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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2023

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 476-7966

Shadow Lakes resident petitions city for policing help

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

A Shadow Lakes resident is asking the city of Braidwood and the Braidwood Police Department to step in to help relieve some traffic issues inside the gated community.

On Aug. 22, Fred Miller approached the City Council with a request for a traffic enforcement agreement between the city and the Shadow Lakes Home Owners Association (HOA).

Miller, who is not a member of the HOA board, said conditions on

the roads in Shadow Lakes have become dangerous for the residents of the community.

"A serious speeding problem has been a continuous and on-going issue within the Shadow Lakes Community in Braidwood," Miller said. "Over the years, residents have offered suggestions to the Home Owners Association to address these issues, but no effective measures were implemented and their concerns have been repeatedly brushed aside."

Miller said that he contacted the HOA in July asking that the HOA and

the city consider a traffic enforcement agreement.

By state law, a municipality can enter into an agreement with entities such as hospitals, churches, HOAs, shopping centers, and apartment complex owners for regulation of traffic on those private grounds.

Shadow Lakes was chartered as a gated community with private roads, meaning the city of Braidwood does not own the streets inside the community. The homeowners, via HOA dues, pay for maintenance and snow removal of their streets, and have their own private enforcement

patrols for speeding or other traffic violations.

Per state law, if an agreement were made, the BPD would be empowered to "regulate the parking of automobiles and the traffic" inside Shadow Lakes, and to erect stop signs, flashing signals, and enforce traffic regulations. The city would also be able to ask for financial compensation from the HOA for such assistance.

Miller said after getting no response from the HOA on his proposal, and after being offered a sit-down meeting with city officials, he

opted to bring it up during public comment at the most recent City Council meeting.

"Through the Freedom of Information Act, the electronic speed monitoring report which was conducted over the 4th of July weekend by the Braidwood Police Department was released on the 28th of July," Miller said. "Copies of the report were emailed to the City of Braidwood and Shadow Lakes HOA, which conclusively documented that severe speeding issues had been identified. On the

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Reed-Custer prepares annual budget

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The Reed-Custer School District has outlined its spending plans for the next year.

On Aug. 16, the members of the Reed-Custer School District Board of Education approved the tentative budget for the 2024 fiscal year (FY24), which began on July 1 and runs through June 30, 2024.

The budget outlines a total of \$30.7 million in expenditures across all funds in FY24, and \$31.8 million in revenues.

In individual funds, spending for the current fiscal year shapes up as follows:

- Education - \$24.3 million, including \$1.9 million in payments for the elementary school construction
- Operations and Maintenance - \$3.6 million
- Transportation - \$1.6 million

The \$1.9 million for the RCES payment was authorized by the board as a transfer from the Educational Fund to the Debt Service Fund

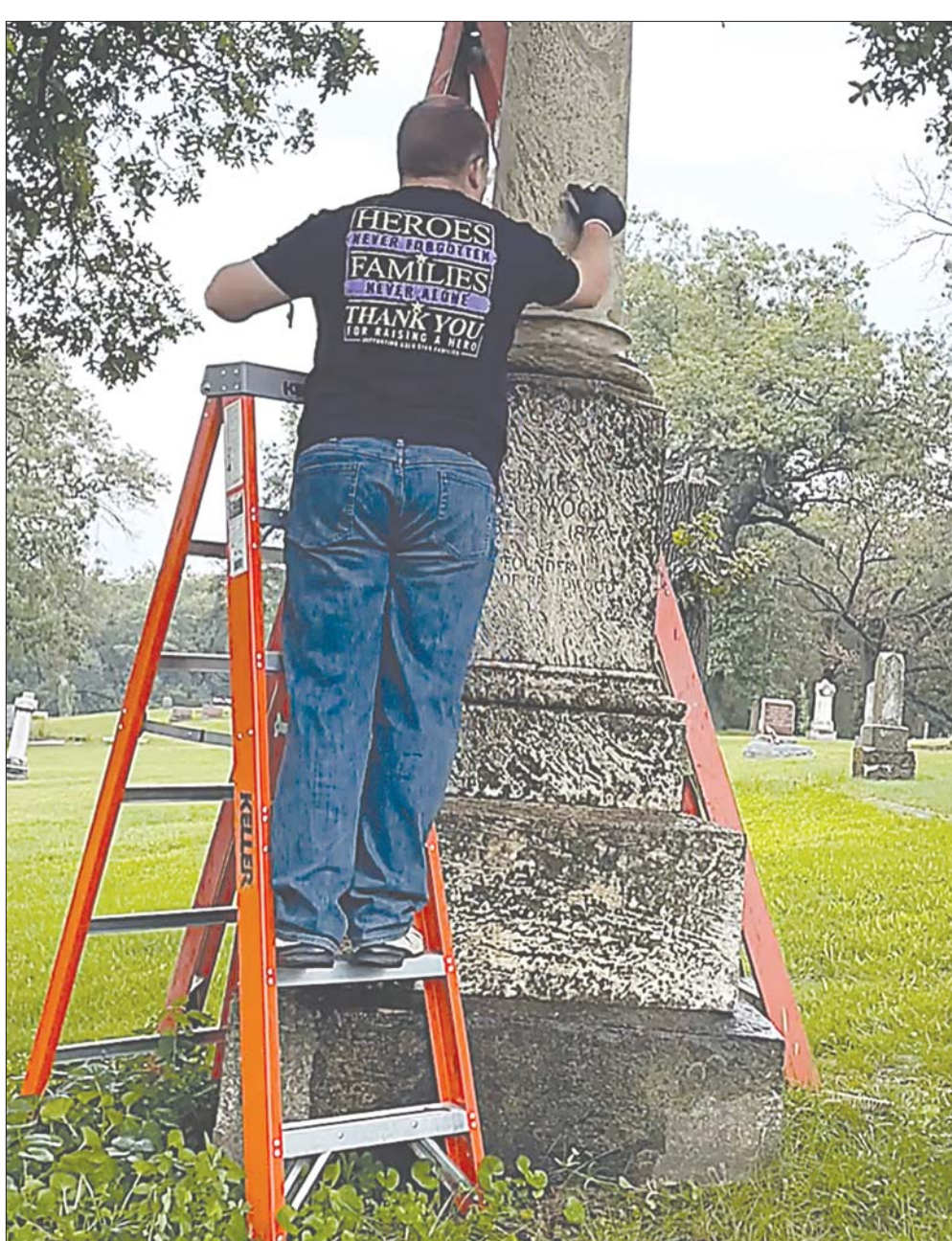
The budget is currently available for review at the district's administration offices, and will be formally adopted during the regular board meeting in September.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Mark Mitchell informed the board of new rules regarding financial reporting to the state.

