

# Readlyn Chronicle

Home of 857 Friendly People and One Old Grump

Volume 18, No. 12, Compiled by Readlyn Community Club — Designed/Printed by Robin Harms, Tripoli, IA, December 31, 2025

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## Readlyn welcomes Santa Claus!



All of the photos above and at left are courtesy of the 2025 Grump, Mary Lou Ungs. See more photos on Page 8.



**Santa was a hit** with all ages! Above, left to right, are Ron Leistikow, Larry and Janet Ladage, Santa Claus, Lauri Phelan, Mary Lou Billhorn, Charlie and Wilda Albrecht, and Judy Leistikow. Above right, Beau Kono enjoys his visit with Santa. At left, Bridget Matthias gives her mom a hug before climbing onto Santa's lap. Little sister, Dani, looks on. Below, left, Santa's helpers, Runner-Up Claire O'Donnell and Miss Congeniality Gwen Forsyth, serve cocoa and Mixing Bowl cookies generously donated by Kristie Boies in memory of her mom and dad. Below center, 2025 RCC board members, left to right, Mary Lou Ungs, Ed and Michelle Harrington, Kristie Boies, Santa, Tiffany Matthias, Marge Quigley, John Galyean, and Louie Hartman; not pictured: Dustin Palmer, Bonnie Wittenburg, and Pat Wehr. Below right, Miss Readlyn Kylie Strottmann and Declan, Callen and Braden Llavelle share their Christmas lists. Photos courtesy of Kylie Strottmann



# Grump's Grumblings

By Mary Lou Ungs, 2025 Grump



It is so much fun being Grump! I got to help decorate the park with the help of the school kids. They really worked hard to make it look great. I don't think we will have to worry about a white Christmas this year!

Today Santa came to town. I got to give the kids bags of treats after their talk. We had a nice turnout, despite the cold. The kids were so cute. Some came with lists or pictures, some were anxious to talk to Santa so he got it right, some were afraid. Cocoa and cookies were served. It was nice that we could use the space that will be Bents Smokehouse and Grill and that the Old Town BBQ food truck was there too. The firemen braved the cold and did s'mores outside. The winners of the pole decorations were announced - thanks to all who participated. Hams were won. The fireworks were great!

It takes so many people to make events like this happen. Thank you, Readlyn

Community Club. They had to pivot quite a few times this year to make this happen. Thanks to everyone for your dedication. This is a great organization to be involved with, and is always looking for new members.

Today was also the cookie walk at the library. It looks like that was also a great success. There was quite a variety of treats. Thank you for coming out.

There is so much going on this time of year, decorations to put up, presents to be bought, parties to go to, whose family to be with and when, travel plans, etc., but let's not forget that Jesus is the reason for the season. I wish you all a wonderful, safe, blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Send news or ads to:  
**ReadlynChronicle@gmail.com**



# Miss Readlyn Comments

By Kylie Strottmann

Hello, Readlyn Community!  
November was a full and busy month, packed with work, dance, FFA activities, and Thanksgiving gatherings with family and friends. I've especially been enjoying dance lately—this season has been so much fun, and it's been great to keep growing and improving each week.

As we head into December, I couldn't be more excited. Christmas has always been my favorite holiday, and I love the joy, traditions, and community spirit that come with it. I'm really looking forward to Christmas on Main this month and all the festive energy it brings to our town.

I'm also excited for what's coming after the holidays. I'll be participating in Preview Night for Dance Competition at the Waverly-Shell Rock Middle School on January 14 at 6:30 p.m., and I'm already looking forward to the opportunity to share what we've been working on.

Wishing that everyone had a warm, cheerful, and memorable holiday season! Let's make 2026 a year to celebrate and enjoy together.

## College News

### Local student named to Dean's List at Palmer College of Chiropractic

DAVENPORT, IA -- The following student was among those who were named to the 2025 summer trimester Dean's List at Palmer College of Chiropractic's Main Campus in Davenport, Iowa: Camryn Wolfe of Fairbank, IA.

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# Readlyn Community Happenings



**Readlyn** Community Club president Michelle Harrington, at left, introduces Jason and Sheila Bents, the couple currently leasing the Event Center.

## Bents is coming to Readlyn in 2026!

A social media post about a favorite area eating place relocating caused an excited stir. It was the announcement that Bents Smokehouse & Pub is going to relocate in Readlyn.

For the past nine years, Bents was a popular restaurant and bar in Westgate. But a fire caused by spontaneous combustion in July changed everything for owners Jason and Sheila Bents. They continued to operate their food trailer while deciding what to do about a brick-and-mortar business.

Then the Bents found their answer in the former Grumpy's Event Center and Bar in downtown Readlyn that closed this fall.

"It was an opportunity that was just too good to pass up," said Sheila Bents. "I got bookings for the event center as soon as I posted the news!"

Jason and Sheila said the combination of a restaurant/bar and event center will add weddings, parties, vendor fairs, catering and more great opportunities for their business.

"We are really excited and so are people in the Readlyn community. We have had a lot of local people offering to help. Members of the fire department have offered to help with moving things. It's great to see so many wanting us to be there and welcoming us so warmly," Sheila said.

The Readlyn location has a dining room and bar area that will seat about 100, plus an event center that holds at least 300. Sheila said they will keep the same menu they had from the Smokehouse & Pub, knowing that what they had was good and people liked it.

"We are looking at opening in January. We will have an exact date after the licensing and painting is completed," Sheila said. "We will be open 5 days a week and will serve breakfast! We can't wait! Thanks to everyone that supported us in

Westgate. We hope to see all of you in Readlyn!"

## Next Pepper Tourney is Jan. 3 at the library


The pepper tournament was held Saturday, December 6 at the Readlyn Library with 10 players participating. The winners and their scores were:

1st: Roger and Connie Buhr - 201  
2nd: Don Childs & Dave Schumacher - 157  
3rd: Millie Crawford & Judy Henn - 142  
4th: Suzy Heineman & Shirley Kuker - 128

Thanks for playing and we hope to see you at our next pepper tournament on Saturday, January 3, 1:00 p.m. at the Readlyn Library. (Use the rear entrance.) Bring a partner. Entry fee is \$3.00.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Shirley Kuker and Judy Henn*



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# Happy New Year!

