

Five apply for city cannabis permits by first deadline

By Lori Sorenson

The city of Luverne received five conditional use permit applications for cannabis licensing during the first round of applications that closed Friday, May 9. They will be reviewed by the city's Planning and Zoning Commission, and a public hearing on June 9 will consider the applications in the order they were submitted.

Terry Gray, Sioux Falls, who owns Herb 'N Legend in Luverne, submitted the first two applications on April 24. One is requested for 206 West Main Street and another for 218 East Main Street.

On April 28, Dylan Stokes, Sioux Falls, applied for a conditional use permit for cannabis licensing at 1202 Kniss Ave. South. Stokes, doing business as DHRB Properties, LLC, is proposing a retail dispensary and edible manufacturing facility at the location.

On April 29, Peter Dikun, Dell Rapids, South Dakota, applied for a conditional use permit cannabis licensing for his property at 704 S. Kniss Ave. He operates as Dikun Properties LLC.

SEE CANNABIS APPLICATIONS ▶ PAGE 2

Next sheriff will be appointed

By Mavis Fodness

Commissioners unanimously decided to appoint a replacement for retiring Sheriff Evan Verbrugge, rather than conduct a special election.

Applications for the county sheriff position will be accepted between June 1 and July 1.

At the May 6 County Board meeting, County Attorney Jeff Haubrich presented the pros and cons of the two options allowed by state statute.

"If you do an appointment process, you also have basically broad discretion into how you set up doing the appointment," Haubrich said.

The appointment process also allows commissioners to fill the position of sheriff more quickly.

The state designates only five days a year on which a special election can take place. Currently, only two months are left this year for special elections —August and November.

If more than two candidates file for the sheriff's position, a primary election

SEE SHERIFF PROCESS ▶ PAGE 2

Rock Ranch to build counseling cabin

By Mavis Fodness

Rock Ranch's equine-assisted therapy program is growing, and owners Marie and Dan LaRock are responding to the need.

A counseling cabin will be constructed this fall, thanks to grants from the Lyon County River Boat and Seeds for Success foundations.

The 16-by-16-foot enclosed structure will be located west of the existing riding arena built in 2020.

The cabin will face the arena and be angled into the corner

SEE ROCK RANCH ▶ PAGE 5



A counseling cabin will soon be built on the west side of the arena at Rock Ranch near Hills. The cabin will have large windows and an observation deck on each side of the 16-by-16-foot structure.



This is a scene from the grandstand as the first-grade classrooms take on each other in the tug-of-war competitions. In the inset photo at the top of the page, kindergarten classmates Esther Gutierrez-Olmedo (left) and John Aukes have a discussion as they begin the Cardinal Dash.

Cardinal Dash marks decade of running for cash

Luverne Elementary students enjoy 70-degree temperatures May 7 for their 10th annual Cardinal Dash, a fundraiser organized by PPIE (Parent Partners in Education). After the running event, students went head-to-head with classmates in tug-of-war competitions.

This year's event raised \$14,000 for the organization to support special activities within the school. The first Cardinal Dash took place in 2015 for the kindergarten through fifth-grade students, who are challenged to sell pledge tickets. The event replaced the annual frozen food fundraiser.

At right, Levi Jessen (front of rope) helps his second-grade classmates win their tug-of-war. At far right, Noel Henrichs leads her tug-of-war classmates to a win in the battle of the fifth-grade classes.



In the photo at left, competitors Veronica Loosbrock (left) and Tyson Sherwood lead their respective third-grade classmates in the tug-of-war contest. In the photo at right, kindergartner Hailey Leicher (center) runs off the starting line with a look of joy.



H-BC to sell remaining bonds

By Mavis Fodness

The second of two bond sales for the Hills-Beaver Creek School District will take place May 28 and will complete the sale of \$29.975 million approved in a 2023 referendum vote.

Board members approved the sale of \$11.475 million Monday night after consulting with financial planner Matthew Hammer with Ehlers Inc.

Hammer anticipates good sale results despite the recent volatility in the bond market.

"We're seeing a little bit more stability in the market over the last few weeks," Hammer said.

"We're getting positioned well for a sale here at the end of the month." Results of the sale will be released at the evening school board meeting on May 28.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The more current bond sale includes \$8.475 million remaining from the 2023 bond sale and will include \$3 million approved last year through the district's tax abatement authority.

By state statute, a school district may collect its full bond levy within a year of the voter-approved bond referendum.

SEE H-BC BONDS ▶ PAGE 3

ON THE RECORD

Dispatch report April 30

•Complainant reported a road and drive law issue on Highway 23, mile marker 11.

•Complainant on E. Warren Street reported a scam.

May 1

•An outage was reported.

•Complainant east-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 11, reported a road and drive law issue.

•Complainant north-bound on Highway 75 reported suspicious activity.

