

On the lam

Area man at large following evening vehicle chase, wreck in Clay County.

Page A6



Hastings Tribune

SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS



16 pages <http://www.hastingstribune.com>

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2013

Home delivered 33 cents Newsstands 75 cents

HPS committee recommends 5-school model

4 ELEMENTARIES WOULD RECEIVE UPGRADES; MORTON WOULD BECOME A PRESCHOOL CENTER

SHAY BURK
sburk@hastingstribune.com
 Hastings Public Schools could reduce its number of elementary schools from six to five under a new proposal. The Hastings Board of Education received its first official glimpse Tuesday into a tentative recommendation by the Community Facilities Advisory Committee regarding the future of the elementary system.



Kautz

"It would be a five-school model with Morton as a preschool center," Superintendent Craig Kautz told the board. "Morton would no longer be a K-5."

The proposal, which is estimated to cost \$21.5 million, would include the remodeling of the Alcott and Longfellow buildings at a cost of \$13.4 million.

Hawthorne, Lincoln and Watson would receive additional space at a total cost of \$7.6 million.

When completed, all five sites would have the space to provide three sections of each grade kindergarten through fifth grade.

There is an additional \$500,000 in the proposal to make some upgrades to the Morton building.

"We actually could do without Morton, without it at all, until we try to educate all

preschoolers. Then you'll probably be glad you held onto Morton and invested in it," Kautz said.

The community advisory committee, which has been meeting for a year, is comprised of 15 community members who discussed dozens of ideas before coming to this tentative recommendation.

Kautz said the plan is to take this recommendation to the community within the next few months through a community survey and community meetings to get a pulse on the idea.

If the community responds favorably, Kautz would recommend a bond election be held in May 2014.

"We may have a community that says you missed the mark and, if that happens, we will not complete the final steps projected here this year," he said. "We will continue to work

Please see HPS/page A3

Kautz: HPS not interested in co-op baseball program

SHAY BURK
sburk@hastingstribune.com
 Hastings Public Schools won't be entering into a cooperative agreement with two other local schools to start a high school boys baseball program. Superintendent Craig Kautz informed the Board of Education of his recommendation at Tuesday's work session. "If baseball comes to Hastings Public, it will come as a Hastings Public activity," Kautz said. "While I appreciate the offer, I think its in our interest and the interest of our kids to try to do that." Superintendents and activities directors with the three schools eventually agreed to poll students in their respective schools to determine interest among students. At Hastings High, 44 of 711 students indicat-

ed an interest in playing baseball during the spring 2014 season. Another 88 at the middle school expressed an interest in playing once they reached high school. The numbers were similar at Adams Central where 44 boys in grades 9-12 indicated they would participate in baseball if it was offered next spring. The results at St. Cecilia, the smallest of the three schools, showed that 50 of the 96 boys surveyed indicated an interest in baseball. Kautz said that because of the high number of interested boys at HPS, he wouldn't recommend entering into a cooperative. Hastings Public is by far the largest of the three schools and Kautz said that a cooperative arrangement could be unfair to the players

Please see BASEBALL/page A3

Are you ready for some softball?



LAURA BEAHM/Tribune

Peyton Young of Gothenberg purchases a state tournament shirt from Richard Parr Wednesday morning at the Smith Softball Complex.

ONLINE UPDATES ADDED TO STATE TOURNAMENT

WILL VRASPIR
wvraspir@hastingstribune.com
Anyone unable to attend the Nebraska State Softball Tournament starting Wednesday at the Smith Softball Complex will have new options for following their favorite teams this year. Organizers have implemented a scorekeeping computer program, called GameChanger, for the first time during the tournament.

Pete Theoharis, Hastings High's softball coach, described the program as a digital scorebook. In addition to tracking scores and stats through the game, the program provides real-time updates through the Internet. Officials will have an iPad on each field to record statistics with the program. Games will be available through the Nebraska School Activities Association website, which is www.nsaahome.org. Basic information about the games

will be free with more detailed information available by subscription. The program can provide play-by-play updates, including runners on base and where each hit lands. The program can be accessed by any device that can connect to the Internet, including smartphones. Theoharis has used the program for five years during high school games. When a game is over, the stats are already com-

Please see SOFTBALL/page A3



LAURA BEAHM/Tribune

Mitch Benes makes himself appear smaller in an inflatable suit as Devon Benes (left), Carlie Benes, Mollie Vasa and Hadley Chvatal of Newman watch before the second round of tournament play at Smith Softball Complex Wednesday.