# 2026

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**Deadline for the Jan. 28  
Readlyn Chronicle is  
Thurs., Jan. 15 at 5 PM.  
Send news items to:  
readlynchronicle@gmail.com**





# Readlyn Community Library

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Beth Kingdon, Director



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### Memorial Books

**In Memory of Melvin Hupfeld**  
*Snarky Sharky* by Bethan Clarke  
 given by Dean and Lois Buhr

**In Memory of Arlyce Harms Heideman**  
*Cold* by Tim McCanna  
 given by Dean and Lois Buhr

### Memorial Donations

**In Memory of Arlo Pipho**  
 Dan and Marva Schuldt

**In Memory of Arlyce Harms Heideman**  
 Laura Phelan  
 Don & Mary Lou Billhorn  
 Ben Witte  
 Marietta Schemmel  
 Verilyn Savage  
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 Arlyce's Family

**In Memory of Donald Heineman**  
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The Bremer County Health Department holds Foot Clinics on the 3rd Thursday of every month. Call 319.352.0082 to make an appointment.

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 Tue - 10am - 5 pm  
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 Thurs - 10am - 7pm  
 Fri - 10am - 5 pm  
 Sat - 9am - 12pm  
 Sun - Closed



# Thank you

The Readlyn Library extends a huge thank you to everyone who helped make our Cookie Walk a success! We had a great day!



Congratulations to our quilt raffle winner Lois Buhr!

# Happy New Year

Watch us on Facebook for more information about upcoming events and programming! Also, winter weather means that sometimes it's not safe for our staff or patrons to get to the library. We try to post notices of any emergency closures on Facebook. If you're unsure, please call before making a drive to the library in bad weather! Stay safe and have a wonderful holiday season!

## Readlyn Senior Citizens meet

Readlyn Senior Citizens met on November 19, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. at Tripoli's Panther Lanes, with 19 attending.

A new person, Therese Schumacher, joined our group. Welcome!

**Birthdays:** We passed a card around for GaryLee Thurm and all the group signed the card and it got mailed as his birthday was October 31.

**Anniversaries:** None for November.

A sympathy card for Joyce Heineman was signed and mailed as Don Heineman had passed away and he had attended our meetings. We will miss his presence.

**Secretary Report:** Janet Ladage read the notes from the previous meeting on October 15, 2025. Larry Ladage made a motion to accept the notes as read. Mary Chapin seconded it. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** The balance as of November 19, 2025 was \$126.00. We had sent a donation of \$100.00 to the Wapsie Valley Education Foundation for the fundraiser they had on November 21, 2025.

**Old Business:** Charlie Albrecht reported on the Readlyn Library event that was November 12 at 3:30 p.m. Linda McCann shared memories in her book of the Cedar Valley Railroad. The Readlyn Historical Society buildings were open for viewing after the event. It was enjoyed by all who attended.

**New Business:** November 29, 2025 will be the Readlyn Christmas Celebration. Santa will be at the Fire Station from 3-5 p.m. and treat bags will be given to the children that come to visit Santa. There will be a vendor fair from 4-8 p.m. located at the Rosebud Occasions on Main Street and also

a BBQ food truck downtown. The lighted Christmas Parade (Main Street Goes Griswold) will be at 6 p.m. Following the parade will be the lighting of the Christmas Tree/Wapsie Choir performs and then the fireworks.

**Latest Update:** This was all canceled due to the snowy weather. The new date of December 13 is set now for this all to happen.

December 6, 2025 will be the next Pepper Tourney at 1:00 p.m. at the Readlyn Community Library. Entry fee is \$3.00 each.

December 13, 2025 will be the Annual Cookie Walk and bake sale at the Library. The walk starts at 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. It will be a free-will donation for the cookies you choose.

December 17, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. will be the Readlyn Savings Bank's open house. There will be a ham raffle and a children's teddy bear raffle.

The group decided that we will be changing the way we do our prizes for our Bingo winners. This will be starting after our first meeting in January 2026. Mary Chapin made a motion to approve the change and Luann Happel seconded it. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be December 17 at 11:30 p.m. at the Tripoli Panther Lanes. Come and join the fun!

Marilyn Lampe made a motion for the meeting to adjourn and Therese Schumacher seconded it. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

**Bingo Winners:** Wayne Kuethe, Luann Happel, Marlys Deterding, Larry Ladage, Mary Lou Unga, Don Billhorn.



**Rick Trotter and Donna Sadler** celebrated 60 years of combined dedication to the Oran Mutual Telephone Company. Rick Trotter has devoted 40 years to serving not only on the board but also in the field assisting with technical work. Of those 40 years, Rick served the last 18 as the vice-president. Donna, the first woman to serve on the board, has faithfully been present for the last 20 years helping the board make decisions. Oran Mutual Telephone Company couldn't have done it without either of them. Thank you, Rick and Donna!



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Readlyn Emergency Services: Thank You for Your Support! Heroes' Ball Coming March 21

As 2025 comes to a close, Readlyn Emergency Services would like to extend our heart-felt gratitude to the many individuals, families, and businesses who have generously contributed to our Emergency Services Building Fund. Your support brings us closer to building a much-needed facility that will serve and protect our community for years to come.

Thank You to Our Donors:

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...and many more who have stepped forward to make a difference.

Looking Ahead – A Night to Remember!

We are excited to announce an upcoming event to continue raising funds for this important

building project:  
Heroes' Ball – March 21, 2026  
Hosted at the new Bents Smokehouse and Pub in downtown Readlyn, this elegant evening will feature:  
• Smoked Prime Rib or Chicken Dinner with delicious sides  
• Silent & Live Auctions  
• Motivational Speaker  
• Live Music  
Tickets will go on sale after the first of the year. Mark your calendars and join us for an unforgettable night supporting a cause that matters to all of us!  
**Special Thanks to Bents**

**Smokehouse and Pub**  
We want to give a huge shout-out to the owners of Bents Smokehouse and Pub for their incredible generosity and community spirit! Not only will they be providing an exceptional catering experience for our Heroes' Ball, but they are also graciously allowing us to host this event at their venue free of charge.  
Their willingness to give back to Readlyn Emergency Services speaks volumes about their commitment to our town. Thank you for helping us make this fundraiser a night to remember!

