

It's Time For The Haunting Season...



The great spooktacular is about to begin. One of the biggest holidays of the year for candy makers is about to land on our calendar. Every year it's a battle between Valentine's Day, Mother's Day or Halloween to see which date will produce the biggest candy sales. Halloween wins nearly every time.

The flagpole at Rothsay Public School has an assortment of carved Jack o' Lanterns guarding the main entrance to the building. All around town there are fall displays of pumpkins, corn stalks, scarecrows and fall leaves. These will be left out until after the Trick or Treating little monsters go door to door on Wednesday evening, October 31.

In addition to door to door visits, the youngsters are also invited to the Rothsay Public School that evening for a School Carnival. For \$5 the kids can enjoy a barbecue meal including chips, pickles, cookies and a beverage. The admission also gets them entered in a number of games including balloon darts, bean bags, face painting, wall of fortune, dime toss, fishing, lollipop stand, duck pond, free throw shooting and a football toss.

There is even a haunted house guaranteed to scare your socks off. The Rothsay School Carnival will be held at the school building on October 31 between 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. in the Performance Gym.

Ashby Coop Elevator Assets Will Have To Be Liquidated

The details of the final days of the Ashby Farmers Coop Elevator continue to become a little more clear. The bankrupt elevator stockholders met last week to begin the process of liquidating assets and terminating the business from insurmountable debt. Things do not look good for anyone who is owed any money from the coop, the only business of any size in the small town of Ashby.

For 29 years the elevator was managed by a Barnesville native and 1980 BHS graduate Jerry Hennessey. Recent superficial preliminary audits, dating back to 2003, indicate that there are funds amounting to at least \$4.9 million dollars that can not be accounted for.

Unauthorized checks appear to have been issued to Hennessey, and companies or individuals that he did private business with. Other possible unauthorized transactions by Hennessey are being investigated. An attorney retained by the elevator as well as an accounting firm well versed in forensic audits are delving into the company's financial records.

The total in missing funds is expected to go well beyond \$5 million dollars missing during the nearly 30 years that he managed the elevator.

Stockholders and patrons of the Ashby Elevator met last week to hear the grim news and to take action to do what they can to terminate the century old business. An agreement is being developed between the Ashby Elevator and the Wheaton Dumont Elevator to purchase the assets of the coop. That includes the business buildings, the main elevator complex and about 300,000 bushels of grain storage bins. The Wheaton Elevator is presently renting the facility while details of a sale are worked out.

All of the property will be

Trail Update At PWLC

Major construction work on the hiking trails at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) in Fergus Falls is continuing into autumn with completion planned for next summer.

Asphalt sidewalks adjacent to the parking lot and extending to the front entrances of the visitor center and dorm will be removed and replaced with new asphalt.

For daily updates on trail closures, visitors can check maps posted at the visitor center and at the North Country Trail near Highway 210 and at Goose Drive, or call the visitor center at 218 998-4480.

Trail work completed this summer includes replacing and upgrading six water control structures and culverts associated with trails that lay between wetlands, and raising low trails prone to flooding.

Hiking trails are open sunrise to sunset, daily. The visitor center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.



JERRY HENNESSEY

liquidated and sold to the Wheaton Elevator. But they will not assume any of the outstanding debt and other unknown liabilities that may still be out there. The Ashby Elevator owes BankCo of Colorado over \$8 million dollars with overdue payments on the principal due. BankCo holds a first position on about \$1.5 million dollars in assets. The rest of their debt is unsecured.

Farmers who did business with the coop are also getting burned in the bankrupt elevator. Those with grain supposedly in the bins may receive a partial payment on that grain from insurance. How many cents on the dollar has not been determined yet and there will be a lot of hands extended hoping to be repaid at least in part.

It would appear in a primary review of any outstanding paper that those with forward contracts on crops such as wheat, soybeans and corn can count those contracts as waste paper. Any equity that farmers may have had in long term dividends is also likely gone.

There will be way more requests for funds from the liquidation than any sale of elevator assets can satisfy.

While it is not specifically required, most coops, as a good business practice, require an audit every year. The Ashby Elevator never had one in the nearly 30 years that Hennessey managed the facility.

In addition to authorizing the liquidation of elevator assets, the members of the coop with money owed agreed to file suit to recover individually in a civil complaint that will be filed against Hennessey and his wife, Jill. They are the owners of record of a lavish home and acreage near Dalton that may have been purchased with proceeds from some of the unauthorized checks.

To date there have been no criminal charges filed against Hennessey in regards to the missing funds and he is not around to answer any questions. He has not been seen since the morning of September 11 when he was dropped off by a friend at a location south of Alexandria. He told the friend to leave so they would not be able to identify who was picking him up.

