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"Preserving Our Past While Working On Our Future"

Rothsay Regional Report

VOLUME 39 - NUMBER 13 - OCTOBER EDITION 2019

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Rothsay School Purchases Transportation Business

By: Karen Carpenter

For the second time in just over a year, Tiger Transport Services, LLC has been sold.

Now the owners aren't individuals but Rothsay School District #850. Rothsay school officials finalized the sale on the first day of school for the 2019-2020 year.

Things were a little tense for Superintendent Wade Johnson and the school board members until everything was signed and agreed upon.

Darin Allmaras purchased the school bus transportation portion of Fosse Transport on August 2, 2018 from Paul and Sandy Fosse.

The Fosses had been owners of Fosse Transport since 1990. They purchased the business from Paul's father, Art Fosse. Five years later, in 1995, the couple purchased the bus company from Sonny Nord and had been providing bus service for 22 years.

When Allmaras purchased the transportation business, negotiations had already been finalized with the

school for the 2018-2019 school year between Fosse Transport and the school district.

The amount agreed upon between Fosse and the school for the 2018-2019 school year was \$244,230.23.

School officials were prepared to offer an increase of 8.22 percent for 2019-2020 and 4.81 percent for the 2020-2021 school year.

Negotiations began between school officials and Allmaras early in the summer.

The proposal issued by Allmaras was a total of \$318,045.10 for 2019-2020 or a 30.22% increase. For 2020-2021 the amount was \$371,387.78 which came to a 17.09% increase.

"The difference over the next two years for transportation services would equal three teachers salaries," said Superintendent Johnson. "We had to weigh all of the costs."

It soon became clear that the two parties were at an impasse in reaching an agreement for future bussing services.

After looking at other options for transportation, the school board

and administrators decided the best course would be to offer to purchase the transport business from Allmaras.

As with all large purchases, legalities and paperwork take time. It was within days of school opening before everything was agreed upon. The final signatures were put to the paperwork on August 30, the first day of school.

The Rothsay School District became owners of a total of eight school busses. They paid \$57,100 for six of the vehicles and \$3,000 for the remaining two. Various tools were purchased for \$11,500.

Chad Curtis was retained as the manager and mechanic. He will be the go to person for day-to-day operations. Chad Curtis had been employed by Fosse for three years as a driver and mechanic and then by Allmaras for the past year. Curtis was already managing the service for daily operations.

Fortunately, all of the drivers returned this year. There is a lot of

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Tiger Transport Services, LLC carries some of the most precious passengers, local children. Rothsay Public Schools became the new owners of the bus service on August 30, 2019. The school purchased eight buses and tools from previous owner, Darin Allmaras, who owned and operated the business for one year. The bus garage and property was purchased from Paul and Sandy Fosse, who had owned the business up until the summer of 2018.

Barnesville Grad Holland Named New Postmaster

By Michael Stein

A familiar face to some Barnesville residents will carry on the mission of getting the mail out to city and rural residents.

Dana Holland Jr., a 1998 BHS graduate, takes over the postmaster duties from Anna Ostby upon her retirement at the end of September.

Holland started his new position Monday, October 14.

While living in Fargo and attending school there after high school, Holland took a part-time postal job helping with the busy Christmas season. He went full time in the West Fargo office in 2000, and in 2009 transferred to Fergus Falls.

"From there I was hired as postmaster in Elbow Lake," Holland said. "In 2012, I returned to Fargo working in labor relations as a management representative."

In 2015, Holland moved on in the Fargo office as a process operations support specialist, which focused on quality control.

Holland and his family have made their home in Rothsay, so his new position will cut down his daily commuting miles.

"This was really a good logistical move for me," Holland said. "It's a positive change of scenery, going from a plant with 150 employees to one with 10 on staff."



BHS graduate and Rothsay resident Dana Holland Jr. is the new Barnesville postmaster.

Like his predecessor, Holland has seen quite a bit of change in the postal industry, including the area of automation.

"While I was in West Fargo, I operated a sorting machine that could process 6,000 parcels in an hour," he said. "We did processing

for most of the state there."

Holland is only the 14th Barnesville postmaster since 1878.

"I'm glad to be back in Barnesville," he said. "I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of familiar faces."