Donation to RESB

There are 3 payment options: Make checks payable to: RESB  
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2) Venmo: @ReadlynFire  
3) Drop off donations at Readlyn Savings Bank  
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# Wasn't it Yesterday? *One Single Word*

Sticks and stones will break your bones, but words will never hurt me. I learned that old saying young, and it was likely through ill measures, I'm sure, but I'm struggling to believe that saying is true.



By J.D. Francis

Consider the fact that broken bones will eventually mend, but angry words, spoken in haste, could very well hurt for a lifetime. I may be diving into the deep end here, but as I think about it, it's hard to find anything as powerful, or carries as much weight, as something as simple as the spoken word.

The words you say may be meaningless to you, but could very well stay with someone for a lifetime, whether in a positive or negative way. There are words to alter reality, words to give praise, or words to mourn a lost loved one. Words in a courtroom will set an innocent man free or convict a guilty man to prison. If not for colorful words, how else for a blind person to see the beautiful butterfly, raising its wings in the palm of a sure and steady hand. Words can mean the world to someone, like, "Will you marry me?" They can also mean despair: "I'd like a divorce." How about the young man who fell madly,

and passionately in love with someone, and hears the sweetest words he never wants to hear, "Can't we just be friends?" That kind of answer reminds me of a saying he might be feeling, "Though his voice was silent, his heart had a thousand tongues." I imagine his tongues were speechless.

The written word can be a subliminal map to a hidden treasure. The buried treasure, nothing more than a dream within, that may never come true. Words can form songs, prayers, poems, and promises. There are words of faith, compromise, love, hate, and inspiration. Words can scar, and words can heal. There are words of the past and words of tomorrow. There are words to suppress, words to regain, words to push and words to pull.

Tonight, as I write these words on Christmas Eve, I find myself reaching. I wish I could find the words to explain, that of all the words we have ever spoken, or all that we've ever heard, none equate to the power of just one single word. An unspoken word, that not one living soul has ever heard or witnessed. That one word, so absolute, so transcendent, and so divine, is the Word of God. You need only believe in Him, and you shall have everlasting life. On that you can believe and depend, for, as the creator of all... He gave us His Word. Merry Christmas to all!

*jdfrancpaint@msn.com*

# Obituary

## Arlyce Louise Harms Heideman

Arlyce Louise Harms Heideman, 100, of Sumner Iowa, entered into eternal rest on November 22, 2025, at Hillcrest Nursing Home.



Arlyce Heideman

Arlyce was born September 23, 1925, in Bremer County, the daughter of Ella (Holm) Peters and Theo Peters. Through the rite of Holy Baptism on October 11, 1925, she was received into God's family at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Readlyn, Iowa; she affirmed her baptismal covenant in the rite of Confirmation at the same church.

Arlyce grew up on the family farm near Tripoli and attended Readlyn Elementary and Readlyn High School. She graduated from high school in 1941 at the age of 16 and always talked about being the youngest in her class. Arlyce worked for a short time at Rath Packing Plant in Waterloo, IA and she would take the train from Denver to get to work.

On January 9, 1945, Arlyce was united in marriage to Eric F. Harms and started farming in the Tripoli area. Later, they moved to the farm near Readlyn until Eric passed away on September 15, 1985. Eric served in the U.S. Navy during WWII and they both were active in the V.F.W. and VFW Auxiliary. They marched in many parades in Readlyn proudly honoring our veterans at Memorial Day and Fourth of July services each year.

Arlyce was a farm wife who could be seen helping with field work and farm chores; cooking and baking bread; and tending a large garden. As hard as they worked on the farm, she and Eric enjoyed going to dances and playing cards with friends. When Eric and Arlyce retired in 1981, they spent a great deal of time traveling as winter snowbirds to Texas and California.

On September 1, 1990, Arlyce married

Oscar Heideman from Frederika, IA at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, IA. They also enjoyed traveling most winters to Texas, California and they also loved going to Laughlin, Nevada. They were married for 28 years.

Arlyce is survived by her children, Allen (Judy) Harms, Readlyn, IA, Sylvia (Bob) Casterton, Readlyn, IA and Mary (Lou) Soto, Woodbury MN. She has five grandchildren, Jason (Nicole) Miller of Prescott, WI, Kristin (Matt) Peterson of Marion, IA, Terri Casterton of Denver, CO, Chantrell Miller of Lahaina, HI and James (Karla) Casterton of Bettendorf, IA. She has six great-grandchildren, Baleigh (Alex) Bono, Buffalo, MN, Cody Miller, River Falls, WI, Madeline Miller, Prescott, WI, Tristin Winkler, La Crosse, WI, Emmaline Peterson and Annika Peterson, Marion, IA. Arlyce had the joy to meet her first great-great grandchild, Harper Bono at her 100th birthday celebration in September this year.

Arlyce was preceded in death by her parents, her two husbands, her sister, Eunice, brother, Victor, and many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to all the Hillcrest Assisted Living and Nursing Home staff for their loving kindness during the past seven years Arlyce resided at your facility. Also special thanks to the Care Initiatives Hospice team and volunteers.

A memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m. Friday, December 5, 2025, at the Zion Lutheran Church in Readlyn with Rev. Dr. Jean Rabary officiating. Burial of cremains was held in Zion Lutheran Cemetery, Readlyn. Prior to the service there was a memorial visitation from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the church. The service was live-streamed on the Zion Lutheran Church Facebook page. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Zion Lutheran Church, Readlyn Public Library, or the Readlyn Emergency Services Building Fund.

Kaiser-Corson Funeral Home in Readlyn assisted the family.