While nobody is officially looking for him, Hennessey has not

been seen since September 11.

The shortages in the elevator's accounts were not discovered until early September. At that time the BankCo bank began to call members of the board of directors of the elevator about a debt payment that had not been made on a \$8 million dollar loan.

Hennessey had been absent from the elevator since mid-August while on a buffalo hunting trip in Australia. He returned back to the United States before Labor Day but did not return to work at the elevator. As the shortages began to become apparent, the board of directors called an emergency meeting for September 10. Hennessey told an employee at the elevator that he would be

Public Invited To Kildegaard Workshop



ATHENA KILDEGAARD

Lake Region Arts Council is happy to announce that the public is invited to attend a free writing workshop and poetry reading by Athena Kildegaard at the Lake Region Arts Council offices, 137 South Mill Street, Fergus Falls, MN from 1:00-5:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 27, 2018.

Athena Kildegaard is a fiscal year 2018 recipient of an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

The afternoon's schedule for this event is:

1:00-3:00 p.m. workshop: "Sorrow: Placing Our Grief in the Mouth of Language" In this workshop we will read poems about grief and learn from them what possibilities are open to us for writing about sorrow.

3:00-4:00 p.m. Break
4:00-5:00 p.m., Athena Kildegaard will read from Course, a book about her mother, her mother's death, the course of grief, and the course of the Minnesota River. One reviewer called the book "moving and genuinely honest."

For further information call LRAC toll free at 1 800 262-2787 or email at LRAC4@LRACgrants.org

attending the meeting.

Instead the board found Hennessey's company pickup parked in the driveway to the elevator. He spent that day of September 10 with a friend and disappeared the next morning.

It is believed that a significant amount of the missing funds were spent on exotic hunting trips, taxidermy, land purchases and a lavish personal lifestyle.

Sometime in the very near future it could be expected that criminal charges related to the missing funds will be filed but that is only a guess so far.

It will likely take years to sort out and unravel this financial mess.

One On One Approach Excels Land Enrollment

Thanks to the local effort and partnership of the West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Pheasants Forever, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Minnesota's Otter Tail County has surpassed 17,000 acres enrolled in conservation programs, since starting the partnership in 2008. To reach this 17,000 acre milestone, this partnership involved more than 3,500 landowner contacts and utilized a variety of conservation programs ranging from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Minnesota Land Trust easements, and MNDOT's Living Snowfence program.

Pheasants Forever's efforts are part of an overriding Minnesota Farm Bill Assistance Partnership that includes the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation

Service, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Local SWCD's.

"Every farm has conservation opportunities, and this partnership makes sure that West Otter Tail County landowners know their options and can make sound decisions for their business and the land," stated Brad Mergens, WOT SWCD District Manager. "The success of this initiative is due to landowners taking time to understand and participate in conservation programs. The goal of the partnership positions is to reach more people and implement more conservation, to provide cleaner water, protect vulnerable soils and create more wildlife on our working farmlands."

If you are interested in being part of the next 17,000 acres contact the West Otter Tail SWCD at 218 998-5300.

Rothsay To Receive Safety Grant Funding

Rep. Jeff Backer, R-Browns Valley, issued the following statement regarding news that both the Rothsay and Chokio-Alberta School Districts are receiving school safety grants funding. Rothsay was awarded \$23,601 and Chokio-Alberta will be receiving \$139,000.

Last session, the legislature approved and Governor Dayton signed into law \$25 million in capital investment funds that schools could apply for to make physical safety improvements. The Minnesota Department of Education is expected to formally announce the grant allocations in a news release later this afternoon.

"I am pleased that both Chokio and Rothsay have been approved to receive these new school safety grants," said Backer. "Part of ensuring a student receives a world-class education is making sure that they are in a safe and secure learning environment. These grants will go a long ways in helping to make sure that is a reality for students in our communities."

The legislature approved an additional \$25 million in school safety grants as part of the supplemental budget bill, but those funds were vetoed by Governor Dayton.

ROTHSAY REGIONAL REPORT



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The publication is issued free of charge to those in the trade area or may be purchased for \$16.00 per year by those living outside the trade area.

To order a subscription or if you have any questions about advertising rates, please contact us at PO Box 203, Rothsay, MN or you may call us at our office in Barnesville at 218 354-2606.

Rothsay Regional Report

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Editor-Publisher

A Truly Unique Educational Experience

Awaits You In The New Rothsay Public School

STEAM Offerings - cross curricular in Science, English, Graphic Arts & Technology Courses. Experiences with 3D Printing, CAD Design, Lego/VEX/First Robotics and more.

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218 867-2116

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Fostering well rounded citizens who aspire greatness through family, community, and lifelong learning.

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