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Local reps against \$9.50 minimum wage

Deal in place; vote expected this week

By Heather Rule and Chris Reinos Daily Journal

Lawmakers reached a deal Monday that would raise the state's minimum wage to \$9.50 per hour within a few years. The minimum

"I can't help but think of the small businesses that have to somehow figure out how to do this."

— Rep. Bud Nornes, R-Fergus Falls



wage could continue to go up unless a governor's administration decides to stop it, according to terms of the agreement.

Rep. Bud Nornes, R-Fergus Falls, believes a minimum wage increase is overdue, but a hike to \$9.50 per hour seems too significant to him.

He and Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen, R-Alexandria, plan to vote no.

"I think we're being a little over-aggressive on correcting the minimum wage," Nornes said.

Based on feedback and discussions legislators have had with their constituents, they've determined raising the minimum wage is going to happen, said Harold Stanislawski, executive director of the Fergus Falls Economic Improvement Commission.

"We're going to have to adjust to that now," Stanislawski said.

The House is likely to vote on the legislation this week; it's scheduled

for a Senate vote Wednesday.

The wage would be indexed for inflation starting in 2018, with an annual cap of 2.5 percent. A decision on whether to block an automatic increase would rest with the Department of Labor and Industry.

Lawmakers had generally agreed to hit the \$9.50 mark in a series of steps beginning this summer. But House leaders had insisted on raises tied to inflation starting in 2017. Top senators said they couldn't muster support for purely automatic increases.

See Wage — Page 3

Paying it forward



Heather Rule/Daily Journal

The Polejewski family (left to right) Hannah, Angie, Grace, J.P. and Joe recently made a \$500 donation through the Bell State Bank's "Pay It Forward" program to the Ronald McDonald House in Fargo. The family stayed there in November 2008 after Joe was born with Down Syndrome and needed to be treated at a Fargo hospital. It was a school essay written by Hannah earlier this year that gave the family the idea to donate the money to the Ronald McDonald House.

Sister's letter for brother eventually leads to \$500 donation

By Heather Rule Daily Journal

Just before Thanksgiving more than five years ago, J.P. and Angie Polejewski, of Fergus Falls, were sitting in a Fargo neonatal intensive care unit with their newborn son, Joe, when they noticed a poster on the wall for the Ronald McDonald House. Not thinking they'd qualify to stay there, J.P. decided to call anyway.

No problem. They were told they could stay as long as necessary.

"Just the fact that he was in the hospital was the only thing they needed," Angie said. "It was a huge burden lifted."

Joe was born with Down Syndrome Nov. 18, 2008, in Fergus Falls. He had trouble breathing and was taken to Fargo where he spent 10 days in the NICU. Doctors wanted to make sure he didn't have a hole in his heart, which he did not.

The Polejewskis stayed across the street from the hospital at the Ronald McDonald House during Joe's hospital stay.

"At first, we were kind of overwhelmed," J.P. said. "The staff made us feel so at home and so welcome. It was phenomenal for us to

have a place to be able to go and stay."

Drawing on those memories, the Polejewskis were recently able to "Pay It Forward" with a \$500 donation from Bell State Bank and Trust of Fargo to the Ronald McDonald House of the Red River Valley in Fargo. The money will go toward the general fund, covering the amounts that affected families aren't able to pay.

"It was a neat experience for our whole family to be a part of," Angie said. "It's neat to be able to see our kids get excited about helping out."

It was fun to hear from the family again, said Jill Christopher, executive director of the Ronald McDonald House in Fargo, since it had been so long.

"Kind of surprising to realize the impact that goes on afterward," Christopher said.

J.P. and Angie's daughter, Hannah, who was just 5 years old when her brother was born, wrote an essay for school earlier this year, with the premise being what she would do with \$100. Her answer was to give it to the Ronald McDonald House.

See McDonald — Page 6



Photo provided

Sister Grace Polejewski gives her little brother, Joe, a kiss during his time in the NICU in 2008 in Fargo.

FF native takes top position at Iowa school

Daily Journal



Weers

A Fergus Falls native has been hired as superintendent for the Tri-Center Community School District in Iowa, according to a report in The Daily Nonpareil in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Tony Weers will start in his new position on July 1. He will replace Brett Nanninga, the district's superintendent of 26 years.

Weers graduated from Fergus Falls High School in 1994 and has several college degrees, including a doctorate in educational administration and supervision from the University of Nebraska in 2012.

He spent the past 12 years working for Westside Community Schools in Nebraska and is an assistant principal at Westside High School.

Man allegedly urinates in squad car

By Heather Rule Daily Journal

An Erhard man was arrested early Tuesday after he allegedly urinated in the direction of a deputy, according to the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities were called to the man's residence for a welfare check on him. They found him passed out on the ground at the end of his driveway. He was reportedly heavily intoxicated and became hostile and disorderly while he was being checked on.

He was taken into custody, with the plan to transport him to detox. While on the way, he reportedly said he was injured, so they headed to the hospital. The man reportedly needed to urinate but refused to do so outside when the deputy pulled over.

Once back in the vehicle, the man allegedly pulled down his pants and urinated in the direction of the driver.

The 38-year-old man was arrested for fourth-degree assault-bodily fluids, criminal damage to property, possession of a small amount of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

He was treated and released from the hospital and then taken to jail.

Annual Empty Bowls fundraiser for Salvation Army set

By Chris Reinos Daily Journal

Lori Charest has been organizing the Empty Bowls fundraiser for 10 years, which would explain why she might seem more excited than many of her students.

But Charest, a ceramics instructor at Fergus Falls-M State, has

also seen what the fundraiser can do for her students.

"They get a chance to see that a bunch of people and a little bit of work can accomplish great things," Charest said.

This year's Empty Bowls fundraiser is set for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday at M State's Legacy Hall. Proceeds from the event, during

which volunteers will sell soup in bowls made by Charest's students, go toward the Salvation Army.

For a suggested minimum donation of \$15, customers will get their lunch, and will also get to keep the bowl it comes in. The soup will be served with fresh rolls from City Bakery, which is donating the rolls. Charest's classes in both fall and

spring semesters have worked on the bowls, with about 45 students contributing two bowls each.

Lauren Proels was one of those students, having spent a total of about two weeks working on her two bowls. The class is her first foray into pottery, and the bowls

See Bowls — Page 3

MAILING LABEL

Weather forecast: TOMORROW: HIGH: 73 LOW: 37 SUNRISE TOMORROW: 6:49 am SUNSET TOMORROW: 8:04 pm YESTERDAY: HIGH: 54 LOW: 34 PRECIPITATION: .0

OBITUARIES In today's Journal, Page 2 • Daniel Halvorson, 47 • Elaine Jacobson, 88 • Gladys Kastella, 95 • Ann Magnuson, 93 • Hildegard Primus, 88 • Claudia Backen, 68 • Larry Hansen, 75 • Chester Holden, 84 • Marlon Restad, 83

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