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**2025 Grump**, MaryLou Ungs, handed out treat bags.  
Photo courtesy of Louie Hartman



The adorable grandchildren of Tom and Karen Kuhlmann. Baby cousins were born the same day.  
Photo courtesy of Louie Hartman



**Brian and Melissa Anderson** with their children, Leo and Elle, visited Santa. Photo courtesy of Louie Hartman



**Bronson and Beckham Bockholt** with big brother, Carter, visit with jolly ol' St. Nick. Photo courtesy of Louie Hartman



**Collin and Emilee Ritzman** with their daughter, Alivia, were happy to see Santa Claus.  
Photo courtesy of Charlie Albrecht



**DJ Slaubaugh** enjoyed everything about Santa's visit. Photos courtesy of Louie Hartman  
**Sutton Lupee** was not too excited about her first outing in Readlyn. Her parents, Coleman and MacKenzie Lupee, just moved to 406 E 6th from Wisconsin.



The daughters of Mike and Crystal Gothard enjoyed their time with Santa Claus. Photo courtesy of Louie Hartman

### Upcoming Events

1/1/26 Readlyn City Hall will be Closed  
1/10/26 Downtown Light Pole decorations must be removed by this date  
1/12/26 @ 6 p.m. Readlyn City Council meeting, Readlyn City Hall, 307 Main Street

## Ham winners named

Readlyn Community Club held a drawing during the Christmas event. The winners of one of 13 hams were:  
Bill Land, Bryce Nielsen, Johnny Kleitsch, Nancy Kleitsch, Sue Boerschel, Gwen Forsyth, Ron Leistikow, Janet Ladage, Kelly Bockholt, Val Northrup, Wilda Albrecht, Claire O'Donnell and Melissa Knight.



**Past and present** Readlyn Grumps got together to fill sacks of goodies to be given out at the Christmas event. Pictured, front row, left to right, are Larry Ladage, Marlys Deterding, Ron Leistikow, and Roger Deterding; back row, Charlie Albrecht, Larry Pavelec, Mary Lou Ungs, Louie Hartman, Ron Hartman and Larry Sauerbrei.  
Photo courtesy of Charlie Albrecht



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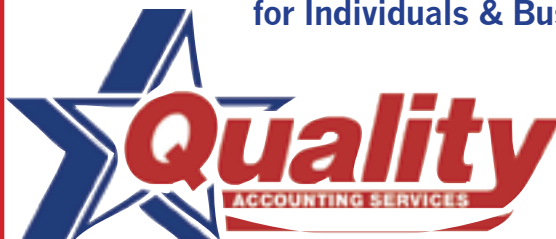


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# Day and Night, Readlyn Sparkles!

All of the light poles on Main Street in Readlyn were decorated for the holidays by various people and organizations. Following are the winners of this first-ever competition of the poles:

First place, pole #6, Gina and Barney Wiersma - \$75 prize

Second place, pole #9, Readlyn Firefighters - \$50 prize

Third place, pole #4, Readlyn Historical Society - \$30 prize

Recognition and thanks go to all of the contestants:

Pole #1 Heather Robinson

Pole #2 India May

Pole #3 Readlyn Library

Pole #5 Main Event

Pole #7 Readlyn Savings Bank

Pole #8 Readlyn Telephone Company

Pole #10 Readlyn EMS

Pole #11 balance

Pole #12 Victoria Templeton

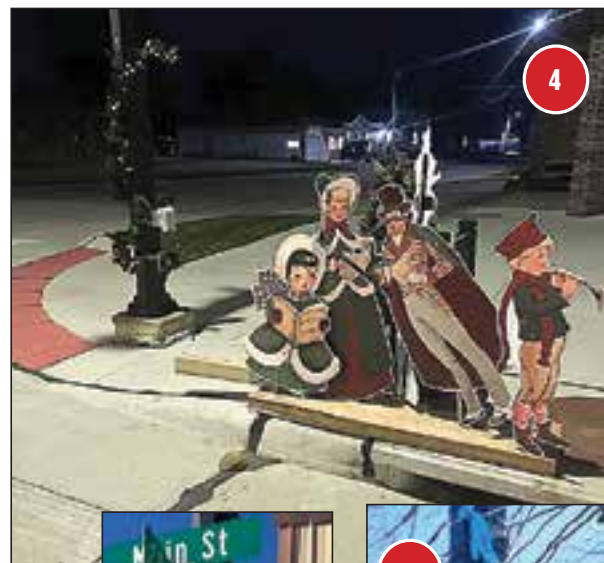
Pole #13 Connie and Dan Wedemeier

Pole #14 Melanie Billington

Pole #15 Wapsie Valley Boosters

Pole #16 Kwik Star

There is still time to admire the light poles. Hurry though -- decorations will need to be removed by January 10.



You can read this issue, or any past issue, of the *Readlyn Chronicle* online at: <https://www.readlyn.lib.ia.us>

## Energy Costs to Increase in Readlyn

By City Clerk Kris McGrane

The Readlyn city officials have been notified of a significant increase in the cost of energy/power beginning January 1, 2026, of approximately 9.54% or \$0.01006 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). There is most likely another increase projected in 2027.

### What does this mean to you?

On January 1, 2026, or shortly after, all Readlyn electric utility customers will see an Energy Cost Adjustment (ECA) increase of approximately 9.54% or \$0.01006 per kWh. You may see this increase starting on your February 2026 utility bill. We are anticipating another increase will take place at the beginning of 2027, also.

EXAMPLES: If a customer has a monthly electric usage of 625 kWh, their current charge would be approximately \$88.16 for electric usage. With the proposed increase, the new approximate cost would be \$94.44, a difference of \$6.28.

If a customer has a monthly electric usage of 1495 kWh, their current charge would be approximately \$199.18 for electric usage. With the proposed increase, the new approximate cost would be \$214.22, a difference of \$15.04.

Usage	Current Cost*	Future Cost*	Difference*
625 kWh	\$88.16	\$94.44	\$6.28
1495 kWh	\$199.18	\$214.22	\$15.04

\*Approximate costs

### Why are electric rates or the ECA increasing?

Butler County REC, the city of Readlyn's energy provider, is also receiving this significant increase in the cost of wholesale power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Bismarck, North Dakota) and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (Humboldt, Iowa). This charge is a pass-through amount which means the city of Readlyn nor Butler County REC will receive revenue from

this increase.