County board gives \$2.8M truck route green light

LAURA BERNERO
lbernero@hastingstribune.com
 The Adams County Board of Supervisors has spent the last several months debating whether the gamble was going to be a smart one. They sat down with property owners and heard from business and tourism advocates. They secured the means to borrow money and took construction bids. And finally, Tuesday, they rolled the dice. A \$2.8 million truck route in north Hastings will be constructed before Aug. 1 of next year, thanks to the board's go-ahead. "It's a great project, and I'll be glad to see it completed. It is time," said Chuck Neumann, chairman of the board. Instead of driving through Hastings on Burlington Avenue and cutting south and east through the city's smaller thoroughfares, car and truck traffic coming from the north will be able to take a left at 42nd Street, follow the new truck route one mile east to Showboat Boulevard, curve south and continue toward 26th Street and U.S. Highway 6. The board anticipates that the new route will improve traffic flow in and around Hastings, which Neumann attests gets especially dangerous around the intersection of Burlington and 33rd Street and at other points along the current designated truck route. The board voted 4-2-1 Tuesday to award the project bid to Werner Construction of Hastings for \$2.2 million. Supervisors Scott Thomsen and Jack Hynes were opposed, and Supervisor Lee Saathoff abstained because he owns property along the route. The board also voted 4-2-1 on a finance plan for the project. The two-mile stretch will affect the county budget, which gave several board members reservations when considering the project. The project will require about \$2.8 million in tax dollars once legal fees, right-of-way costs and engineering are added to the construction cost. To pay for the project, the county tax levy could increase by just under 2 cents beginning next year and remain for five years. However, the project has a promising payoff, as county officials see it. "I know this is a big bite for budget and concern for all taxpayers, but it's the beginning. This project opens the door for other projects," said County Roads Superintendent Dawn Miller at the meeting.

Please see TRUCK/page A3

Weather

Lo: Patchy frost after mid-night. Partly cloudy Thursday.
35
Hi: 60



Art by Madison Watts, 6, Franklin Public School

WOMAN HIT BY TWO TRAINS

WOODS CROSS, Utah — A 29-year-old Utah woman is remarkably alive after her car was hit not once, but twice, by trains. Woods Cross detective Adam

Osoro says the woman was fleeing from officers at speeds up to 100 miles per hour Sunday when she drove under the crossing arms and smashed into the side of a train. Her car came to rest on the other set of tracks. Officers tried

breaking the window to get her out but had to jump out of the way before another train rammed into her car less than one minute after the first collision. The woman suffered only broken bones. *The Associated Press*

Nation

Inside

- Agri/Business **A7**
- Bridge **B5**
- Classified **B7**
- Comics **B4**
- Entertainment **B5**
- Obituaries **A2**
- Opinion **A4**
- Public Notices **B6**

VOL. 109, No. 14 ©2013, THE SEATON PUBLISHING CO., INC. HASTINGS, NEBRASKA



Truck: County board gives \$2.8M project the go-ahead

Continued from page A1

The board is excited about the truck route's potential to address traffic safety concerns in and around Hastings. County officials anticipate that the dominant north-south traffic flow that the new route would create on Showboat Boulevard could dramatically improve the safety at the intersection of Showboat and 26th Street, which was flagged as the most deadly intersection in the state in 2011.

In addition, the new route should relieve hang-ups along Burlington's northern corridor where the majority of trucks regularly travel.

"I live over by the hospital, and when I turned near Spady's the other day, I saw 17 cars and trucks lined up in that bottleneck," Neumann said.

"We're lucky that we haven't had any serious accidents there yet. Now, that whole situation can be made safer."

The new route could facilitate new economic development. Business and municipal officials believe that the road will welcome new business development because trucks and motorists now will have a more direct route from Interstate 80 to the Hastings area.

The willingness of the board to borrow the money for the project was definitely a risk, but one that ultimately could benefit Adams County taxpayers overall, Miller said.

Thompson, who voted against the project and has expressed concern about the project's price tag, thanked the other board members for their

leadership following the truck route decision.

"I know I wasn't for this, but this is how we do things. And now that it's passed, I back it 100 percent," Thomsen said.

Throughout its deliberation process, the county board has considered the impact the road will have on residents along 42nd Street, who currently have relatively quiet, rural lots. Residents there have expressed concern about the road's encroachment on their property and the noise and safety concerns that will come from increased traffic.

