

Fremont Area

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2020 IN

Stories that made news in the Fremont Tribune.

Editor's Note: The stories for the 2020 Year in Review are excerpts taken from some of the year's biggest stories that originally ran in the Fremont Tribune on the corresponding date.

January

Jan. 2: Celebrating 2020 with library event

Lots of people turned out on Laura England-Biggs' birthday.

Kids and their parents and grandparents attended. Party hats and treats were part of the festivities.

And then there was the balloon drop.

Actually, the 77 festive folks had assembled for the fourth annual Noon Year's Eve at Keene Memorial Library.

But Dec. 31 is also England-Biggs' birthday.

England-Biggs is the children's librarian and on Tuesday she rang in the New Year amid children, balloons - and lots of noisemak-

Library patrons were advised ahead of time that the noise volume would increase between 11:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., when second floor balcony to celebrants below.

doors to the library's main-floor auditorium opened at 11:30 a.m.

Decked out in a tall hat made of red, yellow and blue balloons, England-Biggs kept track of attendees as they steadily filled the

"We've got a great turnout. It's only five minutes in and we're up to 33 people," England-Biggs said. "We hope they have a good time and eat some cookies and enjoy the balloon drop."

Attendees immediately got busy decorating paper party hats and coloring pages. They drank lemonade and ate blue or white sugar cookies. One mom later lined up her children against a festive New Year's backdrop for a photo.

Jan. 3: Sinai Lutheran Church to dedicate columbarium

It's a new ministry for Sinai Lutheran Church.

Members and clergy of the Fremont congregation have worked for a year, making plans for a columbarium.

A columbarium is a structure with small compartments, called niches, which each have room for a funeral urn containing the ashes of an individual.

The new columbarium, which is inside the church, is north of the altar area and situated behind an arched entryway.



COLLIN SPILINEK, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Dodge County Board of Supervisors Bob Missel speaks at a groundbreaking for one of four new radio towers northeast of North Bend Tuesday morning. The towers will be part of the county's new public radio system.

will dedicate the columbarium more time with her real-life husattendees planned to celebrate the during its worship services at 8 band, Dirk. New Year and watch a cascade of and 10:30 a.m. The public is in-

at 950 E. Eighth St. At this time, the columbarium Participants were ready when has space for 40 urns. When a second phase of the project is finished, it will have the capacity for a total of 96 urns.

A team of people worked on the columbarium project, meeting once or twice monthly.

Jim Melang, chairman; the Rev. Al Duminy; Scott Flanagan; Annette Holtam; Jan Ostransky; Paul VonSeggern and Cheri Anderson.

Jan. 7: Woman retires as library aide

Susan Allen wasn't surprised when Bill Christensen said he was going to be her next husband.

That's because Christensen would portray the city's namesake Iohn C. Fremont.

And once again that year, Allen would take on the role of the legendary pathfinder's wife, Jessie Benton Fremont.

Throughout her career and volunteer efforts, Allen has assumed many roles — teacher, library aide, storyteller and even actress.

Allen plans to continue in her job as a kindergarten teacher in the Bennington Public School system.

But recently, she retired as a part-time library aide at Keene Memorial Library in Fremont.

"Sixty hours a week is beginning to be too much," Allen noted. And Allen has other plans and

On Sunday, the congregation For one, she wants to spend the same frequency.

colorful balloons float from the vited to the services in the church school where she teaches and also at her church, St. Patrick, in Fremont.

Her biggest reason for retiring as a library aide, however, will incorporate being involved at Keene in other ways, which include helping with its expansion.

"I want to be on the library board and do more with the That team included: the Rev. Friends of the Library so I can help more with the expansion project," Allen said. "I can't work here and be on the library board if an opening comes up."

Jan. 8: Groundbreaking held for new radio system tower

Local law enforcement, first responders and county officials gathered at one of the planned sites for Dodge County's new radio system tower Tuesday morn-

A groundbreaking for one of the four planned towers was held near the intersection of Foothill Road and County Road 10, just northeast of North Bend.

The county's new public radio system has been in the planning stages for almost two years, said Shelly Hozerland, communications director for Dodge County. It was approved by the Dodge County Board of Supervisors in July 2018.

The 800-MHz digital trunked radio system will allow the Dodge County Sheriff's Office, local law enforcement agencies and local first responders throughout the county to contact each other on

The new system will also join She wants to do more at the Regional Interoperable Network nation from the U.S. Department (ORION), which includes Douglas, Pottawattamie, Sarpy and Washington counties.

Dodge County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bob Missel called the groundbreaking a "great day"

for the county. "To get to this point where we're at today is very meaningful in this project," he said. "It's been a long road to get to this point, and I know that everybody that's here today has some ownership in this."

Jan. 10: Fremont Habitat for **Humanity receives \$25k grant** for flood relief

The Nebraska Flood Recovery Fund announced it would give six grants to communities and organizations working on flood recovery, including the Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity will receive \$25,000 for its efforts to demolish and rebuild flood-damaged homes in the Fremont area.

Other grants include \$50,000 to the City of St. Edward, \$65,000 to the Heartland Disaster Recovery Group of Grand Island, \$75,000 to the Midwest Housing Development Fund, \$97,000 to the Village of Winslow and \$62,000 to the City of North Bend.

The fund was established by the Nebraska Community Foundation and Ethel S. Abbott Charitable Foundation last April to assist Nebraskans impacted by the March flooding.

Jan. 11: Platte Valley Equipment breaks ground on new

Fremont store

Platte Valley Equipment recently broke ground on a new store in Fremont. The business will move from its current location at 2263 Business Park Drive, Fremont, to just north of town.

The Fremont location is the flagship of the four-store company. The new facilities will allow the local business to operate more efficiently and play a larger role in supporting its customers and area communities. Key features of the new facilities include: 30,000 square-foot service shop; 55,000 square-foot total; 1,275 square foot of training facilities; current facilities total 34,000 square feet with 18,000 square feet of service shop space.

Owned by Brandt Holdings Company, Platte Valley Equipment LLC is a John Deere dealership serving eastern and north-central Nebraska. Founded in 1996, Platte Valley Equipment has locations in Clarkson, Fremont, Humphrey and Wahoo.

Jan. 18: Fremont Housing Agency earns top designation for first time in a decade

The Fremont Housing Agency Dodge County with the Omaha received a high performer desigof Housing and Urban Development, the highest recognition awarded by the agency.

It's the first time FHA has been awarded the designation in at least a decade, according to executive director Rita Grigg.

All public housing agencies that operate public housing programs are required to undergo a review of essential housing operations. The scoring system for this review is based on four factors: physical inspection, management, finances and capital funds. The four components all factor together in a final determination based on a point system. Those who receive a score of 90 or higher receive the high performer designation.

"For a smaller agency to get the high performer is something special," Grigg said. "We're excited because we've been working towards it and haven't received the award for several years?

For years, Grigg said the biggest factor preventing FHA's designation as a high performer was issues with occupancy. The agency's two public housing locations, Stanton Tower and Gifford Tower, had 30-plus vacancies when Grigg became the executive director in 2017.

Since then, she said occupancy has been trending up. Now, FHA holds an occupancy rate hovering around 95%, a factor Grigg said played an important role in the

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From I1

agency's high performer designa-

Jan. 18: Retired firefighter looks back after 20 years of service

Firefighter Dana Leland wondered what the patient was think-

As part of the Fremont Fire Department, he and other rescue squad members were at a woman's house when she went into cardiac

They performed CPR. Defibrillator pads were placed on the woman, who became conscious after she was shocked.

On the way to the hospital, Leland told the woman what had happened. A concerned look crossed her face and Leland wondered if she'd had a near-death experience.

"It looks like you're thinking about something," Leland said.

And she was. "I think I left the stove on at

home," she said. Leland smiles about the unex-

pected answer. Now retired after more than 20 years of service, Leland has a ka-

leidoscope of memories from his years as a paid firefighter - one who started that career before he was 37 years old. Leland was born in Fremont,

where he grew up. He graduated from Fremont High School in 1980 and worked in the construction field for about 17 or 18 years. He had a friend, a paid firefighter,

at the department. He enjoyed listening to the other man's experi-In 1998, Leland earned basic cer-

tification as an Emergency Medical Technician. He applied and was hired in March 1999. The Fremont Fire Department

has three shifts -A, B and C - of paid firefighters.

"I spent my whole career on B shift," Leland said.

Leland would become a paramedic and then was promoted to lieutenant in 2006.

"I enjoyed being part of a team that was able to help people in medical emergencies and helping to protect their property and belongings in fire situations," he said. He'd see an increase in the num-

ber of calls. "When I started in '99, I think we

were running maybe around 1,500 calls a year and then the last year when I retired - I think they had over 3,000. I think last year, they had 3,015."

He retired in May 2019 – but not before historic flooding that

A couple of days into the flood, Leland and other first-responders were using a large, military truck to shuttle people from the north side of the Broad Street viaduct to the Wooden Windmill restaurant's parking lot.

At the viaduct, Leland and firefighters were talking to an elderly man who said his animals - dogs, cats and rats — were in cages above the water. But he wanted the men to take him to his house so he could get the animals some food and water.

"We were just pulling up to his house when a call came in for a trailer on fire at Regency (mobile home park). We told him that he was going to have to hold tight for a little bit," Leland said.

The man would wait awhile during a time when firefighters were flooded with calls for assistance.

"He ended up going to the fire station with us about four hours later. He stayed in the back of the truck that whole time," Leland said. The man would get someone else

to take him to his house. "He was really good about it,"

Leland said.

Leland has non-flood-related memories, too.



TAMMY REAL-MCKEIGHAN, FREMONT TRIBLINE

Children and adults watch the cascade of colorful balloons fall from the second floor of Keene Memorial Library in Fremont during its Noon Year's Eve event.

called to help a man whose internal defibrillator kept activating and shocking him.

"He'd yell and jump when it would go off," Leland said. "We decided we were going to start an IV to give him some medicine to help try to calm down his heart, which was actually doing its job."

Leland was about to insert a needle for an IV when the man's internal defibrillator went off.

This time, the patient wasn't the only one who jumped.

"I think I jumped twice as high as he did," Leland said. "I didn't know. I didn't think you get shocked, but I guess you're always a little hesi-

Rescue squad personnel were able to get an IV into the man and transport him to the hospital.

Leland said rescue squad personnel have performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on several people, who survived, left the hospital and then visited the fire station to thank them.

"That's always a good feeling," Leland said.

What advice would he give for someone considering being a firefighter or paramedic?

