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“Preserving Our Past While Working On Our Future”

Rothsay Regional Report

VOLUME 39 - NUMBER 12 - SEPTEMBER EDITION 2019



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Rothsay School Is Buzzing On First Day Back

By: Karen Carpenter

School District #850 in Rothsay was fairly jumping with excitement as students and staff started their first day of school together.

It was a beautiful bright and sunny morning on Tuesday, September 3 as students entered the Rothsay School building to begin the 2019-2020 school year.

Some were holding tightly to a parent's hand while other, more experienced, less terrified, scholars, joked and laughed with friends. All and all, it was a very exciting start to the first day of school.

Teachers in the lower grades were in their classrooms awaiting students arrival. The kids found their desks and lockers, stowing supplies and coats.

Then it was time to head for breakfast which is offered free for the month of September. All parents had to do was to complete the 2019-2020 Application for Educational Benefits. Whether the family qualifies for benefits or not, both breakfast and lunch meals are free in September upon returning the application to the office.

It didn't take long for most of the elementary kids to finish breakfast. They were ready to pile into the gym to run off some of that pent up energy before settling into classrooms.



It was a beautiful, sunny morning as kids stepped off the school bus and into the Rothsay School building. It was an exciting time to greet classmates and teachers. Excitement was high to see what the new school year will bring.

The high school age youth spent some time over their meal and then gathered around lockers and in the hall to catch up with friends.

This year the kids were on Facebook live captured on video as they strolled into classrooms and through the halls.

Both school administrators were on hand and very visible as they greeted the students as they stepped

off the bus or entered the building.

Superintendent/High School Principal Wade Johnson is in his second year in this position. He came to Rothsay in the summer of 2017 beginning as all school principal.

For the 2018-19 school year Johnson stepped into the position of superintendent combined with high

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Superintendent/High School Principal Wade Johnson sat down to chat with a young student while he finished breakfast. The first day of school is a great time for administrators to be visible in the building and greet students.

Local Wheat Crop Is Mostly Being Stored In The Bins



Combining of the local wheat crop has not been pretty this year. Farmers have been dodging rain showers and fighting wet fields to get the crop off this season. Wheat harvest is usually wrapped up in a couple of weeks around here but this year's harvest has extended out from early August to mid-September and there are still quite a few fields unharvested. Just about all of the wheat will be placed in a farm bin and held for a future sale. Quality and yield have both been a problem this growing season.

Wheat at one time was the crop that drove the local farm economy. In fact, most of the local crops were small grains. There was wheat, barley and oats at the top of the heap. Any corn grown was mostly for silage and a winter food supply for cattle. There was some corn grown for the kernels but that too was mostly for cattle and was taken off the fields by picking the entire cob. Soybeans were few and far between.

Those small grain harvests would see double and single axle trucks lined up downtown from the Barnesville Farmers Elevator all the way back to Assumption Catholic Church in Barnesville. In Rothsay the line would extend from the elevator to the south, at times all the way to the blacktop highway. There were similar long lines at most of the surrounding elevators in Hawley, Pelican Rapids, Lawndale, Carlisle, Comstock, Wolverton and Kent. All of the trucks were small by today's standards with never a semi involved except to export the grain sold at the elevator.

Driving to the elevator with a load of small grain was an opportunity to chat with others in line because it was going to be a long wait. Two, up to as many as four hours waiting in line was not uncommon at the peak of the harvest. The lines were longest in the morning as farmers brought in grain harvested the day before. There was time to talk as they waited to dump and also waited for field conditions to dry down. By afternoon they could resume combining again.

Today the wait in line is relatively short as high speed conveyors move

the small grain from truck to a storage bin in very short order.

But that was then and this is now. There is still a significant amount of wheat grown locally. There is a little bit of barley grown, usually under contract to a brewing company. There is still a very small acreage devoted to oats. Most of the oats grown locally is under contract for horse feed.

While wheat hit a top market of \$25 per bushel a few years back, that was during a February and March shortage on the market. It really didn't make much difference anyway as most farmers had taken advantage of the rising prices on the way up and didn't have a kernel of wheat left when it hit the peak. Grain has plummeted on the market ever since.

Any wheat now grown is mostly by farmers who need to use it in a crop rotation or need the straw for one reason or another. Or perhaps the farmer just does not want to fight with a corn harvest that can linger well into November, even December is some cases.