Dufault Named New GM For Valley Ag Partners

By Michael Stein

As part of recent personnel changes, Valley Ag Partners has named Dave Dufault the coop's new general manager. Dufault, the third GM since the January 2018 merger of Rothsay Farmers Coop and Kragnes Farmers Elevator, began his new duties in mid-September.

"We've made some changes with the company and with staffing in that we're trying to utilize our staff and facilities more efficiently," Dufault said.

Dufault, previously with the elevator in Pelican Rapids, joined Valley Ag Partners January 2 of this year as branch manager for the Dilworth, Sabin and Kragnes locations. At that time stockholders were told that the Sabin and Kragnes satellite sites would likely close at some point.

"We're not re-inventing the wheel," Dufault said of the recent changes. "But we will be better utilizing the Barnesville fertilizer facility rather than the other smaller and less efficient facilities. The Barnesville plant is a very good asset

for us and we plan to use it the best and most efficient way possible."

After this fall, all fertilizer operations will take place at the Barnesville location.

"So rather than taking product out of Barnesville and mixing it at floater plants, we'll be doing all the mixing in Barnesville," Dufault said. "We'll eliminate some steps and achieve greater efficiency and provide better service to our customers."

Staffing realignment and replacement were part of the recent changes at Valley Ag Partners. The previous general manager Paul Jorgenson stepped down from his position in September for health reasons.

Over the past two years, Valley Ag has undergone a number of changes, starting with planning and executing the merger.

When he joined the company in January, Dufault said, "This was two strong coops coming together. The first year was a learning experience for everyone, so there's no reason why it shouldn't remain a strong



Dave Dufault was named GM of Valley Ag partners in September.

coop."

With the latest changes, Dufault said Valley Ag Partners will continue to move forward.

"We'll be moving some people around as we do more in the Barnesville plant," Dufault said. "Otherwise, we're just trying to get through this fall and hope things start drying out soon."

Filings Close For School And City Council Offices

As you may have heard, there's a big election coming up in about 15 months. President Trump as well as a whole herd of Democrats are all running for the top post at the national level.

But here at home we have more important elections to think about. We have to pick representatives to our school board and to our City Council.

Typically the City of Rothsay conducts their elections in even numbered years.

Due to an unusual set of circumstances, a special election for one representative to the Rothsay City Council will be held on Tuesday, November 5 this year. Filings for that one seat were open for two weeks and officially closed on Tuesday, August 13. Only one candidate filed for the office and Daryl Schleeter will be the only name printed on the ballot. He will be running for a three-year, two-month term on the Rothsay City Council. He currently holds an appointed spot on that board.

This has been an unusual seat on the council in that it has been filled by appointments. Originally Les Nelson won the election in the regular fall runoff. He stepped down to accept a different employment opportunity. He has left the area and since June has been an Arizona resident.

Joe Tillman had to vacate his seat on the council when he successfully ran for mayor in 2018. Former Mayor Chris Buckingham was no longer a member of the city council but agreed to be appointed until a new council member could be named in the next election.

All of this confusion will be history following the special election for the council office on Tuesday, November 5. Traditionally a new representative on the council is not seated until the January meeting of the new year. In the case of this type of a special election, the winning candidate will be seated to the position he is already serving in as an appointment.

Whatever happens in November, and its a good bet it will be Daryl Schleeter elected because he is the only one running, he will join the other members of the Rothsay City Council. Governing the city now are Mayor Joe Tillman with council representatives Darrell Tollefson, Tulsa-Leigh Kugler and appointed members Chris Buckingham and Daryl Schleeter.



There are three positions up for election to the District 850 School Board this year. When filings closed on August 13, incumbents Justin Phillips and Kevin Brenden had filed for re-election. They will be joined on this year's fall ballot by David Simmer. Chad Larson, who was a veteran on the school board, did not file for re-election.

Whoever is elected in the school board general election on Tuesday, November 5, will join Jessi Christ, John Reber and Mike Metzger on the District 850 School Board.

Fabre, Curtis Crowned Homecoming Royalty



2019 RHS HOMECOMING QUEEN JENNA FABRE AND KING ETHAN CURTIS

During their annual homecoming festivities Jenna Fabre and Ethan Curtis were crowned Queen and King respectively by their peers at Rothsay Public Schools. More details on Rothsay Public Schools Homecoming Week and activities, see Page 6.