"It's a good job," he said. "You need to have a good sense of humor and your training is important, because sometimes that's all you have to rely on in situations you haven't

Jan. 18: Ricketts honors Fremont Rural Fire Department for flood efforts

Gov. Pete Ricketts visited Fremont Friday afternoon to honor the Fremont Rural Fire Department for their efforts during the spring flooding.

The town hall also scheduled for Friday afternoon was postponed after Midland University closed for the day due to weather concerns.

Ricketts said the state wanted to recognize heroes during the flood with the award. Although other fire departments were invited to the State Capitol last month for honors, Fremont was not able to make it.

Jan. 24: Fremont High students win awards for infographics

Two students in Fremont High School's graphic design program have placed in a statewide competition for their infographics.

Madalyn Stemley, a junior, placed first, while Chloe Jaspersen, a senior, placed third in the Nebraska Educational Technology Association's contest in the category of infographics.

will attend the 2020 NETA Spring geant earlier this month. One time, the rescue squad was Conference this March at the CHI

PLATTEVALLEYBANK

Health Center Arena in Omaha to receive recognition for their awards.

NETA, created in 1993, is a statewide organization that provides opportunities for highlighting technology in education.

Both Fremont High students were in Kristen Strickler's Graphic Design II class in fall 2019. The class also saw three students take the top three spots for last year's competition.

An infographic displays data in a graphic form with images, charts and sources.

Jan. 24: LifeHouse receives

Care Corps' LifeHouse has received a \$10,000 grant from the American Family Insurance Dreams

The grant will allow the local agency help those facing homelessness who come to its emergency

"Grants like these make it possible for program participants to begin to find success," LifeHouse CEO Tera Kucera said in a prepared statement. "When someone is homeless, their journey starts with having their basic needs met. Everyone deserves a safe place to stay."

By providing the most basic needs — food, shelter and clothing — the local nonprofit can work to alleviate an initial crisis and help provide the groundwork for a successful relationship between

Jan. 24: New campus pastor leading Westside flock

He worked in a boys' home in

Honduras. And helped with disaster relief in

the Philippines. And he drove a forklift in Kearney. Landscaper, bank teller and de-

liverer of medical equipment. When it comes to life experiences, Pastor Seth Rehmert has had quite a few during his 32 years

of life. "I've tried a lot of different professions on the road to ministry,"

said Rehmert, who's embarked on the latest leg of his journey. In October, Rehmert became campus pastor of Westside Fremont

Church. Now, the young husband and father looks to the future with anticipation as his guides his small flock forward.

The church at 605 N. Broad St., is the Fremont campus of the Omaha-based Westside Church.

Jan. 28: Fremont police officer promoted to sergeant

An officer of the Fremont Police Both Stemley and Jaspersen Department was promoted to ser-

Dominic Savio was recognized at



Fremont High School freshmen Josie Bell, left, and Brittany Tule-Mejia decorate strawberries for a fundraiser for the school's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America chapter in February.

on Jan. 14, where his promotion was approved.

"He's just a hardworking guy," Police Chief Jeff Elliott said. "He's willing to put forth the extra effort, and he's willing to be proactive."

Savio started with FPD in 2014 as a patrol officer. After working as a K-9 handler, he joined the III Corps Drug Task Force.

February

Feb. 4: Fremont High students receive Scholastic Art **Awards**

Since 1923, the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards have recognized students gifted in the arts, including Stephen King, Andy Warhol, Joyce Carol Oats and Robert Redford.

Now, nine students from Fremont High School have joined the ranks of these artists with recognition from the Scholastic Art Awards of Nebraska.

The Scholastic Awards in each state give Gold Key, Silver Key and Honorable Mention awards every year to students in grades seven through 12 throughout 29 categories. Almost 340,000 entries were submitted across the country last

Out of 22 submissions from Fremont High students, nine entries were given either Silver Keys or Honorable Mentions, with one student being awarded a Gold Key. Students who win Gold Keys are then judged on a national level.

FHS teacher Kristen Strickler said the Scholastic Awards is quite possibly the most prestigious competition that the school enters. Last year, FHS only had two students winning Silver Keys, the same as

"We didn't enter as many students last year either, but to have 10 students place in a competition like this is very impressive," Strickprogram participants and a case ler said. "It just shows we have a lot of talent in our school, so I was very, very happy."

Koarah Bearden received a Gold Key in the Sculpture category, as well as an Honorable Mention. Chloe Jaspersen and Diego Luna received Silver Keys, while Honorable Mentions were given to Michel Carranza Bernal, Hayleigh Johnson, Lexi Montova, John Russell, Jennifer Sandoval-Monroy and Antonio

The students took about two weeks making the art projects. All of the students were Strickler's except Bearden, who is in Jennifer Gay's advanced pottery class.

Zarate.

Feb. 11: Local businesses honored at Chamber banquet

The Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce honored three local businesses at its 140th annual banquet last Friday night.

Juice Stop won the award for Small Business of the Year, Sawyer Construction won Large Business of the year and Lincoln Premium Poultry won Workforce Game Changer. Each category had three businesses as finalists.

Tara Lea said the banquet was an amazing event, bringing over 285

the Fremont City Council meeting business leaders in the community together.

Feb. 13: Fremont High School reboots FCCLA chapter after 20

When Tiffany Lopez joined the staff at Fremont High School, she had one goal: to get a chapter started for the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

It had been 20 years since FHS had one, and Lopez felt it was the right time.

"I was in FCCLA when I was in high school, and it's really instrumental to me to get that going," she said. "And so here we are. We are getting started, and we're doing great."

Lopez was successful in rebooting the FCCLA chapter, which now has 25 high school students in its membership.

As part of its fundraising process, FCCLA is first making chocolate-covered strawberries for Valentine's Day this week for students to purchase.

FCCLA is a state and national organization that focuses on leadership and opportunities in careers to support families. The organization, founded in 1945, has over 175,000 members in 5,300 chapters across the country.

FCCLA also allows for students to take part in Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) events, which let members compete with presentations at statewide and national levels.

Feb. 15: Many attend grand opening for brownstones at **Gallery 23 East**

The brownstones at Gallery 23 East are now open, adding a new for-sale option to this growing area in Fremont.

Many people attended grand opening on Thursday.

The Gallery 23 brownstones are a series of attached townhomes featuring two-car garages, open-concept floor plans, three bedrooms and square footages ranging from approximately 1,500 to 1,700.

The Gallery 23 brownstones have two product types with varying floor plans.

Depending on the floor plan and finishes, prices will range from approximately \$179,000 to \$220,000.

March Mar.

8: Woman **COVID-19 visited YMCA in** Fremont for Special Olympics event; players, coaches and team staff are asked to self-quarantine

36-year-old The Omaha woman who has tested positive for COVID-19 visited Fremont on Feb. 29 according to a release from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

State and local officials are requesting basketball players, coaches and team staff who participated in the Special Olympics event at the Fremont Family YMCA on February 29, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to self-quarantine to limit exposure Chamber Executive Director to others and monitor themselves

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From I2

for development of COVID-19 symptoms as listed below until Saturday, March 14, 2020.

"We're asking for basketball players, coaches, and team staff who participated this event on February 29, 2020 to either self-report to the Nebraska public health online system at http://dhhs.ne.gov/ Pages/Coronavirus.aspx or contact their local health department for guidance and next steps. Informing the local health department is the most direct way to ensure timely medical care if needed and to minimize the potential risk to others," said Dr. Gary Anthone, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS.

Spectators of the Special Olympics events and other people who were in the YMCA facility that same day are at much lower risk than the direct participants. Non-participating individuals can self-monitor and contact a local health department or their health care provider if they develop symptoms.

blockquote class="twitter-tweet"><p lang="en" l:lang="en" dir="ltr">

</blockquote>The woman is believed to have contracted the virus while traveling with her father in the United Kingdom from Feb. 18-27, according to Dr. Robert Penn, an epidemiologist at Methodist

Mar. 14: Facilities receive recognition for quality care

Nye Legacy and Nye Pointe Health and Rehab in Fremont were recognized by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/ NCAL) for its achievements in the quality of care they provide.

As Bronze Award Quality campuses, Nye Legacy and Nye Pointe accomplished three of four national goals in areas including: hospitalizations, customer satisfaction, reduction of antipsychotic medications and functional outcomes.

AHCA/NCAL recognized long term care providers for their achievements through its Quality Initiative Recognition Program, which honors member facilities for their individual work in achieving AHCA/NCAL Quality Initiative goals.

Nye Legacy and Nye Pointe Health and Rehab along with other achievers from across the country, were honored at AHCA/ NCAL's upcoming Quality Summit in Grapevine, Texas, on March 10.

Russ Peterson and his wife Jennifer founded Nye Health Services in favorite music to saint names. 1989 on the philosophy that older adults deserve services that recognize the individual and are tailored to their unique needs.

Mar. 25: Fremonters making surgical masks to help coronavirus effort

When she was a young girl, Edie Ronhovde said her grandmother would tell stories about her visits to the local American Red Cross during wartime.

"She just said there wasn't a whole lot you can do, and so that was what she did," she said. "She went down to the Red Cross and she would roll bandages and help out however she could."

Ronhovde and others in the Fremont community are keeping that same spirit alive as they make surgical masks for nursing home Nye Legacy and others in the community in need with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coronavirus has caused a global shortage of surgical masks, which are going up to four times their price. The masks help prevent the spread of the virus to healthy people.

Nye Health Services CEO Russ Peterson said although the center carries plenty of personal protective equipment — masks, gowns and gloves — the coronavirus pandemic has overwhelmed the healthcare system.

"We're still kind of chasing down masks and other personal protective equipment that we can," he said. "But what's cool is to see people reaching out, saying, 'How can Fremont Egg Hunt



John and Libby Headid were crowned Mr. and Mrs. Habitat in June by the Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity. The nonprofit's fundraiser was held online after its banquet was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I help?'"

Ronhovde retired from teaching math at Fremont Middle School last May. She raised three children in Fremont with her husband, Mike, who also teaches math at Fremont High School and Metropolitan Community College.

April

April 2: St. Patrick's Parish starts pen-pal program for elderly population during **COVID-19 crisis**

St. Patrick's Catholic Parish is introducing a pen-pal program for the homebound and shut-in elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The idea came from Director of Youth Formation Lori Kisby and Associate Pastor Nicholas Mishek. The parish previously signed Christmas cards that were distributed to its elderly population to let them know the church was thinking

'They just loved it, we got a lot of good feedback," Kisby said. "With all this going on, we were thinking this would be a good way for them to receive letters from kids."

