

The Chetek Alert

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Chetek, Wisconsin | One Dollar & Twenty-Five Cents

FIRSTLOOK

Blessing of the Bicycles at CUMC

Chetek United Methodist Church in Chetek will hold a Blessing of the Bicycles event (and scooters and helmets, too), on Saturday, April 17, at 2 p.m., at the church yard at 300 Stout St.

It is for kids of all ages, teens and adult bicycle enthusiasts. Bikes, scooters and helmets will be blessed by Pastor Chris. There will be a free ice cream treat and bicycle tag. Kids may also make a salvation bracelet.



Make your food shelf donations go the distance

When donating items to local food shelves, in particular the Chetek Food Shelf, here are some suggested items and tips to make sure your donations can be used.

Remember the "food drive five": protein foods (such as nuts, canned seafood and poultry), fruit (packed in juice, dried or sauced), soups (with protein and vegetables), whole-grains (pasta and cereal) and vegetables (colorful and canned).

Choose foods with low-sodium options. More nutritious donations are needed. And choose foods that are not expired or are soon to expire.

The Chetek Food Shelf thanks you for making a healthy difference for those in need.

Chetek Lions Club meeting April 15

The Chetek Lions Club will meet on Thursday, April 15, at 12 p.m. at Red's for lunch and a meeting. For those with any questions, email Ken at lionschetek@yahoo.com.

DEATHS

Ardell Branville, 87

Rosalie Koschke, 76

Community vaccine clinic at UWEC-BC starting April 20

Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has announced that a community-based vaccination clinic in the state will open in Barron County on Tuesday, April 20. The site will be located at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire-Barron County campus in Rice Lake.

"We started opening these clinics with the goal to optimize local vaccination efforts by closing gaps in vaccine access across Wisconsin," said Evers. "From Rock County to Racine, and now in Barron County, these clinics are helping us accomplish that goal by getting more shots in arms and helping our communities bounce back from COVID-19."

Initially, the Barron County clinic plans to administer at least 200 doses per day and has the ability to do up to 500 doses per day, dependent on vaccine supply. The clinic will be open Tuesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Anyone ages 16 and older can schedule an appointment at the Barron County clinic at vaccinate.wi.gov. For vaccine-related questions and appointment registration support, individuals can call toll-free at 1-844-684-1064.

The DHS community-based vaccination clinic in Barron County is operated by AMI Expeditionary Healthcare through collaboration with Barron County Health Department, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Western Wisconsin Public Health Readiness Consortium, area health care partners including Cumberland Healthcare, Marshfield Clinic Health System, Mayo Clinic Health System, and Prevea Health, other local partners and DHS. Various

factors including population demographics, local health capacity, operations and concentration of other vaccine providers are taken into consideration when planning for clinics.

Other DHS community-based vaccination clinics are located in the following counties: Douglas, La Crosse, Marathon, Racine and Rock. As of Monday, April 12, these sites have administered 28,416 total vaccine doses.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE PAUSED

DHS is instructing Wisconsin vaccine providers to stop administering the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine due to a federal review of adverse side effects reported. The Centers for Disease Control and U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a joint statement, saying six cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot, called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, have been reported in the U.S. out of 6.8 million Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses given.

Walmart and Walgreens pharmacies in the region had open appointments for Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week, but those were cancelled in light of the pause on the vaccine.

"We are pausing administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine out of an abundance of caution. At this time, these adverse events appear to be extremely rare," said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. "Vaccine providers should not administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at this time, and should hold on to the vaccine until federal review has been completed."

"There is still a lot to learn about how the vaccine might cause **SEE CLINIC, PAGE A7**



TYLER FLORCZAK | CHETEK ALERT

For goodness' sake! Eastern fox snake sneaks into Alert office

The Chetek Alert staff got an impromptu and unexpected nature lesson on Tuesday, April 13. An eastern fox snake (also known as a pine snake) had found its way into the building and was partially caught in a mouse trap. The snake was quickly moved into a trash can and later released unharmed at the CTH D boat landing. Eastern fox snakes are common across Wisconsin and range from 3 to 5 feet in size. They live in marshes and fields and eat rodents and ground-nesting birds, according to the Wisconsin DNR. Eastern fox snakes live east of the Mississippi River, while the similar western fox snake species lives west of the river. These snakes are often mistaken for a rattlesnake (they do not have rattles) as they shake their tails and hiss when disturbed, but they are not venomous. Fox snakes are often found in homes as they hibernate or hunt for food in old rock foundations.

