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4R Board votes to create new foundation

Entity will provide avenue to house donations for school-related projects

by Cheyenne Rowe

Aurora Supt. Damon McDonald brought to the attention of the board during Monday's meeting the wish by a community group to create the Aurora Public Schools Foundation to collect donated funds to benefit the school.

"This is coming from a community group that has been working on some different information in regards to working with the school," he began. "We've heard presentations in regards to building enhancements and different aspects there. The discussion was formulated that we should probably formulate something that works directly with the school through a foundation. There's been some contacts that have been made out there in regards to an Aurora Public Schools Foundation and what that means and how the school can benefit from the foundation."

McDonald elaborated, stating that the school board would need to approve the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws as presented, as well as be a part of the discussion because the Aurora Public Schools Foundation will be a "charitable organization to the school and the school alone."

"So through that process the group has, I believe in the articles of incorporation it talks about nine of 15 board members," he said. "There are nine board members that have agreed to be board members on the foundation. The superintendent of schools will be a non-voting member and I believe if one school board member would like to be a member of that as well they could participate as a non-voting member."

According to McDonald, the foundation would, upon

approval and accrual of funds, come under the school audit.

"It is a charitable organization and it would come under the school audit in regards to the finance piece," he reported. "I think that's a good thing. That's something that needs to be done and that should be added correctly."

The foundation will reportedly meet quarterly, according to its presented bylaws and articles. Those initial meetings would include start-up organizational pieces and getting some information established.

"But as that process evolves it would be a means for people, groups, businesses, individuals, alumni, whoever -- that if there is a certain project that comes about, if there are wishes by a school building in particular, for their building or they have some great projects -- it's an opportunity to donate to a 501(c)3."

McDonald added that others in the community who wanted to provide opportunities for any school project could utilize the foundation in that regard.

After approval, the next steps will include McDonald going back to the foundation board and setting up the first official meeting.

"Be wary that people are going to want that money going a lot of different directions. Just be prepared for people pulling at that," board member Kirk Penner warned. "I would address that."

The motion was made and all eyes signaled the creation of the Aurora Public Schools Foundation.

While discussing to approve the 2020-21 school calendar, which is two years away, McDonald briefed the board and those in attendance on a few changes to note. One

(See 4R, A10)



News-Register photos

Sandhill Cranes have been flying in and out of area fields for the past several weeks. Though their arrival may have been delayed by rain and snow, experts say just as many birds found their way to the Platte River this year.

Sandhill Cranes weather storm

Flooding washes out road at Rowe Sanctuary, reducing visitor access

by Kurt Johnson

The hard winter freeze and spring flooding that devastated much of Nebraska had little effect on hundreds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes making their annual stop along the Platte River.

The migration season came later this year than usual and is now winding down, but while it lasted the views were as spectacular as ever, according to organizers at the Ian Nicholson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon.

"The birds have been coming for hundreds of thousands of years so they are used to this kind of stuff," said Bill Taddicken, Rowe Sanctuary director. "They are known as the bird that lives on the edge of winter so to them the



flooding was beneficial as it inundated wet meadows and pastures close to the river and provided a lot of food. The cranes themselves weren't effected at all once everything thawed."

That wasn't the case at all for their human counterparts, however, many of whom simply weren't able to enjoy the

annual migration spectacle.

"This was definitely a year to put in the books for weather," Taddicken said. "March came in with a deep freeze and the river was frozen for the first week, which delayed the cranes. Then we had the blizzard and rain which

(See CRANES, A10)

Inside



Young artists showcase talent

A group of young artists put their talents on display with a Sunday art show, wrapping up a Classical Conversations program. Page A7

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Need for gravel on county roads sparks debate

Nunnenkamp calls for larger stone size in gravel bid process

by Cheyenne Rowe

The topic of county roads caused spirited discussion during Monday's Hamilton County Board of Commission-

ers meeting after Hamilton County Highway Supt. K.C. Pawling addressed the board with a request to gather bids on road gravel for the upcoming season.

"That's going to be basically similar to what you put out last summer," Commissioner Roger Nunnenkamp commented, in regards to the quality of gravel put on roads. "And that has disappeared. I mean

that was coarse sand, basically. My understanding is that there are grades of gravel and there were too few big stones in it."

Nunnenkamp added that the roads needed more stones measuring one-half inch or larger.

"Back when we had our own granite pit, I don't know what their screening was but we had inch and a half stones," he said. "You put gravel on the

sides of my roads last summer and it's all gone. When it rains it's muddier than heck again. If we're going to repeat that that's a no-win deal to me. We need better gravel than that."

Chairman Rich Nelson then reminded the board that the county went out to have gravel tested last year.

"What I had put in the document there is the minimum state standards," Pawling said.

"That's minimum. The test results that we got back as I presented to the board at that time, the particle size was actually larger than the minimum standards."

"But you still said 60 percent of it was passing through the small hole," Nunnenkamp said. "More than half of it was not really doing us any good, is my take on it."

(See GRAVEL, A10)

Edgerton, Chamber rolling out Easter Extravaganza

by Richard Rhoden

An Easter favorite among the youngsters is back again this year with a couple new twists and hidden nuggets.

The Edgerton Explorit Center is partnering with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for the Easter Eggstravaganza Sunday from 1-4:30 p.m. at the Explorit Center.

According to Edgerton Executive Director Mary Molliconi, the classic events such as the egg hunt and bounce houses will be a staple, but there are a few surprises to be had from 1-4 p.m.

"We will bring back peep jousting where visitors can decorate a peep with a toothpick and shield," Molliconi explained. "Then we put two peeps in the vacuum chamber at the same time. As you pump air out of the chamber, the air inside the peep (which is basically a marshmallow) expands and the peeps puff up. The fun is to see which peep shield pokes the other one first to win and kids go crazy during the testing. It is also fun to have the participants see what happens when the seal is released and you see the peep shrivel up as the air leaves them."

Other activities include visitors walking on raw eggs to see what happens. There will also be the SPLAT egg drop construction and testing from 2:30-3:30 where eggs will be dropped from a bucket truck in the parking lot to see which ones survive.

For the Easter egg hunt, the scavenger begins at 4 p.m. with ages 0-3 where kids can meet the Easter Bunny in the fenced-in play yard. Following that will be ages 4-6 in front of the Plainsman Museum and kids 7 and up after that.

Justise Rhoden, Aurora

(See EASTER EGGS, A10)