Kisby said there are 31 people in the parish that are considered homebound or shut-in. Since the program's launch on March 30, around 20 pen-pals have been as-

"I was pleasantly surprised," she said. "You're always a little nervous but God takes care of everything. When we sent it out my phone kept beeping, so the response has been good."

Once a family expresses interest, Kisby assigns each child to a penpal. From there, she encourages kids to talk about everything from their at 4 and go train if there's nothing

as what school was like when they were growing up and any unique challenges they faced.

In addition to the letter, Kisby also recommended sending a picture to their pen-pal so the elderly have a better idea of who is writing to them.

April 8: Harbor Freight Tools donates \$8,500 of equipment to **Methodist Fremont Health**

Methodist Fremont Health received \$8,500 worth of personal protective equipment from Harbor Freight Tools to combat COVID-19

Harbor Freight, which has 1,000 locations around the country, is donating its entire stock of PPE to rural hospitals, who could submit a request for the supplies, Fremont Health Foundation Director Shawn Shanahan said.

"In that gift and that donation came 6,500 gloves, 1,095 masks and 300 face shields," she said. "So it was an opportunity for us to continue to be prepared and have needed supplies in the event that we would have the need to have the protective equipment."

Eric Smidt, founder and owner of Harbor Freight, said in an announcement last month that the company would ship more than 44 million pairs of gloves and hundreds of thousands of masks and face shields to 1,000 communities.

April 9: Colorful eggs can be found all over town for popular



COURTESY

Edie Ronhovde, a former math teacher at Fremont Middle School, sews surgical masks for nursing home Nye Legacy at her house in March.

Easter egg hunts are a popular building a family in their class-

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Thousands of brightly colored Easter eggs are scattered across lawns and fields while kids quickly race to find as many eggs as they can. Those coveted eggs usually contain candy or other treats, and often some can be redeemed for

Those kind of large-scale, public Easter egg hunts aren't possible this year, though, with the spread of COVID-19.

With restrictions on large gatherings and social distancing measures in place, a little creativity was needed for kids to still be able to celebrate the Easter holiday.

In Fremont, that meant the development of a social distancing egg hunt. The Facebook group, Fremont Egg Hunt, was created on March 28 by Fremont resident Jennifer Smith.

"I saw a friend in Lincoln post about one they are doing there and I thought it would be fun to get one going in Fremont," Smith said. "There was also some other activities going on prior to this like a bear hunt and people drawing on sidewalks with chalk for everyone to enjoy."

April 15: Nickerson man to run from Fremont to Lincoln and back for YMCA event

Even though running 20 to 30 miles a day may be a feat in itself for some, for Adam Monke, it's

The 33-year-old Nickerson man was looking forward to competing in both the Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile and the Alex Lamme St. Patrick's Day Dash last month but had to put his plans on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, Monke said he started to lose motivation.

"It's hard to get up every morning to train for," he said. "So I got to She also recommends asking thinking, I've always wanted to put distancing protocols. uestions to their pen-pal, such a philanthropic motivator and ac-I've never been able to figure out how to do it."

But now, Monke will use his training to run over 100 miles from the Fremont Family YMCA to the Downtown YMCA in Lincoln next week to raise money for its pro-

Monke will depart around 4 a.m. next Friday, April 24, and make the 104-mile run for the Adam Monke and Fremont YMCA WH(Y) Run. His run will go through cities like Mead, Ithaca, Waverly on his way to Lincoln and Wahoo on his way home.

"I figured if I could ask for money to donate to the Y for the people that are impacted most by the coronavirus and the daycare and everything that goes along with it, I'd be glad to suffer for 100 miles to ask for money," Monke said.

Fremont YMCA President and CEO Jerry Rinne said the donations will go toward its programs during the pandemic, including virtual weight training classes and emergency childcare and schoolage care for first responders, medical personnel and families who are working.

April 18: Hoping for closure, **Archbishop Bergan to re-unite** students, teachers during parade

Over the course of the 2019-20 school year, Archbishop Bergan Elementary School teachers Jennifer Powers and Kris Janke have been

Their first and second grade students have gone from new to familiar faces over the course of the year. Through the first three quarters of the year, each class's relationship has deepened.

"The fourth quarter is kind of like what we would call the sweet spot," Powers said. "Your own classroom has this special family bond that starts happening."

The school's final quarter was meant to be celebratory, but an indefinite closure for the remainder of the year ripped teachers and students away from each other.

"You really start to laugh with each other because you've gotten to know each other so well and that's been ripped away from us," Powers

Now, the majority of learning is done through a computer screen. The face-to-face contact that had become familiar to both Powers and Janke's classroom is gone.

"It tears at the heartstrings because you want to finish out the quarter with them," Janke said. "We're not going to get that last day."

Both Powers and Janke aren't content with closing out the school year without getting at least one final chance to celebrate with their students.

So, the pair began working on a way for families and students to see their teachers in-person during the pandemic. Rather than attempting to visit each family, they decided to bring families to them, thus spawning the idea of a Teacher's Parade.

It will be held this Sunday from 4-6 p.m. at Bergan's Elementary School, 1515 Johnson Road. The parade will allow families to drive through the school's parking lot and wave hello to their favorite teachers, all while maintaining safe social

Powers said teachers will stand wear masks if necessary.

May

May 12: Fremont High School alumna named forensics All-American

Fremont High School alumna Elizabeth Hansen was named an All-American for the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament last Friday.

Hansen, now a senior at Hastings College, has competed in speech and forensics ever since her freshman year of high school. She, along with fellow Hastings College teammate Alli Kennon, is one of only 15 students nationwide who received the award.

Hansen said her interest in speech began when she was a freshman on FHS's debate team.

"At that time there were 45 of us on the debate team and only like a few people on the speech team," she said. "They performed in front of us and I just thought it was something I'd like to do."

Competition on the collegiate level is nearly a yearlong commitment, she said. Hansen said preparation typically begins for upperclassmen sometime in June or July. By the time classes begin in August, performances are being finalized for competition.

May 15: Angie Olson promoted to executive director of Fremont Area Art Association

Although she grew up in Fremont, Angie Olson said the first time she had ever heard of the Fremont Area Art Association was when she was looking for a place to enroll her youngest daughter in art

"When I called to see if they had any, Barb Tellatin actually called me back and said no, but asked if I would like to teach some," she said. "And I'm not an art teacher or an artist, but I did see a need there."

Now, Olson has been named executive director of the Fremont Area Art Association Interim after serving as interim executive director since January.

The FAAA Board of Directors had a virtual meeting on April 28 to approve Olson's promotion to executive director of the nonprofit.

May 23: Dick's Zesto in Fremont sold to new owners after 58 years in family

After over two decades of running Dick's Zesto together, Dick and Donna Brandenburgh have transfered ownership of the ice cream shop to Chad and Mimi Henggeler.

Donna Brandenburgh said the decision came after the two decided that the work was becoming too much for them to handle, as she fought cancer four years ago as well.

"Last year, I broke my leg at work, and I said, 'That's it. I just need to get out of here," she said. "And so we decided that this season, we would put it up for sale, and so we did."

On Thursday, the Henggelers took over ownership, with the Brandenburghs staying on another month to train them for running the shop, located at 225 W. Military Ave. in Fremont.

Mimi and Chad Henggeler, who has also been the owner of the Godfather's Pizza location in Fremont for 20 years, will run Zesto along with his uncle and aunt in Texas, Pat and Michelle.

June 17: Habitat for Humanity crowns Mr. and Mrs. Habitat for online fundraiser

Despite its sponsors and contestants staying home, the Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity crowned its first Mr. and Mrs. Habitat Saturday.

"We had postponed it to July, and then as time moved along, we realized we probably would not be able to do an in-person event with hundreds of people, even in July," Executive Director Joy McKay said. "And we didn't want to go much later in the year with the event, so that's when we decided to make it a virtual event, which is what we ended up doing."

John and Libby Headid were crowned at the nonprofit's online company it with my running, but far apart from each other and will Mr. and Mrs. Habitat Pageant. Other contestants included Scott and Christina Meyer, Garry and Tina Clark and Ben and Amanda Hutton.

"We are very excited that we were able to help out the Habitat for Humanity," Libby Headid said. "It was a lot of fun and kind of cool to see how many friends and family and people in the community voted and gave to the event."

Contestants were voted for through auctions and donations, raising more than \$20,000 for the nonprofit, which provides affordable housing for the Fremont area.

During the course of the fundraiser, participants were able to donate money and bid for auction items, choosing which couple would get their money. The Headids won with more than \$6,000 raised for the nonprofit.

The auctions were held online through Qtego, which allowed for people to receive text notifications if they were outbid.

June 19: Bergan junior competes in national speech tournament

Although many students get into speech in high school, Grant Gibson said it was in the sixth grade.

While the Archbishop Bergan Catholic School student was sitting in English class, he said he was handed a pamphlet for the newly created speech team.

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From I3

"I just kind of gravitated toward it naturally, because I was never that much of a sports-y person, so it kind of just appealed to me," Gibson said. "And I just got with it and I've stuck with it for the last five years now."

Having recently finished his sophomore year, Gibson made history this week as the first Bergan high school student and first Fremont student in more than 20 years to compete at the National Speech and Debate Association's (NSDA) national tournament.

"He's been there from the beginning of the program and grown with us over the years," head speech coach Chris Kabes said. "And so to get him to a point where he's qualified for nationals as a sophomore was incredible and a learning experience all around, too."

On Wednesday and Thursday, Gibson competed in preliminaries with his humorous interpretation piece, "Messiah on the Frigidaire," written by John Culbertson.

The tournament, which is being held online from June 15 to 20, announced its top 60 Thursday afternoon. Gibson did not advance to the next round.

To qualify for the NSDA's national tournament, Gibson said he had to win first or second at the Nebraska South District's qualifier at Lincoln East High School in February. The only student from Bergan to attend, he won second.

June 25: MainStreet of Fremont earns accreditation

MainStreet of Fremont has been designated as a 2020 Accredited Main Street America program.

Accredited status is Main Street America's top tier of recognition and signifies a demonstrated commitment to comprehensive commercial district revitalization and proven track record of successfully applying the Main Street Approach.

In 2019 alone, \$6.45 billion of public and private reinvestment was generated, 6,466 net new businesses were opened, 32,316 net new were jobs created, and 10,412 buildings were rehabilitated in Main Street America communities.

MainStreet of Fremont's performance is evaluated by Main Street America to identify the local programs that meet 10 rigorous performance standards. Evaluation criteria determines the communities that are building comprehensive and sustainable revitalization efforts and include standards such as fostering strong public-private partnerships, documenting propreserving historic buildings.