### Why is the cost of wholesale power increasing?

There are several factors that resulted in the increase, including federal policies, rising demand and reliability strains, regulation and compliance costs, transmission and infrastructure challenges, aging assets and maintenance needs, and labor and supply chain costs.

### How can I try and reduce my energy usage?

I recommend doing a walk-through of your property and look for everything that is drawing energy. Pay close attention to appliances and items that are plugged in that are not being used. Dehumidifiers and space heaters can use a lot of electricity if left on for extended periods of time. Small appliances, like slow cookers, toaster ovens and air fryers use less energy than your oven – just remember to unplug them when not in use.

Even when turned off, many electronics still consume power. Unplug chargers and other electronic gadgets when not in use. Consider a smart thermostat to automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home. If you do not have a smart thermostat, you can save energy by setting your thermostat a few degrees lower and grabbing a cozy blanket or adding an extra layer of clothing. Don't forget to check your garage or shed and make sure there are not items plugged in or using energy that you may not be aware of. These are just a few ideas that could save you some money.

### Have additional questions?

Please feel free to reach out to your City Council, Mayor or City Hall staff (City Hall is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.)



Nine members of the Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter joined more than 70,000 FFA members from across the nation at the 98th Annual National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Nine members of the Wapsie Valley FFA attend the 98th Annual National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis

By Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter  
Co-Reporter, Ryker Oberle

On October 28, 2025, nine members of the Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter departed Wapsie Valley High School early morning to join more than 70,000 FFA members from across the nation at the 98th Annual National FFA Convention and Expo. Members had the opportunity to explore agricultural careers by visiting with colleges and industry leaders at the career fair, all while participating in fun and engaging activities.

On the way to the convention, the chapter stopped at the John Deere Pavilion in Moline, Illinois, where they viewed a wide variety of historical John Deere equipment and memorabilia. After arriving in Indianapolis, the group visited Topgolf in Fishers, Indiana, for an evening of bonding and fun.

Early Wednesday morning, members traveled to Ozark Fisheries in Martinsville, Indiana, for a tour of their aquaculture facility, where they learned about aquaponics and the retail market. They then toured RDM Shrimp in Fowler, In-

diana. A fun fact shared with the students: RDM Shrimp is the first shrimp farm of its kind, founded in 2010, and the saltwater used in the facility today is the same water they began with 15 years ago.

On Thursday morning, the chapter took its first steps into Lucas Oil Stadium for the first general session. Members also participated in pre-session activities, including line dancing, where they had a great time and made new friends. Many agreed that the Expo and FFA Shop were among the highlights of the convention. That evening, members attended the National FFA Fun Night at Malibu Jack's in Lafayette, Indiana, where they enjoyed arcade games, mini golf, and go-karts.

On Friday morning, the group attended their final general session at Lucas Oil Stadium before departing Indianapolis.

All nine members thoroughly enjoyed their time in Indianapolis and look forward to the rest of the FFA year with excitement as they bring new ideas and inspiration back to the Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter.

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Oran Fire and EMS received \$1000 from Aureon to help pay for the new EMS Suburban.

## Ripple Effect assists small communities

Through funding support from Aureon and the economic development expertise of Iowa Area Development Group, Ripple Effect guides projects and initiatives in communities served by independent broadband companies.

This grant program is available to any non-profit through their local telephone company. With Oelwein having OMTC, Hawkeye, and East Buchanan, any non-profits can reach out to their telephone company for this opportunity. For Fairbank, this would be OMTC and Little Wapsie. Readlyn would reach out to RTC.

Recently, the Oran Fire and EMS received \$1,000 from Aureon to help pay for the new EMS Suburban.

The Ripple Effect Program assists with:

- Grants for strategic planning and soft

costs.

- Childcare centers, dental and health-care offices, housing, and community facilities.

- State and Federal grant and loan resources.

- Entrepreneurial and business expansion support.

- Grants for business parks and sites.

- Federal loan packaging.

- Revolving Loan Fund support.

- Business plans, market research, and analysis.

Additionally, the Aureon Charity Grant program provides flexible funding for charitable projects and causes. Only those communities served by Aureon participating broadband companies are eligible for the Ripple Effect Program and direct grant funding.

## Bremer Co. Courthouse closed Jan. 1

All Bremer County Courthouse offices, closed Thursday, January 1 in observance of the New Year's Day holiday. Bremer County Customer Convenience Center/Landfill and Clerk of Court will be

**Deadline for the Jan. 28 Chronicle is Thurs., Jan. 15, 5 p.m.**

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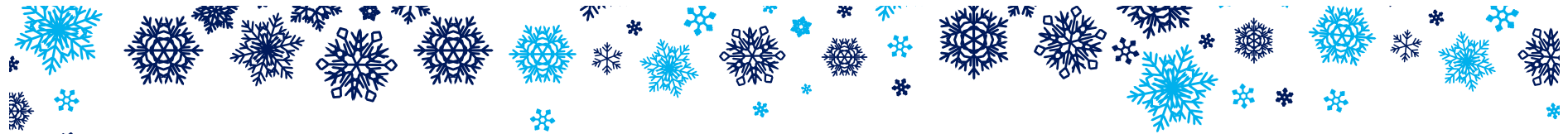
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WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

If you are taking some of your precious time to slow down and read this, I appreciate you and I hope the Holiday Season is treating you and your loved ones well!

This year has been so good to us.

At the end of 2024 and into 2025, we had a small interior bathroom renovation project that all went smoothly and turned out amazing (thanks to John at the Welsh Construction crew!). Later into the summer we started a more extensive outside project of turning our front yard into an oasis for our kiddos to live their best lives in. We dug a pond to fill their primal needs of getting muddy, sunburnt and exhausted and they fell right into the routine. All that mud might mean we will need a new washing machine or have to renovate the bathroom AGAIN sooner than later, but we are so happy to watch them be dirty, scruffy, **smiling** kids and wouldn't change a thing.