While the wheat price stinks, this has turned out to be a problem year as far as wheat yields and quality go. It was a very late spring when farmers were finally able to get into fields. Wheat seeds did not get into the ground on time. It was well into May before any tractor tires started to roll in the fields this year.

The late spring did adversely affect the crop. Most of this summer has been cooler and wetter than normal. Wheat likes those cool conditions and a big harvest was hoped for to offset the price being offered for the crop.

The past two years big yields have offset a weak price structure for all commodities. Wheat yields of 70 bushels to the acre were not uncommon in 2017 and 2018. That was the hope again this year of wheat growers.

But hopes and yields have little to do with one another. For years vomitoxin has not been a factor in fields. That was not the case this year as the cool, damp conditions were an excellent breeding ground for the vomitoxin fungus. The infestation has hurt both yields and quality.

Paul Jorgenson, General Manager of Valley Ag Partners, said at one time it looked like an excellent wheat crop at his receiving stations in Rothsay and also further north at Sabin and Dilworth. But then the combines began to roll and bad news began to become quickly apparent.

"The yield just wasn't there," said Jorgenson. "We have hardly any wheat grown anywhere in our trade area any more but the very best fields were producing 50 bushels to the acre or less. Vomitoxin was causing some significant discounts from the price being offered."

"We actually dumped into our bins only about 60,000 bushels of wheat this year. I advised many of our farmers, if they had farm storage, to use it for the wheat. With the low price and dockage, it just wasn't worth selling. Unless they had to pay us a nickle a bushel per month to store it, then sell it. I don't see the wheat prices going up anytime soon," Jorgenson concluded.

Another concern this wheat harvest season was a new twist called "falling numbers". This is a

grading system that flour millers and bakers have devised to determine the wheats ability to be milled into flour. So far all of the local wheat seems to be making the grade but some has been close.

This year's wheat crop is certainly no bin buster. It has also proved difficult to get into the bins. Farmers have been trying to get their wheat combined for over a month and it has been a struggle. The wheat harvest, due to recent significant

rains, has now extended from mid August out well past Labor Day.

While much of the wheat has been harvested, there is still significant acreage that has not seen a combine yet. Fields are too wet and the moisture content of the wheat harvested is just too high. Standing in the field is causing discoloration and if the wheat stands too long in these damp conditions, it will actually begin to sprout in the heads

"Disappointing," was the one word explanation that CW Coop General Manager Curt Bjertness used to describe this year's wheat crop in the Comstock and Wolverton area.

"Yields were way down from what was expected. We had some fields producing in the low 30 bushel range. A very few of our best fields might make 60 bushels to

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Homecoming Candidates Chosen By RPS Peers



This year homecoming will be held the third week of school. Homecoming week will start on September 16 and conclude on the 20th. Candidates for homecoming were chosen last week and include seniors, left to right, king candidates - Ethan Curtis, Isaac Fredrickson, and Brady Molter; queen candidates - Jenna Fabre, Jordyn Martinez, and Brinna Rieken.

Junior attendants are Lilly Wheelright and Craig Henning. Chase Balken and Jett Kulack are the sophomore attendants. The freshman are Josie Leitch and Justin Kugler. The first-grade attendants are Madi Johnson and Carter Grunewald.

There are some activities going on around town throughout the week. There is a home volleyball game on Monday against Ashby. The third annual PTO color run will be on Wednesday with registration starting at 5:30. The short race will start at 6:00 and the long race at 6:15.

Coronation will be at 2:00pm on Friday, the

20th with an indoor parade to follow.

The Lions pork feed will be on Friday the 20th from 3:30 to 6:30 at the co. The football team will play at 7:00 pm on Friday against the Warriors from Wheaton/Herman/Norcross. Ending the week will be the Homecoming Dance after the football game on Friday.

Dress up days this year include Jersey Day on Monday. Tuesday come dressed like a teacher for Teacher Student swap day. Wednesday is John Hancock Day. Wear a shirt and get everyone to sign it. Thursday is color day.

Each grade level is assigned a certain color to wear. Color assignments are: 12th - pink; 11th - black; 10th - white; ninth - blue; eighth - purple; seventh - green; sixth - red; fifth - orange; fourth - yellow; third - green; second - blue; first - purple; and kindergarten and pre-k - pink.

Friday is the traditional spirit day where people are encouraged to wear Tiger colors - blue and gold.