MainStreet of Fremont's mission is to improve the quality of life in Fremont by strengthening the historic downtown as the center of the community. In 2019 alone, \$20,600 local public improvement dollars were reinvested into downtown beautification and \$59,400 was reinvested by privately owned building rehabilitation projects capitalizing on the idea that the downtown is the center of community life, and more than just a place of commerce.

The accomplishments made in 2019 would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers and local partnerships. Volunteers of MainStreet of Fremont contributed to 630 hours throughout the year on downtown beautification, community events, and downtown clean up with Keep Fremont Beautiful.

July 1: Fas-Break Auto Glass Service transfers ownership of Fremont location

While many hitchhikers in the 1970s might have seen California as their destination, Shannon Smith had another state in sight.

Forty years ago, he hitchhiked from California at age 18, with Nebraska as his destination.

In 1984, Smith founded Fas-Break Auto Glass Service in Kimball, which moved to Scottsbluff and then Fremont, where he has lived since 1994.



COLLIN SPILINEK. FREMONT TRIBUNE

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

DPA Auctions COO Brandon Peterson poses by a construction sign for the business's new building at 900 Bud Blvd. in Fremont. Peterson has been with the company since 2017, revamping the sales and marketing teams.



TAMMY REAL-MCKEIGHAN, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Bev Boro, left, 53, of Craig and Doris Crippen, 73, of Omaha are sisters separated when Boro was a baby. They were reunited at Dunklau Gardens in July where Crippen went for rehabilitation after falling in her apartment and breaking her arm due to coronavirus-related weakness. Boro is a medicine aide at Dunklau.

step down from the business.

"I've always wanted to go out back west, but it's kind of tough, Nebraska being home of the good life," Smith said. "I truly believe that I love the people, I love the character, the Huskers. There's just so many things I loved about it."

On July 22, Smith formally sold Fas-Break to Ryan and Stephanie Harder, operators of its Columbus location. The company at 405 N. Broad St., specializes in windshield repair and also has services in Omaha and Blair.

Now living in Round Mountain, Nevada, Smith plans on semi-retiring with his wife, who is retired.

July 2: GFDC announces new grants for small businesses affected by COVID-19

A new program from the Greater Fremont Development Council will allow businesses that were not eligible for federal and state programs to receive funding for expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Dodge County Small Business Relief Program, announced us," Peterson said. "Our whole team grammatic progress, and actively Tuesday, is an addition to the Wel- was out there, and the smiles were stead Fund, a micro-loan program that started last fall. The GFDC ture's going to look like and a little will award seven grants of \$1,000 to businesses in Dodge County.

The Welstead Fund is named after the late Marvin Welstead, who was a co-founder of the GFDC. The fund, which has raised \$74,000. provides loans for exterior and interior improvements to new or growing small businesses with 20 or fewer employees.

Last March, the GFDC conducted a survey with the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce and found that 96% of the responses were in favor of the relief program.

July 15: Fremont High student selected for All-National Honor **Concert Band**

When Yukina Higashi found out she had been selected for the All-National Honor Concert Band, she said it almost didn't feel real at

"Last year, I didn't get the chance to perform," the Fremont High School junior said. "But I was just really glad that all the hard work and the time I spent on my clarinet was worth it and all good."

Higashi will take part in the National Association of Music Education's All-National Honor Ensembles in Orlando, Florida, this November. She will perform with just over 100 students from around the country for the concert band.

Last year, 10 students from Nebraska were selected, with just two performing in the concert Now, he said it's time for him to band: Taylor Velgersdyk of Lincoln ters together

Southeast High School on clarinet and Caitlyn Haggstrom of Blair High School on french horn.

July 18: DPA Auctions celebrates groundbreaking for new building

The staff at DPA Auctions have outgrown their current building, COO Brandon Peterson said.

And with its plans to expand its staff, Peterson said its new building will be perfect for its needs.

"We've got almost 40 people on staff right now," Peterson said, "and we're looking to put about 100 people into that building."

DPA Auctions held a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday with the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce for the new building at 900 Bud Blvd. in southeast Fremont.

The event was attended by members of the community including Mayor Scott Getzschman, who also spoke at the ceremony.

"We were really excited to see all the people come out and support ear to ear, just to see what the fuglimpse into that."

The new two-story building, which is set to finish in the fall of 2021, will feature a more open work setting, meeting rooms and a digital studio with cycloramas, green screens and a podcast studio that can be rented by the public.

July 22: Fremont Police Department welcomes two new officers, two to begin training

After six months of training, two Fremont Police Department officers joined the department's patrol division earlier this month.

Officers Garret Jensen and Jaydn Foster, who joined the department in late October, started their positions as officers on July 6.

Additionally, Hunter McKenzie and Ryan Christensen were sworn in at the Fremont Municipal Building on Monday. The two will start their training on Aug. 40.

"They'll go through the normal orientation process of paperwork through the city, getting the equipment ordered, getting the stuff we have on hand issued to them and then training lined up at the Grand Island Police Training Center," Lt. Kurt Bottorff said. "So there's a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff to be done when they first start."

Jensen's appointment was approved by the Fremont City Council on Oct. 8, while Foster's was approved on Nov. 12.

July 23: COVID-19 brings sis-

Doris Crippen wasn't happy about contracting COVID-19, but can see how something wonderful came from it:

She found sisters and brothers she's been separated from for years.

It happened after Bev Boro, a medication aide at Dunklau Gardens in Fremont, was going through a list of resident care plans. That's when she spotted Crippen's name.

"That's my sister," Boro told a

The sisters had been apart for more than five decades.

Boro, now of Craig, was a baby when her parents had been deemed unfit by the state to care for their children. She'd later done some research trying to find her siblings and knew Crippen's name.

At first, Boro didn't know if she should say anything to Crippen.

Boro's heart raced. 'Well, this is my chance," she

Because Crippen, 73, is hearing-impaired, Boro used a white, dry erase board to write the name of their father.

"That's my daddy;" Crippen said. "I pointed at myself and said, That's mine, too," Boro said. Boro cradled her arms as if she

were rocking a baby. "The last time everybody had seen me I was 6 months old," Boro

Crippen saw the resemblance between Boro and their father.

"She looks a lot like my real dad," Crippen said. "I got the big eyes, but I don't have the brown eyes like him. She lucked out and got the brown eyes."

Crippen burst into tears when Boro said they were sisters.

"I nearly fell out of my chair," Crippen said. "It was just a happy feeling to find my sister. It's been 53 years since I've seen her when she was a baby and I held her and it was the Lord's blessing. It was God's blessing that I got sent here or I would have never found her."

Crippen, who's from Omaha, shed tears again on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 as she and Boro shared their story with the media at Dunklau Gardens in Fremont.

"We both were overwhelmed, because our search is over," Crippen said. "We don't have to look anymore." Boro would connect Crippen

with siblings in other states and lots of nieces and nephews. Boro said there are 10 siblings from her father.

"She's the oldest," Boro said of Crippen. "And I'm the youngest."

Crippen communicated with some of her siblings via Facebook and Boro is hoping for a family re-

Boro, 53, said the sibling separaon occurred after their father and children for a week with an 11-yearold to take care of them.

"My understanding is a neighbor called Social Services and we were all taken away," Boro said.

Crippen went to live with her biological mother, while Boro was put up for adoption.

"Then the rest of my life, growing up, I never thought I'd ever find her again," Crippen said. "She grew up and I grew up and you move on and you lose track of their names."

Crippen said she and her husband later tried to find her siblings without success.

"You feel like a failure, sometimes, when you're trying to find them, and you can't and you really

want to," Crippen said. Last spring, Crippen was self-quarantined, trying not to contract the coronavirus. She stayed in her Omaha apartment, but one day went outside on a small porch.

Three people passed by. She hurriedly went back inside, but figures she must have been out just long enough to be exposed.

A few days later, Crippen began to feel ill and weak. She thought she had the flu, not COVID-19. She had

One day, Crippen was trying to reach for her water bottle when she rolled off her bed onto the floor and broke her arm.

"I laid on the floor overnight and for half a day," she said. "My cell phone was on the bed by my stand.

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I couldn't call anybody for help."

Because Crippen communicates daily with her children, they realized something was wrong when she didn't answer their calls.

Her son, Chad, went to her apart-

"He found me lying by my bed on the floor and my family thought was gone, because I was not moving," Crippen said. "Had he not

found me I really felt I'd been gone." Her son tapped her on the shoulder. She told him to call the rescue sauad.

Crippen said she was hospitalized from May 2-28.

After she was in the hospital, Crippen went to rehabilitation and back in the hospital. The place where she'd previously gone for rehabilitation filled up so her doctor found her a place at Dunklau Gar-

Crippen commends the director and staff at Dunklau Gardens.

"I've been getting wonderful care to get myself well so I can return home," she said. "I'm improving each day."

And her baby sister is right there with her.

July 31: RTG Medical helps Nebraska Humane Society purchase almost 4,000 pounds of

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Kathy Roum said the Nebraska Humane Society has been serving 11% more clients than normal with its Pet Food Pantry.

"Our biggest goal is to keep families together, and that means people and pets," said Roum, vice president of development for NHS. "So if somebody has lost their job due to COVID, they're no longer getting a paycheck, we want to make sure that they have the food and supplies they need to be able to keep their pets at home with them."

RTG Medical of Fremont, who has been a partner of NHS since 2016, made the shelter's job a little easier with a donation through its community partnership program, also established in 2016.

"Just last year in 2019, RTG donated more than \$80,000 to our community partners," RTG Marketing Coordinator Lianna Austin said. "So we're always striving to make our community stronger and better in any way that we can."

With its June donations, NHS was able to provide 3,579 pounds of dry dog food and 586 pounds of dry cat food to give to the public through its pantry, which provides mainly food and kitty litter.

August

Aug. 1: Fremont author wins international awards

A Fremont-area woman, who is a Crippen's stepmother had left six has won two 2020 International Book Awards.

Tosca Lee won the awards — one each for her 2019 pandemic thriller, "The Line Between" and its sequel, "A Single Light."

Part of the first book and most of the second are set in Nebraska.

"The Line Between" won in the Mystery/Suspense category and "A Single Light" in the Science Fiction category. "I'm so very honored - and sur-

prised," Lee said. "It's been such an odd year in so many ways, not all of them welcome. But this was one of the nicer surprises." The author noted something else:

"I admit it feels a little weird celebrating awards for a pandemic story in the middle of a pandemic, but I am very grateful," she said.