•Complainant east-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 11, reported a road and drive law issue.

•Complainant on N. Oakley Street reported suspicious activity.

•Complainant on S. West Park Street reported theft/larceny.

•Complainant on S. Oakley Street reported property damage.

May 2

•Complainant on W. Bishop Street reported suspicious activity.

•A solicitor license was obtained.

•Complainant on W. Virginia Street reported harassing communication.

•A fire call was reported on 80th Avenue, Steen.

•Complainant in the Freeman area and Hatting reported trespassing.

•Complainant on S. Donaldson Street reported a civil issue.

•Rock County Sheriff's Department assisted another department east-bound on the county line.

•Complainant on Sioux Valley Drive reported threats.

•Complainant on S. Donaldson Street reported an assault.

•Complainant on N. Blue Mound Avenue reported disturbing the peace.

•A road and drive law issue in the 24-Hour parking lot was reported.

May 3

•Complainant on N. Freeman Avenue reported trespassing.

•A scam was reported.

•Complainant on S. West Park Street reported theft/larceny.

•Complainant on 4th and Church Avenue, Hills, reported a road and drive law issue.

•Rock County Sheriff's Department assisted another department on Highway 75, mile marker 17, near Hardwick.

•A fire call was reported on 150th Avenue, Steen.

•A fire call was re-

ported on 10th Avenue and 91st Street, Valley Springs, South Dakota.

May 4

•Rock County Sheriff's Department assisted another department in Beaver Creek.

•Complainant west-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 11, reported an accident with property damage.

•Complainant reported a scam.

•Complainant reported theft/larceny.

•Complainant on Dakota Road near Lineage reported suspicious activity.

•Complainant on 180th Street, Kenneth, reported a fire call.

•Complainant on N. Estey Street reported suspicious activity.

•Complainant on county roads 3 and 4 reported a road and drive law issue.

May 5

•Complainant on N. Kniss Avenue reported theft/larceny.

•Complainant west-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 20, Magnolia, reported a road and drive law issue.

•Law enforcement responded to report of a missing person on 115th Street.

•Complainant on E. Warren Street reported suspicious activity.

May 6

•Complainant on N. Oakley Street reported disturbing the peace.

•Complainant on N. Kniss Avenue reported property damage.

•Complainant on N. Blue Mound Avenue reported an accident with property damage.

•A fire call was reported on 140th Avenue, Hardwick.

•Complainant on W. Bishop Street reported burning/smoke.

•Complainant on Park Avenue, Kenneth, reported burning/smoke.

•Complainant on Park Avenue, Kenneth, reported burning/smoke.

•An accident with property damage was reported at 24-Hour parking lot.

In addition, officers responded to 1 escort, 14 ambulance runs, 1 parking violation, 2 paper services, 3 animal complaints, 1 fingerprint request, 23 burn permits, 3 vehicle impound releases, 1 point of information, 1 driver's license check, 3 alarms, 4 purchase and carry permits, 20 traffic stops, 7 abandoned 911 calls, 2 welfare checks, and 2 public assists.



The equine-assisted therapy program at Rock Ranch will soon have a dedicated counselor cabin at its rural Hills facility, thanks to two grants received from area foundations.

FROM PAGE 1 ► ROCK RANCH in Hills to build counseling cabin

between two pastures.

“It’ll be easy to swap horses out,” Marie said.

Large windows and a deck run along all sides of the cabin to allow unobstructed views of the horses and the surrounding countryside.

The cabin will allow sessions to be conducted in a quiet and relaxed natural setting and out of the weather elements, if necessary.

Rock Ranch began its equine-assisted therapy program in 2021 and completed 20 sessions that first year.

This year Rock Ranch anticipates completing 162 sessions.

In 2024 Rock Ranch had 3,300 visitors to the rural Hills facility.

They operate three programs — beginning horseback riding lessons, senior saddles for nursing home residents, and equine-assisted therapy.

They also host various organizations and groups interested in learning about horses.

How equine-assisted therapy sessions work

Clients are encouraged to ask questions while observing three or four horses used in a typical session.

Brenda Ling is one of three equine-assisted therapists working at Rock Ranch.

“As they interact with the horses, they are becoming curious about certain things, and they notice things that reminds them most of what they are working through,” Ling said.

Sometimes what is going on outside the fence opens clients to their concerns.

At a recent equine-assisted therapy session with Glory House in Sioux Falls, participants asked several questions about the horses in a nearby corral: Why can’t the horses go out in the pasture? Are they being fed? Why are they kept separate from the herd?

“They were still stuck on their time in prison, and the idea of freedom is scary for them — they feel safer there because this is what they’ve known,” Marie said.

“We turn that around and explore what freedom could look like, and the challenges of freedom are really hard.”

Other sessions had clients talking about the horses’ behavior with



Large windows inside the counseling cabin at Rock Ranch allow users to view nature and/or horses from all sides.

one another.