"I'm still opposed to the project," said Ivan Bengtson, who has lived at the corner of 42nd and Columbine for 21 years, following the decision. "I

know they say they're going to put up trees and fences between us and the road, but that kind of thing doesn't happen overnight. I'd still like to know more."

The county created an advisory group comprised of several supervisors and five property owners who will advise the county board on the project from here on out. Many property owners will have fences and trees installed where their properties abut 42nd Street, hoping to defer as much traffic noise as possible. The county has promised to pay for those barriers.

"I have done a lot of thinking and been to a lot of meetings. My main concern was for the residents in that area," said Supervisor Mike Weeks. "But now I'm satisfied that we will be

treating them fairly and have them taken care of as best we can."

A box culvert just east of the Smith Softball Complex, a joint city and county project, will be completed this month and 42nd Street then will become drivable from Highway 281 to Showboat. Meanwhile, 42nd Street will remain a gravel road east of the box culvert until the truck route project gets under way in the spring.

At its meeting Tuesday, the board also approved the installation of stop signs on Columbine Avenue at 42nd Street. A previous stop sign for east-bound traffic on 42nd Street will be removed.

County officials anticipate that 42nd Street will see increased traffic as soon as it is open this winter.

HPS: Committee recommends upgrades to 4 elementary schools

Continued from page A1

on it, though, because as I said, the timing is now. From a community perspective, we have got to get our facilities in better shape so later on all that doesn't pile on the table. The timing is great now."

If the plan is approved by the community, Kautz said the estimated timeline for the projects to be completed is set at about eight years.

The first step would be to complete the additions to the Hawthorne, Lincoln and Watson sites.

Then students from Alcott

would be moved to the newly expanded Watson Elementary while Alcott undergoes a major renovation.

Once the Alcott project is completed, those students would move back to Alcott.

Longfellow students would be sent to Watson, Hawthorne and even possibly Lincoln while Longfellow is under renovation.

Upon the completion of those projects, students at Morton would be moved to Watson and Hawthorne permanently.

Kautz said some community

members may wonder why the district would start with the additions and not start with the major renovations at Alcott and Longfellow.

Kautz said the district could put students into modular school trailers or set up temporary schools at the Adams County Fairgrounds or even within the Imperial Mall.

"But we should be spending money on buildings that are going to be used, not temporary modular units that would be sold for a dollar per hundred of what they cost," he said. "With the fairgrounds or the

mall, either of those options requires investment."

Kautz said it makes the most financial sense to use the facilities that the district also is investing money into to educate students.

He said with the shuffling of students during that time, the district most likely would need to provide busing.

On the issue of the cost to the taxpayer, Kautz said that while nothing is set, he may have a way to keep from raising the levy too much.

The \$21.5 million project currently represents what could

be an additional 13 cents to the levy.

The district currently has a tax levy rate of \$1.32 with 10 cents of that coming from the district Early Retirement Incentive Fund.

The ERIP is used to buy out the most expensive teachers in order to hire less experienced teachers at a lower rate.

"Based on what I know right now I'm not sure that need is still there," Kautz said. "But the question is do you try to buy down your general fund costs or do you try to get after your facilities in a time when it

seems like it's the appropriate time to get after your facilities."

With the elimination of ERIP, Kautz said those 10 cents could be put toward the elementary facilities, leaving only 3 cents to possibly be added to the existing levy rate.

"But by the time it gets to you or the community as a decision, we don't want to say it's automatically a 3-cent increase," he said. "We don't know that yet, but at this point in our planning, we think that would be a reasonable figure to do all of those things."

Softball: Online updates added to state tournament

Continued from page A1

the NFHS network," Sasse-Kildow said. "We're really excited about that partnership."

Jeff Hassenstab, superintendent of the Hastings Parks and Recreation Department, said the city boosted its Internet capabilities in the complex to provide more bandwidth for up and coming technology being used at the tournament. By adding extra modems, he said they hope to avoid disconnections and downed service.

It's an investment that is likely to pay off in the future with future bids to host the tournament. Bellevue won the bid to host the tournament in 2012 and 2014, but had to bow out after flooding prevented the fields from being constructed.

With Bellevue unable to fulfill the bid, Hastings agreed to host the tournament last year and will do so again next year.