Lee's double win is the latest highlight in a series of award nominations for the duology, which already have won Literary Titan silver for "The Line Between" and gold for "A Single Light." In addition, the series has been

named as a finalist for many other awards including: *The High Plains Book Awards;

*The Library of Virginia's People's Choice Awards; *Oklahoma Romance Writer's

("The Line Between"); *Killer Nashville's Silver Falchion and Realm Makers Awards (both

National Readers' Choice Awards

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From I4

books).

Aug. 7: Fremont Children's Academy celebrates 15 year anniversary

When April Ross was looking to find an adequate daycare in Fremont for her two children more than 15 years ago, she said she struggled to find the right fit for them.

But after finding a for-rent sign outside of a building in northwest Fremont, the 22-year-old decided out of the blue that she would tour the building and create something herself.

"I had absolutely no idea about anything about daycare, and I had really only set foot in a daycare center maybe once at that point in my life," she said. "But somehow, things just kind of fell into place, and I decided that this was the path that I was supposed to pursue."

Ross would eventually found Fremont Children's Academy, which will celebrate its 15th anniversary this Saturday. The daycare center is at 2436 N. Colorado Ave.

Ross said throughout the years, she's gotten close to the staff members as well, even if they don't work at the center anymore.

"In fact, two of them work for other daycare centers, and we still work together and collaborate together and get along so well," she said. "And I just think that that says a lot for our environment, not only our work environment, but our students' environment then in turn."

Aug. 7: LifeHouse CEO Tera Kucera honored with alumni award from MCC

The Metropolitan Community College Foundation has named LifeHouse CEO Tera Kucera winner of its 2020 Distinguished Alumni

The award, started in 2015, is given annually to graduates with exemplary achievement in their

"We established it just as a time to honor our alumni, because they do good work and we really appreciate them," said Maggie Schill, alumni and corporate relations associate for MCC.

Kucera was named executive director of Care Corps in 2016. She took the position of CEO in 2018 after the emergency homeless shelter partnered with Low Income Ministry to become LifeHouse.

Kucera, a 2016 graduate of MCC, said she was humbled and honored to receive the award from the college, which she said she attended after she found herself ready for a change in her life.

building sold, will house news - Sioux City and York. paper and TEK Services

William Loughman III, a Fremont business owner and entrepreneur, has purchased the Fremont Tribune building at 135 N. Main St.

The building will remain home to the Fremont Tribune's operations, but will also be home to TEK Services, Loughman's business, a company that specializes in contract manufacturing, including custom fabrication and assembly; fulfillment; electrical, mechanical, and electro-mechanical repairs; and warehousing.

"The city of Fremont is and will continue to be a mecca for economic development," Loughman said in a press release. "It's exciting that a building with such history and significance in our community will play a key role in this continued growth."

The Fremont Tribune will lease about two-thirds of the front office area, with walls to be placed between the two businesses. The building, which was built in 1964, will keep its Tribune signage on the outside, with new signage to be placed for TEK Services.

Aug. 29: Methodist Fremont Health Center for Wound Healing celebrates 10th anniversary

The Methodist Fremont Health Center for Wound Healing is celebrating 10 years of wound care in the Fremont area. Since it opened on Aug. 25, 2010, the center has healed more than 8,800 patients with a healing rate of 95%. It has



ALLISON RAMIREZ, FHS RUSTLER

Emily Lambley displays some of the custom jewelry she has made from home in October. Lambley started a small business, selling her custom jewelry on Instagram, last March during the nationwide pandemic.

also prevented 481 amputations, saving limbs and lives.

The Methodist Fremont Health Center for Wound Healing specializes in treating chronic and nonhealing wounds. The center offers hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) treatments, an advanced form of treatment that significantly improves the healing of chronic wounds when used in conjunction with standard wound care. The center has a 100% healing rate among its 109 patients who have received a combined 3,597 HBOT treatments.

September

Sept. 5: Eakes Office Solutions celebrates 75th anniver-

Eakes Office Solutions, a provider of business products and solutions, is celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. Founded in 1945 by Howard Eakes, the company has grown from two employees in Grand Island, Nebraska, to over 250 employees spanning 13 locations across Nebraska.

Originally named Office Equipment Company, Eakes started as a Remington Rand adding machine and typewriter servicing business. As Eakes continued to grow, so did their business offerings. The company added filing systems and office supplies in 1952, copiers and printers in the late 1970s, furniture and design services in 1998, commercial janitorial products and equipment in 2017, and a software and technology services division in 2019. Eakes Office Solutions continues to grow their services to better support their customers in every aspect of their

the 13 locations - Beatrice, Columbus, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Aug. 26: Fremont Tribune Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, this business, I could save some care space, and the demand for our them. She approached a local radio

Poultry celebrates one-year anniversary

It's been an interesting year to start a business in Fremont.

With consecutive years of flooding followed up with a worldwide pandemic that continues to leave its mark on the local community, there have been plenty of burdens local businesses have been forced to carry.

Those burdens have affected all local businesses, from mom-and-pop shops to the 400,0000-square-foot Lincoln Premium Poultry processing plant located just outside Fremont.

Yet, through the adversity, LPP still found some good news worth celebrating.

The company reached its oneyear anniversary on Sept. 9 after opening its doors to the public for the first time in 2019. Ever since, the complex has been slowly scaling up operations to reach its full workload.

"We've probably had one of the more interesting startups, at least in this industry, that I've heard of," LPP Spokeswoman Jessica Kolterman said. "But, it has gone very well considering and we're really proud of our team."

scale up operation, which saw the complex grow from just over 600 employees in September 2019 to just over 1,100.



COLLIN SPILINEK, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Shih-Ping Fu, owner of Brass Wok at 330 W. 23rd St., will close the restaurant and retire at the end of September after 28 years in the community.

complex's employees come from focuses on three areas: leadership, Fremont, while the rest commute from surrounding areas such as Schuyler, Blair and Omaha.

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Additionally, nearly all local contractors responsible for raising the poultry have had their barns completed. Out of the 520 barns, Kolterman said only around 80 need to be completed, with most of those being built in the fall or spring.

All in all, LPP was able to follow the timeline it initially set out with when it first began production a

Sept. 18: Brass Wok owner of 28 years says goodbye to community with closure

After 28 years in Fremont, Brass Wok owner Shih-Ping Fu said it's time for him to finally close shop.

"I've raised my family and kept my business, but I really need to retire," he said. "I'm 72 years old, and I can't handle this."

Brass Wok, a Chinese restaurant at 330 W. 23rd St., will close its doors on Sept. 30. The restaurant, which has been in the community since 1992, offers drive-thru, takeout and buffet options.

Fu, who is originally from Taiwan, came to the United States at age 34 with his family, which included his wife and two sons. The family initially lived in Portland, Oregon, where he started work at a Chinese restaurant.

Not wanting to work for somebody else anymore, Fu found his building in Fremont, which had been a steakhouse for 22 years.

"At that time, they wanted to sell the building, so I looked at it, and in just a few days, made a decision and we bought it," he said.

Ultimately, Fu said he was glad Eakes employs over 250 people in to have been able to run Brass Wok. which he said allowed even more opportunities for his family.

"So my favorite part is by running money to provide to my kids who **Sept. 11: Lincoln Premium** could go to college, finish their college, and raise my family," he said. "That's really, for me, that's part of what I'm doing here."

Sept. 29: Fremont Cadet Squadron member, Dodge County recognized for work

A member of the Fremont Cadet Squadron and the Dodge County Citizens Corps were both recognized by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's Citizen Corps Council Monday morning.

Lt. Col. Jim Kuddes of the squadron received the Nebraska Citizen Corps' Volunteer of the Year Award, while the Dodge County Citizens Corps received its Group of the Year Award.

Kuddes first joined the squadron as a cadet around 50 years ago. The Fremont Cadet Squadron is part of the United States Air Force's Civil Air Patrol (CAP), which trains its young members for emergency services.

As his older brother was also a cadet, Kuddes joined as well, and after turning 18, he became an officer after the squadron was in need of a commander.

In his role, Kuddes is involved in many of the search-and-rescue portions of the squadron.

"I do a lot of the training for that, LPP has completed a 45-week and I'm very active in the emergency services part of it," he said. "And then my other primary function is safety."

In training both the cadets and Kolterman said around half of the adult members, Kuddes said he

aerospace education and emergency services.

"The entire program has changed as we've gone along," he said. "It's become much more streamlined, and there's a lot more activities that we do."

Kuddes said the Fremont squadron is one of the most active units in the state, or the "wing" of the CAP.

"We've started doing a lot of things with drones involved in search-and-rescue and in missing persons searches," he said. "We've been doing a lot with Dodge County Emergency Management for the last two years with the flooding, as we flew a lot of drone missions in looking at ice jams and things."

As a member of the squadron, Kuddes said working with the cadets and seeing them grow has been his favorite part. He said the squadron has also helped people during its training, as its cadets pulled a woman from the Platte River as she was having issues with her paddle-

Additionally, the squadron's cadets discovered a runaway teenage girl last year in the freezing cold.

"And our cadets found her and got her warmed up and we got her reunited with her parents," Kuddes said. "So just saving lives is why we do this."

Sept. 30: Home Instead Senior Care celebrating 15 years in Fremont community

Since opening in Fremont in October 2005, Home Instead Senior Care has provided companionship and home helper services to its clients, franchise owner and managing director John Hudnall said.

"And then probably about 10 years ago, we started doing some personal care," he said. "Home Instead itself is just trained to be as effective as we can in the home services just continues to grow."

Next month, the Fremont location will celebrate 15 years at 748 E. Military Ave. The location has around 90 caregivers serving 70 clients in the Fremont area.

Home Instead, which is based out of Omaha, was founded by Paul and Lori Hogan in 1994 and now has more than 1,000 franchisees worldwide.

Hudnall worked at the global headquarters in Omaha for six years before joining the Fremont location in February 2018.

October

Oct. 7: Lambley turns hobby into a business

Emily Lambley's weekday work, as a junior at Fremont High School, shifted from in-class instruction to remote learning when the global coronavirus pandemic hit the United States last March.

The nationwide shutdown that immediately went into effect, coupled with the shift in the Fremont Public Schools continuation of learning model, meant that Lambley would have more time on her hands.

As a result, not being able to do much in the evenings-or the weekends-sent Lambley searching for something to fill her time.

"I went from seven hours in school to maybe two hours on my computer learning," Lambley said. "I had so much free time on my hands that I just started making jewelry again."

She soon found herself spending 10-15 hours per week crafting decorative pieces of jewelry on the couch in her bedroom.

Word spread fast that Lambley was making custom jewelry. Jasmine Salazar, a junior at FHS, looked at Lambley's jewelry last spring and liked what she saw.