Weyerhaeuser man found dead in burning car

A Weyerhaeuser man was found dead after his vehicle crashed and burned on CTH SS near Bloomer, according to the Chippewa County Sheriff's Office.

Around 1:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 4, the sheriff's department received a report of a vehicle on fire in the ditch near the intersection of CTH SS and 200 Avenue in the town of Bloomer. Deputies found a Buick LaSabre in the ditch and completely on fire. Firefighters extinguished the fire and a body was found in the driver's seat, severely burnt.

The vehicle's registration was listed to John J. Boncimino, 59, of Weyerhaeuser, who was later identified as the driver.

The initial investigation showed the vehicle was heading east on 200 Av-



CHIPPEWA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

This Buick LaSabre was found on fire after a crash sometime in the early morning hours of April 4. The deceased driver was identified as John J. Boncimino, 59, of Weyerhaeuser.

enue, just west of CTH SS when it entered the south ditch and struck a fence. The vehicle stopped in a swampy area. Witnesses said the engine was running at a very high rate of RPMs for some time before the fire was extinguished. This may have

contributed to the fire starting. Chippewa County Coroner has ordered an autopsy to determine the cause of death. A medical condition prior to the crash is a suspected cause at this time, said Sheriff James Kowalczyk.

Local farmers' efforts help keep land productive, lakes and streams healthy

BY CARL COOLEY

Planting season is just starting, but thanks to the conservation-minded practices of many farmers, fields are already green, rather than brown, muddy and prone to erosion.

Barron County Conservationist Tyler Gruetzmacher said more farmers are learning of and reaping

the benefits of regenerative farming practices like no-till planting and the use of cover crops.

This time of year is when the ground is most susceptible to erosion and runoff, when valuable nutrients wash into streams and rivers and contribute to algae blooms. When spring storms bring rain, it's the action of the raindrop hitting

exposed soil that starts erosion, Gruetzmacher said.

But having fields that use no-till planting and aren't conventionally tilled with plows prevents erosion, along with having plant residue left over from last year's harvest or having cover crops, Gruetzmacher said. Around 25 percent of the county's fields have cover crops, he said, which are planted for the purpose of protecting the ground, rather than harvest.

Last month, at the annual Red Cedar Watershed Conference, in Menomonie, two local farmers, Logan Dwyer, of Havin Hills Rolling Acres farm near Chetek, and Jim Kusilek, of Four Mile Creek Dairy in Hillsdale, gave presentations on the conservation efforts they are using. Both Dwyer and Kusilek have attended the conference and this was their first time presenting for it.

Dwyer and his wife, Amber, have about 400 acres of

wheat, rye, corn, soybeans, sunflowers, hay, pumpkins, squash and cover crops and around 75 head of cattle.

Dwyer said he plants oats, rye, clover and Austrian winter pea on small-grain fields. If planting with corn, he's inter-seeding cover crops of Italian rye grass, African cabbage, purple top turnip, red clover and annual rye grass between the rows. They also use no-till planting, where seeds are drilled into the ground.

Kusilek, and his wife, Audrey, were commercial bankers before they bought Four Mile Creek Dairy in 1998. They now have around 2,700 animals and work around 2,300 acres of owned and rented

land. Around 300 acres are grass and legumes, 800-900 acres are alfalfa and the rest is corn and cover crops for straw.

They plant corn for silage and harvest it early so cover crops can be planted in September and be mature by winter, giving the soil good protection.

It does cost money to plant cover crops, and sometimes leads to a smaller harvest in some years. "But at the end of the day, we get a better stand, which leads to better biomass and better results," Dwyer said.

The reduced erosion and being able to graze cows into the winter are benefits he has seen so far. He has also seen significant yield bumps. "Last year, the corn-beans-wheat rotation was the highest yield. And this will be the third year of that this year," he said.

Kusilek noted that manure management **SEE FARMS, PAGE A7**



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOGAN DWYER

Logan and Amber Dwyer own Havin Hills Rolling Acres Farm, near Chetek. The farm uses cover crops and no-till planting to promote soil health and reduce erosion.



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