This summer, I deleted all of my social media accounts and have found myself being more present, getting SO MUCH more done, and being a better mother and wife to the people that mean the most to me. I don't hear all the gossip and I don't know all the trends but I realize how much I was wasting time and energy on things that don't have anything to do with me. This has been the greatest gift I have given myself and I hope we can all continue to come back to living in the moment and living for ourselves rather than for recognition on the internet. Without being preachy, I would highly recommend it if you need a 2026 resolution!

Cody is still working with the Iowa State Patrol and has thankfully had an uneventful year. He is surrounded by amazing, highly capable co-workers and loves what he does, which is more than most can say! Calvin, Carver, and Carissa are all doing well in school at CLS and are happy and healthy and good hearted little humans. They spend their non-school hours on a field, court, dance floor or wrestling mat... making new friends and memories along the way. Each year they become more independent than the last and we just try to chase them and be with them for as long as they'll allow. *(Sidenote: Every summer, I test whether my kids still think I am “cool” to be around by asking if they want to go off the diving board with me... so far they haven't rolled their eyes and told me “NO! Get away” so I will continue to categorize myself as COOL!! I know it will be short lived so I hang onto those YES answers very tightly!)* We went on a few roadtrip vacations together, we tried new things and met new people, and we had our share of ups and downs but are all still here to love and support each other. We are so blessed.

And my clients - the best clients in the world!  
Some bring me holiday treats, some send me a card, some send a quick text or phone call... some are way too busy with their own plans to think of me at all and that is perfectly fine too! I am so stinkin' lucky to get to do what I do with people that I enjoy being around. I appreciate everyone who gives me their trust and confidence and don't take for granted how big of a responsibility that is. It is good pressure that is a blessing to live up to.

I hope everyone reading this could just as easily fill a page of blessings that have found them this year and that 2026 is even better. Life is Good!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Ashlea (Kleitsch) Jones

Financial Advisor  
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# READLYN OUTDOORS

By Eric Johnston

Ejohnston@mossyokprostaff.com



## The Story of "Split G2"

The snow fell harder as deer started filing onto our Mossy Oak BioLogic Food Plot in search of food in the deep Iowa snow. My daughter, Delana Johnston, and I had waited patiently in her blind for this last hour of daylight and our best chance of the day at seeing deer. Deer came from every direction, some right under our 5-foot tall perch, feeding a mere five steps away. I caught movement to our left - there he was, "Split G2," a massive, tall, mainframe ten-point buck with an extra point on each G2 tine matching and giving him his namesake.

The woods were quiet with only the sound of snowfall and now 11 deer digging in the snow to uncover the turnip greens they craved. Delana slowly and carefully readied her rifle as I tried my best to keep from shaking as I filmed this giant. As he moved out onto the plot, Delana took aim, clicked off the safety and....

This month I'm going to tell you the story of "Split G2," a buck that consumed my thoughts for many years and became quite famous in our household.

This story starts all the way back to the fall of 2022. Late in the year, a small buck with matching split G2s arrived on the farm during Iowa's gun seasons. I would see him on our trail cameras and, to our surprise, he decided to reside on the farm that winter. At that time, Split G2 was a 1.5-year-old whitetail deer, but his rack had our attention and I told Delana that's a deer with some potential if he gets a chance to get some years on him.

Fast forward to early spring 2023, while shed antler hunting with the landowners, Wilda Albrecht found one side of Split G2 and a week later I found the other. As time rolled into the summer of 2023, I really knew Split G2 was special. He went from a cool-looking antlered 1.5-year-old to an impressive 135" deer with those matching G2s prominent. I would often see him on cameras that fall, but never actually laid eyes on him from the stand and was able to harvest another buck we called "Big 10" that season.

As the spring of 2024 rolled around, I searched for endless hours scouring the farm looking for his shed antlers and came up empty. Through that summer, however, I began getting pictures of him and realized he was now a 150-inch deer at 3.5 years old. I told Delana he was now on the list and I was going to hunt him exclusively.

All fall of 2024, I bow hunted hard, passing shots on very nice bucks in hopes of crossing paths with Split G2. It took all the way to November 28 for me to get that chance.

That very cold evening, I was sitting over a food plot and a group of does filled the area in front of me. We film everything for our YouTube Channel, The EDJ Whitetails, and I became preoccupied filming the does feeding as the sun sank low on the horizon. My bow stayed on its hanger next to me and then I heard a twig break behind me. A panic set over me as I wasn't ready and I had a feeling it was him. I carefully turned and for the first time laid eyes on him a mere 15 yards from my stand. I felt I still had a chance, as he wasn't focused on me but rather the does on the food plot. As I

attempted to set the camera on the arm and grab my bow, the whole field erupted with whitetails flashing and Split G2 running as one of the does spotted me and spooked. I was down but not out as I knew he was young and could possibly grow much bigger.

As the gun seasons came and went, Delana harvested a very nice 9-pointer and we ended the season happy. As always, we are working in the land to improve the habitat for wildlife. A lot of this work became geared towards Split G2 and, in January 2025, Split G2 took up residence in a 2-acre bedding area I created over the three previous springs. Last spring in March, while searching that bedding area, I found his right side antler and another clue to where he liked to be. I was excited and searched for the other side every free moment I had. I came up empty, but on a cold, windy March day, I found his right side antler from 2023 laying in the middle of the switch grass field, weathered and slightly chewed on by mice, but a trophy and another piece of the puzzle.

Late in March 2025, Split G2 started to look skinny and wore down. At first I chalked it up to the stress of the rut and the winter. But, as time went on with each trail cam picture, he looked worse and I knew he was sick. I thought we would lose him to Mother Nature, but spring green-up came early and it saved him and by May he started to look healthier and was coming out of it. I could always tell which deer he was by his stub tail even when he had shed his antlers. For whatever reason, he only had half a tail. I communicate with our neighbors and some had named him "stubby" over that tail. Relief came as, on camera, he started to grow his 2025 antlers and gained weight back. At the time I was unsure what had happened, but more on that in a bit.

By this time, I had really started to zero in on where Split G2 spent his time throughout each year. At the start of each spring, he would spend the majority of his time west of the farm in the wide open fields among the crops and steadily work his way back east as fall approached. Each year, around October, he would make his way back onto the farm and in winter he would live in our created bedding area and feed in our plots. However, he was a roamer, which made him very hard to bow hunt. One



morning I'd get a picture on one end of the farm and that evening get a report from a neighbor stating he was a mile east.