"I thought her jewelry was really cute, so I bought a pair of earrings," Salazar said. "The quality is really good and it's lasted longer than most of my other jewelry."

Now a 17-year-old senior at FHS, Lambley said she sells a variety of custom jewelry items (including earrings, necklaces and bracelets). Her prices range from \$3 to \$20 per piece of jewelry.

"I'm very creative so I love customizing anything my clients want," Lambley said. "A lot of my friends come to me asking if I can make them jewelry that shows their personalities and that's when I get to work."

Lambley didn't need any extra training to start crafting again (she's been doing it off-and-on for four years) during the pandemic. But she did need to summon the courage to turn her hobby into a small

"I created my social media platform (on Instagram using the handle 5inister5election) for my business in June, but I had already sold stuff before that," Lambley said. "I definitely think COVID-19 impacted my business a lot, but in a positive way."

Having set starting her own online jewelry shop as the ultimate goal of her small business, Lambley knows that she will have to work her way up to that level. In the meantime, she won't be hurting for inspiration anytime soon.

"I just really enjoy doing what I do," Lambley said, "and my clients are always so happy when they get their product. I owe myself a lot because I finally got myself a hobby I love and I'm ready to work even harder to achieve my goals with both my career and business."

Oct. 14: Fremonter earns Girl **Scout Gold Award**

Ashley Staver is being recognized for a golden achievement.

The local high school student has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award. the highest award in Girl Scouting.

When Life Choices, a Fremont pregnancy resource center, needed funds for its free ultrasounds, Staver stepped in to help.

Staver worked with Milady Coffeehouse to host a fund-raising concert.

She recruited a local advertising agency to create concert fliers and asked local merchants to display station for advertising support and was interviewed about her project and the concert.

The concert raised more than \$1,600 and educated the community about Life Choices' services.

Staver is among 16 high school girls in the Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska council who earned the award by making lasting and impactful change in their communities, said Susan Payne, public relations specialist.

"Gold Award Girl Scouts tackle issues dear to their heart, driving lasting change in their communities and beyond. Ashley Staver's concert to raise money for Life Choices in Fremont did just that," Payne said.

Oct. 17: Getzschman honored for mayoral tenure by Whole-**Stone Farms**

Scott Getzschman was honored by Wholestone Farms for his decade-long tenure as mayor of Fremont during a ceremony on Friday.

WholeStone Farms CEO Scott Webb presented Getzschman with a plaque commemorating the longtime mayor's contributions to the Fremont community during the last 10 years.

Getzschman announced he would not run for re-election in December after holding the mayoral seat since 2010.

During the last two years, Webb said he has gotten the chance to see firsthand how the mayor has

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Years in Business



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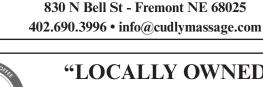
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From 15

contributed to the development of business in Fremont with a strong desire to respond to community

"He's been very pro-business;" Webb said. "He's been an advocate always looking out for what's best for the community of Fremont."

The award specifically recognized Getzschman's efforts toward advocacy in the agriculture industry in the Fremont area.

Oct. 20: Dodge County Judge Geoffrey Hall recognized with statewide award

Dodge County District Court Judge Geoffrey Hall received a 2020 Distinguished Judge award from the state last week for his work.

On Friday, Chief Justice Mike Heavican announced that Hall, presiding judge of the District Six Adult Drug Court, was the recipient of the Improvement of the Judicial System Award.

"Judge Hall obviously exemplifies what it means to be a judge who has improved the judicial system through his many good works," Heavican said during his morning address.

The Distinguished Judge awards were created in 1999 to recognize judges for their projects and accomplishment that enhance the vision of justice within the communities they serve.

Hall is the third judge to win the Improvement of the Judicial System Award from the Sixth Judicial District, which includes Dodge, Washington, Burt, Cedar, Dakota, Dixon and Thurston counties.

Previously, District Judge John E. Samson received the award in 2018, while District Judge F. A. Gossett received it in 2000. Additionally, Court of Appeals Judge Frankie J. Moore won the Improvement of Community Relations Award in 2015.

In 2010, Hall was appointed as a Dodge County District Court judge by former Gov. Dave Heineman, and took the position the next year.

Oct. 21: Mamá Chencha's owner keeping spirit of grandmother alive with recipe

Food has always been a huge part of Wilmer Linares' family, as he would help his mother with cooking in El Salvador.

"All the time when she made bread, I watched her and I started learning," he said. "Then I started making it at home just for us and the family, but right now, I make it for everybody in Fremont."

Earlier this month, Linares opened Mamá Chencha Tienda y cated at 25 W. Sixth St. in downtown Fremont.

Along with Mexican and Central American food products, the store also features fresh baked bread made from a recipe passed on by

Linares' grandmother. "And that's why I call it 'Mamá Chencha; because that was my grandma's name," he said. "Everybody called her 'Mamá Chencha' where I come from, because I come from a small town, and everybody

knew my grandma." "Mamá Chencha" had 18 kids, with Linares being one of 126 first cousins on his mother's side. In 2000, he came to the United States at the age of 17 to be with his mother and brother.

"I lived for two-and-a-half years in New York, and in 2003, I moved to Fremont," he said. "And all my life, my dream was to have my own business, a bakery."

Around two years ago, Linares said he began to have serious thoughts about starting his own bakery, as he had lots of experience in baking bread.

"A lot of people helped me," he said. "I found somebody in Omaha, and she helped me a lot to register the business and to get all the paperwork?

Mamá Chencha's first day of opening was Oct. 3.

Oct. 27: Dunham's Sports set to open this Friday at Fremont

The Dunham's Sports location at the Fremont Mall will hold its grand opening this Friday.

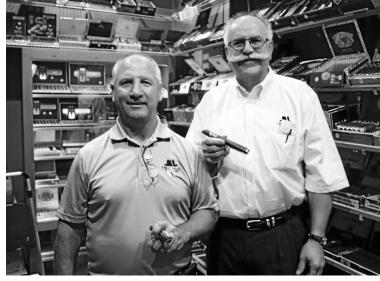
"We're extremely excited," Fremont Mall Asset Manager David Gibbs said. "We welcome everybody to come check them out and check out the mall and the things that'll be happening there."

Last July, Fremont Mall announced on social media that Dunham's would take the spot of its former JCPenney location at 1050 E. 23rd St., which closed in 2017 after

more than 50 years at the mall. After months of construction, the store held a soft opening last Friday. Its grand opening this Friday will start at 10 a.m.

Dunham's is one of the Midwest's largest sporting goods chains. Since 1937, it has offered athletic equipment and other merchandise in

more than 230 stores in 22 states. Oct. 30: Churchills offers ci-



COLLIN SPILINEK, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Churchills manager Bill Peck, left, and owner Scott Brannon, hold cigars in the bar's walk-in humidor.

in downtown Fremont

Scott Brannon said the name for Churchills-The Cigar Bar came from several sources, including his late father, Gordon Churchill Bran-

"But Winston Churchill was a fantastic cigar smoker also, and it's also my favorite sized cigar to smoke," he said. "So between the three of them, that's how we got the name 'Churchills.'"

Churchills has honored all three of its namesakes since it opened at 345 N. Main St. in Fremont earlier this month. The bar offers a wide variety of cigars, as well as indoor and outdoor seating, multiple televisions and a bar with beer, wine and liquor selections.

bar, has been a longtime resident of Fremont, as well as its manager, Bill

Oct. 30: Fremont High students rank high nationally for business exam

Two Fremont High School students scored in the top 10% of students nationwide on a business exam taken last vear.

Senior Cade Holland and junior Janice Nelsen took the exam during the 2019-2020 school year, which is part of the school's High School of Business program.

"The national average on some of these tests is in the upper-60s, percentage-wise," said Matt Burg, business teacher and business department chair at FHS. "And Cade and Janice both scored above 90%, so they did really well."

High School of Business, a program with the Marketing and Business Administration Research and Curriculum Center, had approximately 6,000 students nationwide participating last school year.

The program brings six col-Panaderia (Store and Baker), lo- lege-style business courses to seating. high schools to provide them with hands-on experience in marketing, economics, finance and manage ment.

> "It's just a sequence of six business classes that really are to help students who are interested in business, give them a sequence of classes they can take to give them an overview of what business education is and some of the concepts they're going to need to know to move forward if they would decide to move forward with a career in business down the road," Burg said.

November

Nov. 3: A giant of a man remembered

career path occurred when he was

5 years old. Nitz had gone to an auction with his dad, Joe. When he returned home, the little boy cut pictures of

farm equipment out of a catalog. He lined up the pictures and had his own little auction with his par-

ents and Aunt Marge as the bidders. Years later, Nitz launched a business that would become one of Eastern Nebraska's leading full-service auction and real estate firms. Nitz guided his business through changes in markets and economy. He'd mentor new auctioneers and serve in many organizations. He'd conduct and take part

in hundreds of benefit auctions. When Nitz died on Saturday, the community lost a longtime businessman and volunteer and his children and grandchildren lost a beloved dad and grandpa.

Nitz was 84.

Nov. 3: Dairy Queen in Fremont to upgrade to modernized building in 2021

Fremont's Dairy Queen will get a brand-new look with an upgraded building coming next year.

'This building's been a staple in town for a long time, and it's served its purpose very well," owner Charlie Pleskac said. "But especially as the restaurant industry evolves, there's always efficiencies that come up throughout the year."

In October, Mary and Jim Winterstein announced they would sell the restaurant at 2222 N. Broad St.,

after 39 years to Pleskac. Pleskac said last June, Dairy Queen released new prototype designs for its buildings, which is what

will be based on.

"We will be one of the first 10, give or take, depending on who completes construction first, on their new next-gen 3.0 design," he said. "It's very, very nice, lot of improvements for efficiency."

The new building will feature 46 seats inside, as well as an outside patio. The building will be centralized in the parking lot to allow better traffic flow for the drive-thru, Pleskac said.

"It'll actually look really nice, so hopefully the city of Fremont will have the same opinion," he said. "But I think it's a very good-looking building, set up to be efficient with improvements."

The new building was unani-Brannon, who is the owner of the mously approved by the Fremont City Council during its meeting on Oct. 27.

Nov. 6: Reinita Restaurant offers blend of Latin American foods to downtown Fremont

What first started as an ice cream shop has now expanded its operations to Reinita Restaurant, a brand-new Latin American restaurant in downtown Fremont.

"This is a Latin restaurant, because I'm from Guatemala, and my husband is from Honduras, and we have a lot of friends from El Salvador and Mexico," co-owner Berta Quintero said. "So that's why we tried to bring all customers from everywhere to here?

