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Forest Lake Times

November 25, 2021 | Volume #119

Issue #28 | 651-464-4601 | ForestLakeTimes.com | \$1.50



Photo by Hannah Davis

Empty concession stands, boxes of supplies and computers filled the lobby of Lake 5 Theater on Monday, Nov. 22, just a few days after Lake 5 closed to the public.

Lake 5 Theater closes

Hannah Davis
News Editor

Late at night on Friday, Nov. 19, Lake 5 theater held a final showing of "Dune" before closing its doors permanently.

"It's bittersweet, I guess," owner Shane Martin said.

Business had been declining for several years, he said, as competitors around the area began upgrading seating and other amenities.

"I think it was we just

got far behind, as far as being able to provide the amenities that this building wasn't meant for. It kind of seemed like writing on the wall.

"We knew we could only keep it going for so long without investing a ton of money back into the building, and this building probably wasn't going to [work], regardless, to upgrade. We were

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Anoka County declares November Adoption Awareness month

Emilee Wentland
ABC Newspapers

Nearly 1,500 children statewide are awaiting adoption, according to a Nov. 9 presentation to the Anoka County Board, which is honoring November as Adoption Awareness Month.

On any given day, there are up to 424,000 children in the U.S. foster care system nationwide, Commissioner Jeff Reinert said. The number of children waiting to be placed into foster care is about 120,000, he said.

"These children simply want to find loving homes," Reinert said.

In the past 12 years, 111 families adopted 165 children during Anoka County Adoption Days, an annual November celebration for families who are adopting children, Jess Van Kuyk, a manager in the Children and Family Services Department, said.

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Submitted Photo

On July 11, John and Kim Motschenbacher crossed the Hoosier Pass at an elevation of more than 11,000 feet, which is the highest elevation on the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail. It was their most difficult time navigating the two-lane, highway with no shoulder.

Across the country in 88 days

Forest Lake native and wife cycled a 4,165-mile adventure

Natalie Ryder
Community Editor

The seed to undertake a cycling adventure across the country was planted into Forest Lake native John Motschenbacher's mind in 2016, when he and his wife, Kim, encountered a couple who were biking across the country at their local Walgreens in Chaska.

"I was just like, 'Oh, that's super cool,' and then I went on about my day and my life. And he's like, just wouldn't let it go," Kim said about John.

It wasn't until late 2019 into early 2020 when they seriously revisited the idea to bike the 4,165-mile TransAmerica Bicycle Trail, which runs from Oregon to Virginia. The "experiences over stuff type of deal," John said, began to appeal to them as they began a downsizing lifestyle. So the

couple read more about the trail and previous cyclists' experiences through blogs and books.

Their son Colton inspired them, too, they said, with his sense of adventure and minimalist lifestyle. But the couple also hoped to, in turn, inspire their children and grandchildren.

"Just to inspire them to do what makes you feel good in life. ... Create your own path," John said.

Additionally, they both agreed that they wanted to not only do the trip for themselves but raise money for an organization.

"We both decided we wanted someone to benefit from our efforts, and so the natural path to that was the Lobular Breast Can-

cer Alliance," Kim said. She is a 10-year survivor of the disease. They raised more than \$25,000 for the organization.

The 'Motch Across America'

With plans, maps and a mission to inspire set in place, the Motschenbachers got rolling on their journey at the end of May 2021. They shipped their bikes across the country to a bike shop in Astoria, Oregon, which is where the trip kicked off with a heavy start.

"We kind of never got the opportunity to ride with our packs fully loaded on our bikes," John said regarding the shocking adjustment that 40 to 50 pounds of weight made to their bikes. They said the first morning, on May 26, they set out to dip their bike tires in the coastal water, something cyclists of this trail do at the start and end to signify riding coast to coast, and were surprised by the

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"There's a lot to the trip, and it's life-changing, but in small pieces."

- John Motschenbacher

Wyoming approves hiring of new public safety director

Neil Bauer,
Woodbury
sergeant, set to
start Dec. 20

Hannah Davis
News Editor

The city of Wyoming has hired its new public safety director, Neil Bauer, a sergeant in the Woodbury Police Department. The council approved the hiring of Bauer at its Nov. 16 meeting. He will replace current Public Safety Director Paul Hoppe, who announced his retirement in September. Bauer is ineligible to be considered for promotion within the Woodbury Police Department due to nepotism policies.

Bauer received both a master's in police leadership and a doctor-

ate of education from the University of St. Thomas. He has served as a police sergeant in Woodbury since 2007 and started as a community service officer in Woodbury in 1999.

Bauer was one of six candidates who applied for the position. Five candidates were brought in for the first round of interviews with a panel, including the city's city administrator and assistant city administrator, as well as another police chief from one of the 10 largest cities in the state, and a former city administrator from an inner-ring metropolitan suburb.

Two candidates were then selected out of the five, and they participated in the final interviews, exercises, and background checks.

The city of Woodbury operates under a similar public safety model, with both police and fire departments answering to the single public safety director. As a sergeant, Bauer provided leadership, training and planning for his assigned patrol shift. In addition, he has participated in the police/paramedic cross-trained program and is a certified paramedic.

City Administrator Robb Linwood said in his address to the council regarding Bauer: "Considering medicals are our greatest call volume for the Fire Department, his past experience [will] yield valuable experience to our fire division."

Bauer's focus in Woodbury included a data-driven approach

to developing evidence-based policing strategies. He also focused on developing methods for officer recruitment and retention, as well as co-created the Woodbury Police Multicultural Advisory Committee, which seeks to enrich relationships between the department and people of underrepresented cultures.

Bauer also has nine years' previous experience working as an adjunct faculty member teaching law enforcement and criminal justice at Century College and is currently an instructor at the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, a position he's held since 2016.

Bauer's tentative start

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Photo by Natalie Ryder

The area off of I-35 and Highway 97 where construction is underway for the Love's Travel Plaza.

Construction begins on new travel plaza

Love's Travel
Plaza set to open
summer 2022

Natalie Ryder
Community Editor

Construction has begun on Columbus' new Love's Travel Plaza, located at the southeast corner of the juncture of Interstate 35 and Highway 97, off Hornsby Avenue. At this time, the new travel plaza is slated to open in

the summer of 2022, according to Caitlin Campbell, the media relations specialist at Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores. Campbell added that opening date is "weather dependent," as construction is underway now and will continue through the winter until completion.

According to the city of Columbus website, construction at the site of the future Love's officially

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