I hunted all bow season without laying eyes on him until November 15. That morning, I was fortunate to harvest a buck we nicknamed Curly and, after he crashed into the brush, Split G2 came to investigate the dead deer and pushed and prodded on him. What made for a cool video would be only the second time ever laying eyes on him from the tree stand.

The next two weeks seemed like an eternity waiting for December 6, Iowa's gun season and Delana's chance to hunt. The week before season, a big snowstorm dropped a bunch of snow and cold temps for our area and with that brought Split G2 right to his winter time home and pattern. Every day of the week, leading up to Saturday, Dec. 6, Split G2 would be found on the camera leading in and out of the bedding area and feeding on our planted food plots. I knew going into the season Delana had the best chance either of us had ever had at him with this pattern finally happening during season.

Saturday morning's hunt was uneventful with no deer sighted and at 9 a.m. we headed home to get ready for the afternoon hunt which I had been waiting for. The sun still shone as we got our gear and made our way to the land. Delana driving me with her truck was a welcome change as she was taking care of dear ol' dad! We purposely parked the truck much further away than normal to help stay quiet. It was a long walk but worth it as we filmed and made our way in. The woods were calm and quiet even with a storm front forecast for the afternoon. A wind shift out of the southeast was welcome even though light to aid in hiding our scent. We silently got in the blind and settled in.

Delana and I whispered, talking about anything and everything while filming songbirds and pheasant for our video. We had been in the blind since 1:30 p.m. and about 3:00 it started to cloud up. Shortly after 4 p.m., I looked back into the woods and spotted the first deer making its way to the plots from the east. A small doe, she made her way right under our blind feeding a mere 5 steps away. Shortly after, we spotted deer coming from the south to the plots, two small bucks and a doe. By now it was nearing 4:30, and the snow started coming down in big flakes and heavy. To my left, a deer entered the plot just 15 yards away.

"Big buck, Delana, get ready," I whispered,

camera rolling. Delana has matured so much as a hunter, although heart beating out of her chest, she calmly and quietly readied her rifle. More deer came funneling out of the woods to our left which made it very tense for Delana readying the gun and me, the camera man, making sure all those eyes and ears didn't know we were there. I somehow managed to keep the deer in camera frame, although, I was shaking. It was Split G2.

I didn't know whether Delana knew that or not and I didn't dare tell her and make her more nervous. He made his way out into the turnip plot and dug his way through the snow for each bite. Delana took aim, clicked the safety off and crack!! The 350 legend rifle sent a bullet home! "You smoked him!" I let out to Delana as he kicked and ran into the thicket to the east. Delana had never had one run after the shot and was worried. I reassured her she got him! With the snow falling hard yet, I didn't want the follow-up trail getting covered. We took up the trail immediately and, as soon as I looked into the thicket, there Split G2 lay!

We were both in shock as we walked up to the big ol' buck that had been such a fixture in my world and household the last few years. We took the moment in and filmed our follow-up to finish the video. Delana immediately made phone calls and visits to landowners were made to show them! Upon getting home, my wife, Aubrey, had our garage full with friends and family waiting to see "Split G2" and celebrate with us!

My daughter had closed the book on a buck I had followed so long and I'm happier than I would have been if I'd have shot him. I'm proud of my daughter and the hunter she's become!

Upon processing Split G2, I found a bullet wound from the year before scarred over at the very top of his spine. That injury is what had made him so sick the previous spring. He had come within a quarter of an inch from his fate the year before. Crazy how things go in the wild!

A special thanks goes out to my wife, Aubrey, for tolerating my obsession, and the landowners for making these memories with my daughter possible! You can see this hunt and all of our hunts on The EDJ Whitetails YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/gya789Bdle8?si=m3OaH-GeJzdaZFmE> And, until next time, GET OUTDOORS!!!



NEWS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As we start 2026, I want to thank our families, staff, and community for the continued support of Wapsie Valley schools.

I would also like to share an update on the football field and track project. The project has officially been put out to bid. Putting it out to bid does not lock the district into moving forward, but it does allow us to see the real costs of a new 8-lane track, new home bleachers and press box, and a synthetic playing surface for the football field. Once bids are received, the Wapsie Valley Board of Education will review them and decide how to move forward. If the bids come in at a level the board is comfortable with, they may choose to proceed. If not, the board will need to consider next steps, which could include adjusting parts of the project or rethinking the plan altogether.

If the bids are favorable and the board decides to move ahead, construction would begin this spring, and the field would be ready for play by the first football game of the season. This construction will not affect other sports such as baseball or softball, and it will also have no impact on the new concession stand that was built a couple years ago.

This project is being considered because updated facilities help attract students and families to our district. This project will also provide safe and modern facilities, that our student athletes should have, where they can practice and compete with pride. This facility upgrade will also allow for multiple classes and sports to use these areas during times when the current facilities can not be used due to excess water, snow, etc... This will also give our community some outdoor facilities that can be used at their leisure as well.

We received good news from the state in December. As you were aware, Fairbank Elementary, JH/HS, and the rural buildings were given school rankings of "commendable" and Readlyn Elementary was given a ranking of "high performing." The entire district was given a ranking of "commendable." This ranking is something new from the state and is something that our entire community can be proud!

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me. I am always happy to visit with you.

*Chris Hoover, Superintendent  
Wapsie Valley School District*

Readlyn City Council - December 8, 2025

The Readlyn Finance Committee met in open session at 5:45 PM on Monday, December 8, 2025 to review bills. The Readlyn City Council met in open session at 6:00 PM on Monday, December 8, 2025 for the regular meeting. Meeting was called to order by Mayor Wedemeier. The following council members were present: Nicole Barnes, Keith Brunscheon, Rocco Imbrogno (arrived at 6:27 PM) and Joseph Jones. Absent: Jason Franck. Others in attendance included: Steve Aiello, Barney Wiersma and Kris McGrane.