Reinita Restaurant, located at 414 N. Main St., is a new restaurant opened last month by the owners of Heladeria Reinita, an ice cream shop at 709 N. Broad St. that will remain open as well.

The new restaurant also features a bar, televisions and seating in the front and space to make reservations for parties. The back patio is also being remodeled for additional

The restaurant's hours are 10 a.m to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to midnight Saturday; and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday.

Nov. 13: Simply Strong opens new training studio after 9 years

Molly Bird said after finally opening the new building for her training studio, Simply Strong, she was most looking forward to seeing the look on her youth students' faces.

"It did not disappoint," she said. "They were so excited, and some of them were even screaming as they looked through the windows and saw the different things set up in

the gym." Bird debuted the new building An early indicator of Jack Nitz's for Simply Strong at 2710 N. Lincoln Ave. in Fremont on Nov. 1. The center features new equipment, including tumble tracks, rings and rope for its participants.

Originally from Fremont, Bird was a cheerleader in college for the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Valdosta State University in Georgia, where she graduated with an exercise physiology degree.

After moving back to Omaha and working at Lifetime Fitness for about two years, Bird worked her way up to assistant department head of the personal training

"I was just really missing working with kids, and I had always had this dream of starting my own gym in mv hometown," she said. "And I just wanted to get closer to that dream."

Bird moved to Fremont with her husband to help her father, a farmer, as well as start Simply Strong in 2011. The business started smaller, with Bird working as a personal trainer for her customers in their homes.

"A lot of my clients were still in Omaha, so I traveled to Omaha almost every day, and I had some Fremont clients, too," she said. "And then we had children, and after three kids, then I decided to kind of move my business into town."

Simply Strong ran its business from several small studios in Fremont, the most recent being at 1414 E. 23rd St. for two years.

Along with yoga and strength training for adults, Bird said the business has a large youth program that teaches tumbling and strength training for youth. Children ages 1 to 3 have a class in which parents gars, lounge seating experience Pleskac said the Fremont location assist them, while students ages 4



COLLIN SPILINEK, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Cars line up in the Christensen Field parking lot to receive a free Thanksgiving meal.

all the way up to college take beginning, intermediate and advanced classes.

In Fremont, Bird said the program continued to grow, with many of its classes at capacity with the space provided. Simply Strong had almost a year of not being able to take hardly any new students, she said.

"So I had this wait list of people, and it really bothered me, because I hate turning people away," Bird said. "I want people to be able to participate, so we needed a bigger space just to accommodate for larger classes."

Wanting to provide more space for her students and allow more to join in, Bird decided something needed to be done.

"It was at that point when I started at 23rd that this dream of the gym, we had drawn up plans and we were really thinking about it, but we just weren't really ready to take that leap, that risk," she said. "And so it kind of grew over those two years until we just decided, 'It's time. We're just going to go for it?"

One of Bird's dreams for the new building is for parents to be able to take a class at the same time their child is in another room.

"I'm a mom, and I know what it's like to be driving kids to different activities in the evening, and either you just don't get to work out yourself, or you're scrambling to find time in the early morning or late at night," she said. "So the idea for this gym was to make it easier for families to exercise."

Having taught classes for nearly a decade in the Fremont community, Bird said she especially loves teaching, as exercise has always been an outlet for her.

"It's been a release, it's been therapeutic, and so I feel really blessed that I can provide that release and that outlet for kids and adults now,"

ward to her classes every week.

"I really take that to heart. I really think about that as I'm teaching," she said. I'm always reminding myself, 'This is somebody's favorite day of the week, so make it worth

Nov. 14: Remembering Gene

Steffensmeier Genuine.

Humble. Generous.

Such are the words of those mourning the loss of Gene Steffensmeier, whom they describe as a man devoted to God, his family, church and community.

The man who launched and has run successful car dealerships in Fremont and Columbus died Wednesday.

He was 78.

Many know Steffensmeier through Gene Steffy Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, and Ram in Fremont.

Nov. 18: New lagoons aim to bring around \$1 million per year to Fremont

A series of new lagoons using waste from Fremont processing plants aims to make the city around \$1 million each year with renewable methane.

The Fremont Wastewater Treat ment Plant recently finished construction in late September on three new lagoons, which take in waste from Lincoln Premium Poultry and will soon include WholeStone Farms.

Currently, the plant is looking at an annual revenue of \$700,000 to \$1 million by putting the gas back into the pipeline, said Keith Kontor, superintendent for the plant, "So it's by far very valuable and

by far a good way of helping us pay for those improvements that we made to the whole project," Newton said. "It eventually pays for itself." Kontor said the biggest benefit he

sees with the project is just knowing that the city has large industries that not only are looking at expanding, but have the capability to do so. "Along with having industries

within the city of Fremont," he said, "it cuts down the cost on residential customers when we do have to do upgrades, whether they're, most of the time, for new EPA treatment requirements that come down the line."

Nov. 20: Corner Bar closes doors after nearly 40 years in

downtown Fremont

Although she had regularly visited the Corner Bar in Fremont throughout the 1980s, Tammy Trahan had no idea she would someday own the place.

"There's something about that building, and I have goosebumps right now saying it, it just holds some killer vibes that just welcomes you in," she said. "Obviously with any bar, we've had our issues with people, but it's just a place where everybody wanted to be."

After nearly 40 years of providing live entertainment and friendly service to the Fremont community, the Corner Bar closed its doors last Sunday.

The Corner Bar was owned by Trahan's husband, Randy, from 1981 until his death in 2008. From there, Trahan took over operations for the bar.

Originally, the Corner Bar was owned by Jerry Fullington at the corner of Fourth and Main streets in Fremont. After a fire at the building, Fullington partnered with Randy Trahan and moved operations to 300 N. Main St. on Aug. 1, 1981.

Although she doesn't know where her future will take her, Trahan said she'll always have the memories of the people who have walked through the Corner Bar's doors.

"There are so many stories, so many people that have been there, so many people that we have lost, she said. "I think that's the biggest thing right there, is just all of the people."

Trahan also thanked her customers for their support throughout the years. In providing a music venue for the public, she said music has always been therapeutic for her, and in turn, has wanted to give others

that therapy. "You could just shut everything off and just let the music take you,' With many of her students, Bird she said. "And you walked out of aid she's told that they look for- there with a smile, and that's the

thing I'm going to miss the most." Nov. 24: Fremont families served with 500 Thanksgiving

meals at Christensen Field Fremont families in need were given an early Thanksgiving meal as 500 meals were served at Chris-

tensen Field Monday evening. The event was the biggest yet for the Grab N Go events, which were started by the Fremont Area Com-

munity Foundation last spring. "During our previous Grab N Go meal events in Fremont, we had funding to feed up to 400 meals," FACF Executive Director Melissa Diers said. "Today, we decided to go ahead and boost that to 500, anticipating that we would potentially

have a larger turnout." Diers said the event seemed like the natural way to help area families

during Thanksgiving. "We felt that it was important to do this not only as part of our ongoing food security efforts during this difficult time, but also because when we learned that the Fremont Thanksgiving Dinner was not going to take place this year because of COVID-19, we felt that it would be nice to try to do something for the community and folks that have been struggling," she said.

Although the event was sponsored by the Fremont Area Food Safety Task Force, Hy-Vee also contributed, offering to pay for 100 of the 500 meals, Diers said.

"When we reached out to them to see if they would have the capacity during what is typically a busy time for grocery stores to help us with this food event, they were more than happy to do it," she said. "They told us that they are excited about what we're doing through this effort."

The event Monday had families drive up in cars to receive the meals, which included turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, green bean casserole and a roll.

Nov. 25: Keep Fremont Beautiful receives Gold Affiliate Award for community service

Keep Fremont Beautiful (KFB) has received a Gold Affiliate Award from Keep Nebraska Beautiful, the highest designation awarded to affiliates across the state. KFB has received the gold award

consistently over recent years,

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according to Executive Director Casey Vaughan. In order to receive the award, affiliates must meet strict criteria.

That criteria ranges from holding community recycling and waste events to conducting educational programs that promote litter prevention, recycling and community beautification.

"It has been a very different year, but we have worked around all of the obstacles that have come our way and continued on with our program," Vaughan said.

Nov. 27: Fremont children send nearly 200 thank-you cards to frontline workers

Children at Fremont daycares and schools brought smiles to the faces of frontline staff at Methodist Fretime to thank them.

The Fremont Health Foundation received its first batch of nearly 200 cards made by students from Trinity Lutheran School and children at Fremont Children's Academy Tuesday.

Upon receiving the cards, Fremont Health Foundation Executive Director of Development and Community Health Shawn Shanahan said the nurses became emotional.

"It was like a breath of fresh air, and it was fun to read," she said. "They enjoyed receiving them, and as you can see with the photograph of those nurses, there's masks on, but you can see nothing but pierced smiles from those eye expressions."

The foundation isn't done sending cards to nurses, as Shanahan said at least four other organizations are in the process of making and sending over more.

But Shanahan said she was thankful for those who have made or are planning to make cards, and encouraged those interested in reaching out to the foundation.

"We hope that others join," she said. "We hope that others flood our hallways with amazing cards and artwork to continue to inspire hope and opportunity to keep things in the battle against the moving forward."

Nov. 28: Tikal Market 23rd Street with bakery, meat department

Originally from Guatemala, Jose Larios came to the United States with a work permit and moved to Fremont in 2010, wanting to build something from the

ground up. "I always had a dream of owning my own business, but that wasn't the real reason I came," he said, translated through Litzi Gomez. "I just came to work and then eventually, I was able to fulfill my dream."

Since then, Larios now has two businesses in Fremont, the most recent being the second location of Tikal Market, located at 843 E. 23rd St. In 2018, he also opened Maya Market, a bakery in Omaha.

While the original Tikal Market opened at 208 N. Main St. in 2014, Larios opened the second location on Nov. 7.

"The difference between both of them is that I'm going to sell fresh meat here, and then there's not at the other store," he said. "And it's a lot bigger, so it's more open space and there's a lot more products that we don't have at the other store."

Larios said he would often drive past the location, and eventually saw a sign saying it was for lease.

"I saw that a lot of cars passed by, so this was a good opportunity to open a Hispanic store on 23rd Street," he said. "And we've had a lot of American clients too, which is great because it makes it more diverse."

On Friday, Tikal Market opened its meat department and bakery. As the location's previous tenants were not in nap as their "guilty pleasure." the food industry, Larios said he had to hire people to install the needed equipment.