“They feel connected to the little horse that’s in the corner, and they feel excluded themselves,” Ling said. “They can relate to that because that’s how they feel in their family.”

Rock Ranch is a member of the equine therapy program called ARCH or Arenas for Change.

The program likens itself to someone walking through an archway.

“Before we enter an archway, we have certain things that we’re thinking about and experiences, feelings and all of that,” Ling said. “As we step through the arch, we can do so through different twists and turns as we share a story, and the transformation can happen.

“When we’re on the other side of the arch, that’s kind of a symbolic nature of what this can do for people.”

Percherons not part of therapy program

Last summer two black Percherons were gifted to Rock Ranch.

David and Kathryn Johnsons were looking to place their horses with an organization in which they would be used.

The draft horses, JoJo and Guinness, were trained to pulled wagons and became instant favorites for the Senior Saddles program.

The large horses would also transition into the equine therapy program.

As the Percherons were intro-

duced into the Rock Ranch herd, the Johnsons had a change of heart about their use.

“They realized their horses aren’t going to be used to drive and they wanted their horses driven every day,” Marie said. “They were not comfortable with that.”

The Johnsons have since removed the Percherons from the Rock Ranch.

“I do appreciate them being here,” Marie said. “I appreciate the things they taught us, but we did learn fast that we don’t have the time to have a driving program here.”

Four mindful clinics coming up

Marie and Ling are experimenting with one-time mindfulness sessions called “Breathe, Ground & Connect.”

The clinics are a self-guided experience with horses and nature.

Ling said participants receive a journal, where they reflect on various prompts from the horses and from nature.

“We are hoping for nice days and people will be able to explore,” Marie said. “It’s a time where they can just let go of everything else and just be mindful and take the time to focus on stuff that you really want to focus on. We don’t give ourselves time to do that.”

The two-hour sessions take place Fridays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on June 20, Aug. 15, Sept. 19 and Oct. 3.

FROM PAGE 4 ► BERGHORST LETTER supports child care center

to solve them.

Recognizing the urgency of this problem, the City Council partnered with other elected leaders, the State of Minnesota, and the Kids Rock! Board to take action. Local businesses and community members stepped up, contributing more than a million dollars to support this

vital project. Quality child care requires qualified, dedicated professionals — and just like in public education, that quality comes at a cost.

Public tax dollars and utility contributions are regularly invested in a wide range of community projects and organizations. Not every initiative will have

unanimous support, but our elected officials are tasked with making difficult decisions and prioritizing the greatest needs. Over a decade ago, accessible, reliable child care was identified as one of those needs, both locally and regionally.

Thanks to the many businesses, individuals and

organizations who contributed to this effort, we are securing the future of child care in our community. This investment not only supports working parents but also strengthens local businesses and our broader economy.

Barbara Berghorst,
Luverne

FROM PAGE 4 ► SORENSON LETTER grateful for emergency response

county line, I ended up working with both Pipestone and Rock County dispatchers.

Both dispatchers did an excellent job in telling me that all services. The response was quick, but as we all know, it seems a long time when waiting for them. However, help arrived in many ways, either by emergency vehicles or their private vehicles because they were close.

I truly can say that being on this side of needing service, seeing all the help that ar-

rived is a true blessing to our small communities.

When I was able to get up above the riverbank, I was very impressed with the assistance that had arrived.

First Responders from the Rock County Sheriff's Office, Jasper Ambulance, Jasper Fire Department and Garretson Fire Department were on the scene to assist in our need.

I would like to make sure the dispatchers and first responders are recognized

for their assistance during this incident. The dispatchers were professional and calm on the phone. The first responders were helpful in caring for my father all the way to the ambulance and to the hospital — along with asking if there was anything they could do for my family.

These are truly the blessings of a small community.

My father miraculously had no serious injuries or broken bones. However, he was very sore and bruised.

Please make sure if you see your local first responders and dispatchers, take the time to thank them for their services. Many of our emergency responders are busy with their lives but drop what they are doing to come to the aid of people in need in a moment's notice.

We were certainly grateful when they did so for our emergency.

Matthew Sorenson,
Rural Rock County,
Garretson, S.D

PALACE

PALACE

THEATRE

UPCOMING

EVENTS

VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS ONLINE

Afternoon Escape Movie:

The Unbreakable Boy

Thursday, May 15

2:00 pm

\$6 Admission

PG

Sinners

Friday - NO MOVIE DUE TO A PRIVATE EVENT

Saturday, May 17

Sunday, May 18

7:00 pm

2:00 pm

Tickets: \$6 for kids age 3 – 12th grade, \$8 for adults

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Save the dates!

KIDSSUMMER

CINEMA

FRIDAYS AT 10 AM

★ June 20

★ July 18

★ August 15

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