Under newly enacted state law, districts that do not receive federal impact aid funding must annually calculate their operational funds' cash reserve balances and compare them with the district's average annual expenditures.

The district must then annually present a written report covering the annual average expenditures of its operational funds for the previous three fiscal years at a

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Courtesy photos

BRAIDWOOD RESIDENT ADAM BEATY carefully cleans the gravestone of James Braidwood, the namesake of the city of Braidwood. A civil engineer and mining boss, Braidwood died in 1879 and is buried at Oakwood Cemetery.

New life for Braidwood headstone

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Turn the clock back 175 years, and the landscape in southern Will County was quite different, both literally and figuratively.

In the 1850s, settlement of the area was gradual, with farmers unlikely to pick the region and its sandy meadows as their first choice to call home.

But things changed when coal was discovered in 1864.

"The news of the discovery of a workable vein of bituminous coal so near to Chicago, the metropolis of the Great Lakes region spread so rapidly and far, attracting the first hundreds of experienced coal miners from Pennsylvania, then thousands from such foreign countries as Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, France, Italy,

Germany, Austria, Poland and Bohemia," wrote MJ Donna in his 1957 book, *The Braidwood Story*.

While early settlers included James Cunnea, William Higgins, Frank and Thomas O'Reilly, William Smith, Patrick and James Dwyer, William Sterritt, Timothy Keane, and William Keever, it was Scottish-born civil engineer and mine owner James Braidwood who would become the namesake for the city of Braidwood when it was founded in 1865, and later incorporated in 1873.

A mining expert, Braidwood bossed the sinking of the B and C mines for the Chicago and Wilmington Coal Company.

After his passing in 1879, Braidwood was buried at Oakwood Cemetery on Essex Road, where his grave has gone unnoticed by the

SEE GRAVE, PAGE 2

Town Hall meeting focuses on youth alcohol use

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Members of the community gathered together at Wilmington City Hall on Aug. 24, for a frank talk about alcohol and how it affects teens.

The Town Hall meeting was sponsored by the Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community, and attracted residents looking to find the best ways to help local youth, as well as their families, understand the dangers that exist with underage alcohol use and misuse.

The discussion got a Major League boost, thanks to panelist Scott Spiezio. The Morris native and two-time World Series Champion spoke to those in attendance about how alcohol, and later cocaine, affected his life and his career in the Big Leagues.

Spiezio, who was drafted by the Oakland As in 1993 and later went on to win two World Series rings, one with Anaheim and one with St. Louis, said he

didn't drink much as a teen or early in his career, when he was focused hard on getting to the next level.

But, he said, peer pressure as his career grew to cut loose and have drinks with his friends and teammates set the groundwork for future issues. He said that while he continued being active in his church and community, a spinal injury in spring training one left him temporarily sidelined.

"I fell into depression," he said. "Instead of dealing with it in a way that was healthy, I dealt with it by saying, well, if I go out and I'm hungover or something, that's not going to affect my play. So, I started going to try and make friends in the wrong places, on the road, at bars. One thing led to another, I remember I was sipping a beer and I didn't like it, but someone [suggested a mixed drink], so I choked one down and after two or three days in a row, I started liking

SEE TOWN HALL, PAGE 2

Talks continue over Custer, Braidwood IGA

STAFF REPORT

The Custer Fire Protection District (CFPD) will continue talks about a potential Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Braidwood Fire Protection District for services.

But if and when that plan will ever materialize is still up in the air.

The CFPD met on Aug. 23, where newly appointed members Dan Rozak and Ryan Shorkey were sworn in. The pair will fill two vacancies left after two previous board members departed over residency issues.

During that meeting, the board announced that the CFPD's ambulance passed its inspection at the state level. The next step is training for staff before the ambulance can go live.

Information posted to the public following the meeting noted that the board unanimously agreed to continue

talks with Braidwood regarding the proposed IGA, and a full board special meeting is being planned.

A date for that meeting has not yet been announced.

The draft IGA proposal would turn fire services in Custer Township over to Braidwood.

Highlights of the proposal include Custer turning over operations to Braidwood, and in return Braidwood would intend to man the firehouse on Route 113.

Custer would liquidate all its assets other than the firehouse and ambulance, and Braidwood would take over those operations fully.

The full text of the draft can be found on CFPD website, www.custerfpd.org.





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