Motion by Barnes and seconded by Brunscheon to approve consent agenda items, which included the regular council meeting minutes from 11/10/2025, the claims list from 11/11/2025 to 12/8/2025, the November 2025 reports (Budget, Treasurer's & Financial) and the election results. All said yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Jones and seconded by Barnes to approve the agenda. All said yes. Motion carried.

The mayor informed the council that instead of replacing the holiday decorations on Main Street, the council may consider replacing/repairing the city electronic sign along Reed Avenue. He also reminded everyone that the city holiday celebration was rescheduled for this weekend (12/13/25) and that Bent's Smokehouse and Pub will be opening early next year in downtown Readlyn at 209 Main Street.

Motion by Brunscheon and seconded by Jones to approve receiving reports from the city clerk, police, public works and library. All said yes. Motion carried.

Craig Codner (General Manager/CEO) and Matthew Mahoney (Energy Services Manager) with Butler County REC were present to inform the council of an increase to the rate adjustment starting the first of the year, January 1, 2026, of approximately 9.54% or \$0.01006 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The increase is coming down from their wholesale supplier to Butler County REC. This increase is too much for Butler County REC to take on without passing it along to all of their customers, and they suggest the city of Readlyn pass it along to their customers as well. They are also being informed that there will be another increase of approximately 7% for next year (or in 2027) but they will not receive further details until later next year. Imbrogno arrived during the discussion at 6:27 PM. After discussion, no action by the council was taken.

Motion by Jones and seconded by Brunscheon to approve an alcohol license for Bents Smokehouse and Pub, subject to meeting all the city and state requirements and completing all the necessary steps with the city and the state. All said yes, motion covered.

Motion by Barnes and seconded by Brunscheon to approve the second reading of Ordinance #365, an ordinance amending the code of ordinances of the city of Readlyn, Iowa, Chapter 156 entitled Building Code. Roll call, all said yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Imbrogno and seconded by Brunscheon to approve Resolution #2025-18, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Iowa Department of Revenue and the city of Readlyn regarding the State Setoff Program. Roll call, all said yes. Motion carried.

McGrane informed the council that the handheld utility meter reading device quit working on 10/31/25. This device is old and obsolete and is no longer being made or repaired. The city is currently renting a used device on a short-term basis. McGrane provided a few options to the council, including purchasing another used device or purchasing a new system/software. The council will discuss this further at a future meeting. No action by the council was taken.

Motion by Brunscheon and seconded by Barnes to set a public hearing for Monday, January 12, 2026, at 6:00 PM for amending the Building Code in the code of ordinances of the city of Readlyn, Iowa. All ayes, motion carried.

It was suggested to have more information about repairing/replacing the city owned electronic sign along Reed Avenue on the next city council agenda.

Motion by Barnes and seconded by Jones to adjourn. All said yes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Wapsie Valley School Board - Nov. 19, 2025

Wapsie Valley CSD  
Regular School Board Mtg.  
November 19, 2025

Pledge of Allegiance

1. President Wolfe called the Regular Meeting of the board to order at 6:33 PM

A. Directors: Aiello, Auel, Kaufman, Sauerbrei & Wolfe. Declare a quorum.

B. Administration: Supt. Hoover, Board Sec. Arndt, & Principals Murphy, Forsyth, & Myers

C. Others: Vaughn Gross, Scott Broten, Rachel Klendworth, Christy Tiedt, Mandy Bockholt, Abby Bockholt, Bella Tiedt, Anika Bates, Jax Klendworth, Steffanie Bate, Amy Becker & virtual participants.

2. Moved by Auel, Seconded by Sauerbrei to approve the agenda moving Spotlight on Education to number four as presented Motion carried 5-0

3. Spotlight in Education-Abby Bockholt, Bella Tiedt, Anika Bates & Jax Klendworth presented on the partnership the 6th Fairbank students have with Ghana students. The class has donated shoes, books, money & supplies to this needy school.

4. Public comment - None

5. Arndt presented the unofficial school board election votes

6. Moved by Sauerbrei, Seconded by Aiello to approve the consent items including the bills being reviewed by Brent Sauerbrei as presented. Motion carried 5-0

7. Board-Adam Kaufman has noticed Wapsie Valley buses going very fast.

Superintendent-Hoover: Report includes Fall Activities, Football Field/Track update, Pre-negotiations, Water leak, Website, Auditorium, Computers, & Thanksgiving.

District/Principals: Report includes Veteran's Day Program, Professional Development, Field Trips, Leader In Me, Lighthouse, Career Fair, Blood Drive, &

Activity Updates.

8. Personnel-Resignations-Moved by Aiello, Seconded by Kaufman to approve the resignation of Caitlin McElhose-Winter Cheer Coach and thank her for her service to Wapsie Valley. Motion carried 5-0

Contracts: Moved by Aiello, Seconded by Auel to approve a contract to Kayla Schwartz-Before/After School Care Supervisor-\$20 P/H as presented. Motion carried 5-0

Addendum-Moved by Auel, Seconded by Kaufman to approve the Leader In Me addendum from \$750 to \$1,066 as presented. Motion carried 5-0

9. New Business-Moved by Auel, Seconded by Sauerbrei to approve the resolution for continued participation in the instructional support program as presented. Motion carried 5-0

Moved by Sauerbrei, Seconded by Kaufman to approve the School Board Review Committee Special Education Administrative Costs of (\$8,244.09) for the LIED Center and (\$2,390.79) for River Hills for the 26-27 school year as presented. Motion carried 5-0

Moved by Aiello, Seconded by Sauerbrei to approve the vote for Central Rivers AEA-District 2 Board of Directors-Dr. Debra Semm Rich as presented. Motion carried 5-0


Moved by Aiello Seconded by Auel to approve the purchase of Laars MightyTherm 2 propane 200K water heater at the JH/HS-(\$19,600) as presented. Motion carried 5-0


Class photos will not be sold. They will be put back up after being digitized.


10. Board Talking Points-Board would like to update the board photo.


11. Moved by Kaufman, Seconded by Sauerbrei to adjourn at 7:04 PM. Motion carried 5-0

Respectfully,  
Kim Arndt


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**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

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**1:00PM - 6:00PM**



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