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Meet seven more new teachers in Norfolk.
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NEWS BRIEFS

REGION

Bald eagle killing

One of two Honduran nationals who had been living in Norfolk earlier this year has pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor crime stemming from the killing of a bald eagle.

Domingo Zetino-Hernandez, 20, pleaded guilty last week to violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, said Stanton County Sheriff Mike Unger in a press release. Zetino-Hernandez is scheduled to be sentenced in November.

In February, the Stanton County Sheriff's Office had contact with Zetino-Hernandez and Ramiro Hernandez-Tziquin, 20, after responding to a call of a suspicious vehicle near the Wood Duck recreation area. It was learned that the two men, who at the time were living in Norfolk, shot and killed a bald eagle with a high-powered air rifle, just west of the recreation area southwest of Stanton.

The two were cited on state charges, Unger said, and the deceased bird was turned over to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Zetino-Hernandez and Hernandez-Tziquin then were charged by federal authorities with the unlawful killing of the national bird.

Zetino-Hernandez was arrested on a federal arrest warrant and has been in custody since March, according to Unger. Hernandez-Tziquin is being sought on a federal arrest warrant. Both suspects are alleged to have illegally entered the United States and could face deportation.

Victims identified

Two women who died last week when their minivan rear-ended a tractor in Northeast Nebraska have been identified.

Jamie Norton, 37, of Craig and Elizabeth Thomsen, 42, of Rosalie died Wednesday as a result of their injuries, according to the Cuming County Sheriff's Office. Both women were pronounced deceased at a West Point hospital.

Investigators determined that Norton was driving a 2019 Dodge Caravan westbound on Nebraska Highway 51 just west of Bancroft about 8:15 a.m. The minivan collided with the rear of a John Deere tractor that was pulling a feed wagon.

The driver of the tractor and another passenger were transported to area hospitals.



Keep on top of it all

City hall, schools part of complete coverage

By MILANA DONÉ
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An informed public provides the foundation for a healthy community. While national news is abundantly available, quality local coverage — reliable, trusted, balanced and accurate — can be harder to come by. When it is available because of the work of a local newspaper, it should be valued.

That's what the Daily News strives to provide, whether the topic is city government, education, business and industry, agriculture, the criminal justice system, arts and culture or sports.

Jami Jo Thompson, superintendent of the Norfolk Public Schools, understands and appreciates that.

Communication, community relationships and reliable media go hand in hand, she said. Local communities thrive when knowledge is timely, thorough and truthful.

"We appreciate our partnership with the Daily News and (its) commitment to providing accurate information to our community," Thompson said.

It's also true that when a community lacks reliable facts, false or misleading information can take its place.

"When there is not a reliable news source, misinformation is spread. It's important for people to receive accurate information in a timely manner," Thompson said.

Having accurate information is especially important at times where there is "strife with the people," said Shane Clausen, a member of the Norfolk City Council.

That's why he appreciates the Daily News' efforts to serve as a "platform to be objective."

"In my opinion, everyone gets a fair shake to say what they're trying to say," Clausen said.

City council meetings, reported on and summarized by the Daily News, provide important information for local citizens on developments in communities. Decisions made at council meetings provide an insight into the goals of the council and how they will impact citizens.

"By covering council meetings, you can see what direction we're trying to go in," Clausen said. "The coverage

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Protect the Pillar

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The Protect the Pillar series, to date, may be found by scanning the QR code or going to www.norfolkdailynews.com

In times of crisis, NDN keeps readers informed

By MILANA DONÉ
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On March 8, 2019, the Daily News published a story alerting readers that meteorologists were concerned about impending flooding conditions in Northeast Nebraska.

In the article, hydrologist David Pearson said, "If you had a checklist for the things you don't want to have for flooding to be worse, we're checking all the boxes. The recipe is there."

About that same time, representatives of the Pierce Fire Department were attending an annual "storm spotter awareness" class. Serving as a refresher for most of the department, the information shared made the first responders a bit more aware of possible flooding to take place in Pierce.

"The meteorologists who were there ... seemed a little bit nervous," said Steve Dolesh, Pierce's fire chief. "They gave us some information about potentially some heavy-duty flooding that could occur in mid-March. That got our awareness up a little bit."

Around the time of the storm spotter class, the Daily News published an article about potential severe weather in the forecast that month. "One of the things that was in that article stated that they were most concerned about extreme flooding and the North Fork of the Elkhorn River specifically by Pierce," Dolesh said.

Even more than the meteorologists' words a few days earlier, the Daily News' article spurred Dolesh into action.

"That article right there prompted our attention," he said. "I contacted all my officers on the fire department. We contacted the police department, the city officers, contacted all the city department heads and

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Council keeps tax levy for airport in place.
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Man seeks facts in ex-transit manager's theft case

By AUSTIN SVEHLA
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Jeffrey Stewart has unwavering support, and it's not just from his attorney.

An Indiana man who has staunchly defended the former general manager of North Fork Area Transit submitted a letter to the Madison County Court office on Friday requesting a fact sheet pertaining to the money allegedly spent by Stewart while he worked for the nonprofit.

Michael Rockport, who provided an address in Chesterton, Indiana, typed a two-page letter directly addressing the court. He also attached a 10-plus page letter he previously sent to the Nebraska State Auditor's Office. The state auditor's office released a report on Aug. 7 detailing the alleged financial improprieties by Stewart.

Rockport's letter is the second he has submitted to

An Indiana man wants the court "to set the record or facts straight and dispel misconceptions of what type of money amounts expenses were created by Mr. Stewart from his criminal case in Madison County."

the court. In February, he communicated a similar request for a fact sheet, while also alleging that media reports have fueled public misconception surrounding Stewart's alleged crimes.

Rockport also has taken to social media comments to defend Stewart and question media outlets as to the information they have reported on in Stewart's case and the fallout for North Fork Area Transit and Norfolk-area residents.

In his letter published on Friday, Rockport asked

the court to create a fact sheet and to make it public "to set the record or facts straight and dispel misconceptions of what type of money amounts expenses were created by Mr. Stewart from his criminal case in Madison County."

Stewart, 32, was charged on Dec. 16 with felony theft resulting from allegations that he used North Fork Area Transit credit cards to charge around \$740,000 in personal expenditures. An arrest affidavit alleges that Stewart spent tens of thousands of dollars at casinos, hotels and local businesses.

The state auditor's report released earlier this month included details of a five-day trip Stewart and his family took to Disney World in July 2022 in which Stewart allegedly made more than \$34,000 in unauthorized purchases.

The audit also shows that in 2022, Stewart spent

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