"It was just open space, so I had to install sinks and bathrooms and ovens," he said. "And we had to get electricians down so it could take enough power for the ovens." Larios said he plans to have



COURTESY PHOTO,

BECKYNOVACEKPHOTOGRAPHY Fremonter Kim Wilch gets in the holiday spirit with antlers and a red nose while she and Kathy Howerton work on gift bags for an Adopt-A-Nurse project. The bags are set to be delivered to emergency department nurses at Methodist Fremont Health.

mont Health by taking the mainly Mexican bread with the bakery, as well as a few Guatemalan types of bread from his home country.

December

Dec. 4: RTG Medical breaks ground on new \$18 million facility east of Fremont

RTG Medical announced it has started to break ground on its new \$18 million headquarters east of Fremont.

"This is not only a gem for RTG's initiatives, but we hope it becomes an example and invitation for additional like-minded facilities in the future for the community," Chief Operating Officer Jeremy Guenthner said.

The 54,000-square-foot headquarters will be located at Gallery 23 East on the southeast intersection of U.S. Highways 275 and 30. White Lotus Group is the lead developer for the project.

Dec. 12: Friends launch Adopt-A-Nurse, hope people bless others

Kathy Howerton wanted to do something nice for her daughter.

Howerton's daughter, Hope, is a nurse in the Emergency Department at Meth-

odist Fremont Health. These are stressful times for nurses around the world who are on the frontlines

COVID-19 pandemic. and putting it in her car," said Howerton, who lives in Fre-

mont. another idea Then

emerged. "I thought, 'Why don't I do that for all the nurses in

the ED? What began as a simple idea became an "Adopt-A-

Nurse" project. Now, Howerton and her friends want to encourage people to try similar endeavors with other nurses and health care workers, retail store clerks and anyone on the frontlines.

Howerton first shared the gift bag idea with her daughter and learned that the ED has many nurses.

That's when Howerton decided to get help from some of her pals. Becky Novacek, Donna Meyer, Kim Wilch, Suzy Benes and the Rev. Kandy Paulson stepped into help with gifts or monetary donations.

"They all had great ideas," Howerton said. "Kim said she'd make craft gnomes. Donna volunteered to make caramel corn. Becky made the name tags."

The women opened the project for donations.

HyVee Food Store donated gift cards to all the nurses.

"We're still open for donations," Howerton said.

Those who wish to donate may call 402-720-6595 or email khowerton@neb. rr.com.

To personalize the gift bags, Howerton had brief questionnaires distributed, asking nurses to write down their favorite drink, candy bar and "guilty pleasure."

Many nurses listed taking a

Others wrote binge-watching the "Grey's Anatomy" television show. A couple wrote that they like eating graham crackers with frosting.

So the bags will have a few of the same things, but they'll be individualized, too.

Dec. 17: 'It brings tears of



COLLIN SPILINEK, FREMONT TRIBUNE

Jose Larios, owner of Tikal Market, opened the second location for the market in November. Along with the first location, he also owns Maya Market in Omaha.

relief to my eyes' — Frontline workers at Methodist Fremont Health receive vaccine

The light at the end of the tunnel moved a little closer for some health care workers at Methodist Fremont Health on Wednesday as they were among the first in the area to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.

hospital received approximately 200 doses of the Pfizer-BionNTech COVID-19 Vaccine from the Methodist Health System on Tuesday. In total, the health system, which encompasses three campuses between Fremont and Omaha, received 1,775 doses of the vaccine.

Angela Meiergerd, a registered nurse at Methodist Fremont Health, was the first employee at the hospital to receive the vaccine.

She works in the emergency room, where Meiergerd said the hospital can see anywhere from seven to 10 positive COVID-19 patients on a daily basis.

"I think it's a huge relief," Meiergerd, a mother of two, said. "I am very concerned about bringing it home to my family."

Throughout the pandemic, Meiergerd said she and her husband have avoided any contact with other members of the family who are elderly or have an underlying health condition.

"I miss them terribly," she said. "So, the opportunity to potentially see them, with a mask on still to protect them, is huge. It brings tears of relief

Meiergerd is one of ap**opens second location on** just for her so I thought about key frontline workers at the Johnny Carson Theater to getting her a little gift bag hospital who will receive the vaccine first.

Dec. 23: Wishing Wheel makes largest donation vet with 78 bikes to Salvation Army

In choosing who would receive a bicycle from Wishing Wheels, organizer Deb Niles said she's had to draw names out of a hat to narrow it down.

'Sometimes with families of four, two would get them and two wouldn't, and that always kind of hurt. I didn't like doing that," she said. "But this year, every child got one."

With a grand total of 78 bicycles, Wishing Wheels made its largest donation yet to the Salvation Army of Fremont on Thursday. The organization also saw its largest number of bikes given away this year at 101.

Wishing Wheels, founded in 2012 by Niles and Dave Mitchell, partners various local organizations in need of bikes such as Uniquely Yours Stability Support or the Oxford House. It has donated more than 600

bicycles to children who need them," Niles said. "We need to give bikes to adults that

facebook.com/ ChuysMexicanRestaurants/

tion to get to work or need to look for a job, and so we work on that."

In 2020, Wishing Wheels introduced two new proneed of bikes, as well as foster children.

donated, Niles said she felt 100-bike threshold in 2020.

Dec. 26: Archbishop Bergan, Fremont High take top awards in state fun." one-act competition

When Fremont High School senior Shannon Engel found out she had won Most Outstanding Female Performer for the state one-act competition in the school's class, she said it took her a while to register what had happened.

"I didn't even see my name, I just saw our school mascot, and everyone just started cheering," she said. "It was like the loudest roar."

Both FHS and Archbishop Bergan Catholic School received high honors at the Nebraska School Activities Association's State Play Production Championships in Norfolk Dec. 9-11.

Bergan's production of "Proof" resulted in a runner-up award in Class C1, while junior Grant Gibson won Most Outstanding Male Performer. FHS's production of "The Miracle Worker" placed third in Class A.

Additionally, North Bend Central placed sixth in Class B for its production of "Alice in Wonderland."

"I only wish our kids could have gotten that recognition performances went. proximately 350 individuals of going up on stage in front think any of us would trade it," said Chris Kabes, direcseason and make it through with everyone healthy, and our memories will be just as special."

Kabes said Gibson's win was a continuation of his work throughout the season, but on a much larger scale.

"He's a great kid who took on a challenging role, and won that award at every meet that offered it," he said. "But bringing home the award from state was on another level."

Senior Angelee Rump, who played the main role of Catherine in "Proof," said although the COVID-19 restrictions made it harder to grow, as they couldn't view other performances, she was proud of the school's work.

"I think going into it, we really did have a feeling that if we were going to make it to state, this was going to be the show to do it," she said. "Like, all season, we had that feel-

don't have the transporta- excited to perform at state. As the awards ceremony didn't take place in person, the school learned its placement on the way home.

"We were all on the bus, grams, helping veterans in and we were kind of all huddled together, listening to the Zoom call from our coach's As last year saw 93 bikes phone," rump said. "And when they said that we got proud to have reached the first, it was just like a lot of screaming and hugging, and we were so excited. It was a great experience. It was so

> Caitie Hays, director of "The Miracle Worker," said she was happy to see the students "freaking out" over getting third place.

> "We had talked a lot ahead of time about how special it was that we even got to go," she said. "And so I think finding out we were third, that was pretty cool."

> Engel, who has done theater from a young age, has been involved with every play production at FHS since her freshman year. In performing as Ann Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher, she said she had to channel a lot of energy.

> "To me, it's just as much about Annie as it is about Helen, and it's about her journey of finding how to love again and her growth as a teacher and just finding that friendship and that connection with Helen," Engel said. "And that's how they are able to learn the language together and how that miracle kind of happens."

Sophomore Ava Woods, who played Keller, said this year's restrictions had an impact on how the school's own

"I definitely realized that form last year was a lot more get their medals, but I don't important than I gave it credit for, because we did not get that this year," she said. "And tor of "Proof." "We were so so seeing other one-acts perblessed to be able to have a form really helps you think about what you're doing with your character more, and just seeing how other people portray their own characters helps you."

Engel also said the pandemic made the performers unsure as to whether or not their next performance would be their last.

"Knowing that nothing is really guaranteed and things are always kind of tentative, it's difficult to put your full effort into something you know that you might not get to perform or you might not get to go to state," she said. 'You have to find that internal motivation of, 'I still want to be better, I still want to do the best show that we can:"

As FHS went to more comand crew started to form a

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stronger bond.

"It's hard to put it into words, but it's just that gut feeling that everything is going right and everything's kind of clicking into place," she said. "And I could tell that everyone wanted to go to state as much as everybody else."

In her honor as an actress, Engel said she was thankful for the accomplishment.

"It really didn't hit that it was my senior show until after all the fanfare was over, and I just worked so hard to make Annie my own character, but also stay true to who she was as a person," she said.

As FHS hadn't been to state since 2004, Woods said she was honored to be a part of the production that finally made it.

"Since we haven't gone in so long, I felt very special for being able to go while I'm at high school," she said.

As she prepares for her last semester at FHS, Engel said she's glad to leave on a high note and was thankful for everyone's hard work in the play.

"I think that this third place feels like a championship in its own way," she said. "Even though it's third, it is our own championship that we made this show succeed, and we took this show and made something special out of it."

Kabes said he was proud of all of his actors and their outstanding performances, calling it a "dream come true" for them.

"A few of our judges this season commented that performing a show with only four cast members was risky because there's no way to hide any weaknesses; it's all out there in the open for everyone to see," he said. "So to have them all not only handle a show like that, but to be recognized as outstanding individuals was pretty special."

While she knows the Fremont Public Schools District is always supportive of the arts, Hays said was extremely glad to see everyone reach out in support of the school's theater program.

"So we're really grateful for all of that support, and I guess it's just up from here," she said. "This is the new bar, and so now, we've got even further to go."

Dec. 30: Fremont Area "I wanted to do something who have been identified as of a packed house at the seeing other one-acts per- Community Foundation to produce 6,500 week end food backpacks for students, families

Food insecurity has been a top-of-mind issue for the Fremont Area Community Foundation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an effort to curb that issue, the foundation's COVID-19 Task Force is working with Fremont Public Schools and HyVee Food Store, along with other area volunteers, to put together approximately 6,500 weekend food backpacks for children across the district.

Around 250 backpacks will be distributed each weekend, beginning in January at the start of the spring semester, according to FACF Executive Director Melissa

The backpacks will supplement the estimated 230 backpacks being distributed by the school through a partpetitions, Engel said the cast nership with Food Bank for the Heartland.