With a long history in hosting tournaments at the complex, Hassenstab said most of the preparations were routine. Crews helped install black wind screen around the complex. They brought in extra bleachers, painted the lines and spruced up the complex to welcome

teams from around the state.

"We paid a little more attention to details," he said.

Co-site directors Tracy Douglas and Bob Moderow had a number of details to attend to, as well. They have added scaffolding for photographers and camera crews. The ticket booths were moved to the main entrance. Additional staking was completed along the outfield fences to prevent balls from rolling outside the play area.

For Douglas, this is her first year as a tournament organizer, inherited after taking over the position of activities director at Hastings High. She has helped in various positions during the tournament as a volunteer, so she is familiar with the basics.

"I have to have Bob show me the ropes," she said.

Several organizations coordinate to make the tournament a success, including the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce, Hastings Parks and Recreation Department, Hastings Public Schools officials, maintenance staff, Hastings College baseball and softball teams, as well as the NSAA itself.

In previous years, Douglas

said they have had trouble finding enough volunteers to

fill all the required positions.

This year, that wasn't an issue.

"As this event continues to

be in Hastings, we've seen greater community support," she said.

Baseball: HPS not interested in co-op arrangement with AC, STC

Continued from page A1

from other schools when there would more students involved from Hastings High.

Similarly, by adding players from other schools, Kautz said a cooperative team also could limit the number of Hastings High students on the team.

"I don't want to limit our students because of the involvement of others," he said.

Instead, Kautz said that based on the student interest, he would ask the board to consider more discussion in the future on the proposal of starting a baseball program within the district.

Kautz said he isn't opposed to working with the two other schools on behalf of students; however, this isn't the best situation in which to do that.

Ron Alexander, the activities director at Adams Central, gave a similar recommendation when he released the results at that school at a Sept. 9 board meeting.

He said if 40 boys went out for baseball from Adams Central alone, there would be no need to co-op. Besides the issues of splitting costs, determining the team name on jerseys and other things, a cooperative would create a lot of unanswered questions for the

schools.

When the Adams Central board met Monday, there was no discussion on the issue.

Hastings Catholic Schools Superintendent Tom Brouillette said the Unity Board has yet to meet this month. Members are scheduled to discuss the issue at the Oct. 28 meeting.

Holiday Festival
 Oct. 18, 19 & 20 & Oct. 25, 26 & 27
 ***2 HOLIDAY WEEKENDS ONLY!
 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Each Day
 Lunch served each day we're open.
 Find us on Facebook or mossypond.com
 Enjoy a Fresh Air shopping experience
 for all your art, gift and decorating needs!

Mossy Pond
 arts and crafts
 "May the footprints that we leave lead them to before."
 865 H Road, Chapman, NE • 308-986-2630
 1 1/4 mile east of Chapman on Hwy. 30
 2nd right hand turn east of the Pump & Pantry

Napoli's
 Family Owned
LUNCH SPECIALS
 Starting at \$6.95 11am-3pm
 includes salad and rolls
 3001 W. 12th Street, Hastings, NE
 402-834-0809

\$4.00 OFF
 with the purchase of 2
 entrees after 4 p.m.
 Valid at the Hastings or
 Grand Island location
 Cannot combine with any other offer.

Godfather's Pizza
 NEW!
Oven Toasted Ciabatta Bread SANDWICHES
 • Ham 'N Cheese
 • Italian Supreme
 • Spicy Sausage
 • Stromboli
 Try one today!
 Inside Ampride North Foodcourt
 1414 N. Burlington
 402-461-0386

Become a fan of the Hastings Tribune at facebook.com

BRUCE FURNITURE
 Chairs by the Pairs

HOT BUY

LIMITED TIME - SALE ENDS SOON!

2 GREAT CHAIRS, 1 LOW PRICE!

LAZBOY ASHLEY Lane HOME FURNISHINGS

Two Recliners For Only \$599.00

Two Recliners For Only \$699.00

Two Recliners For Only \$899.00

Two Recliners For Only \$1099.00

Don't Need Two? 14 One-of-a-kind recliners at OUR COST!

117 Recliners In Stock ALL ON SALE or Special Order the exact style/color you want at the same sale price!

Luxurious Bonded Leather

BRUCE FURNITURE Just Right For You!

FREE Professional Delivery!

3 blocks south of the Landmark Center on Marian Road, Hastings, NE • 402-463-3223 • 1-800-713-1984 • Visit us at brucefurniture.com