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Hi, hello and welcome to our E-subscriber of the Week: Kris Ferguson Drayton, ND

Your Weather



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DRAYTON'S FOUR LEGGED OFFICER IN TRAINING

Infamous dog Freeway heads to officer training

By Christine Jensen

From lost and alone to finding his forever home, the German Shepherd puppy Freeway has become an important figure in the Drayton community. With help and encouragement from his community, Freeway headed to police training on Jan. 15.

According to Ian Mattice, chief of police, after adopting Freeway and letting him ride with him for a short time, it was decided Freeway would be perfect for the job. Due to liability issues, the city decided it would be best if Freeway didn't ride with unless he was able to get training which the city didn't have funds for so fundraising efforts started and since then, with help from community members and friends, more than half of the \$6,000 goal has been raised thus far and Freeway was able to begin his two month long training.

Mattice said training will be at Minnesota Canine Consultants (MCC) in New Prague, Minn. He said they do both police dog training as well as civilian dog training, taking in dogs from around the country as well as Canada. They also run a boarding service. Mattice took him for an evaluation and testing, meeting the trainer Andrew Helgerson half way in St. Cloud.

"They have quite the facility and train multiple dogs," Mattice said. "They have a lot of people working at the facility as well."

According to the MCC website, in 2015, Eagan police officer Andrew Helgerson decided to put his years of experience in police canine to work by starting his own business. Together, with the help of a couple of friends, Minnesota Canine Consulting was formed. In 2021, Andrea retired after 22 years of law enforcement and 17 years in police canine to focus on building his business. In May, 2022, MCC purchased 10 acres of land and Acres of Fun Pet Resort in rural Scott County, Minn.

"We are proud to offer unmatched service in the dog boarding industry as well as the very best in modern dog training," the website states. "What started as a hobby has become something much more. Fueled by a passion for dogs, commitment to public service, and providing the ultimate experience for our customers, we have grown and are looking forward to the future."

The website goes on to state as police officers, they are proud of their history of service to the public and continue that public service by training pet owners on the importance of responsible dog handling.

"From training police canine teams to the family pet, we take this responsibility seriously," MCC website states. "Dogs are a huge part of the family unit and we keep this in mind with every dog we train."

Although it was difficult for both Ian and his wife Jamie, as well as their daughter Rylee to see Freeway go because he has become so much a part of their family, they know the training

will be beneficial and they realize how much Freeway will be a benefit for Ian, his family, the Drayton community, and Freeway himself.

"He is so good with people and the kids at the school just love him. He has become a community dog. I know in order for him to ride with me which he loves doing, we had to put him through this training. We just felt like it was his purpose," Ian said. "It will benefit both the community and Freeway."

Freeway will always be wearing a special sock on his back paw Ian said. He was injured at some point when he was lost and looking for sustenance around the county. The special sock protects his paw from the elements because of his injury.

"When he was rescued he had that bad paw," Ian said. "We think it was either a trap or he got caught in something and then he got frostbite."

Ian said it was difficult to see him go since he is such a huge part of their lives. It was an emotional time for them as they handed him over to the trainer.

"I just kept thinking I hope he doesn't think we are abandoning him," Ian said. "He seemed to know something was happening but he hasn't been able to come to work with me for a while so we thought this was the best outcome for him. It helped that we had a few days to hug on him and love him before he went."

According to Ian, Freeway passed all the initial evaluation and testing so he hopes he will do well at training. They are unable to visit Freeway during his time there. The trainer said it affects the dog's training because they think they are going home if they see their family and dogs can often get depressed after a visit.

"It is really sad for us too but the trainer will be sending us pictures and videos of his progress so that will help," Ian said.

In addition to Freeway's training, Ian will have to go for a week long training with Freeway as well. A cage and other supplies for the police car will also need to be purchased so there are some additional expenses they hope to cover by fundraising efforts.

Fundraising efforts

A meat raffle will be held on Feb. 1 at Johnny Bravos in Drayton, beginning at 7 pm. Raffle tickets are currently being sold around town for five different guns and the drawing will be held that evening.

"We are so very honored a few people in the community decided to hold a meat raffle to help us with fundraising efforts," Ian said. "We are looking forward to him coming home and getting back to work. A huge thank you to everyone who has donated and people who have stepped up with fundraising efforts, those who have bought raffle tickets, and the entire community. We have had so much support and it is appreciated."

According to Jamie, they have raised \$3,500 so far which does not include the gun raffle. She said they have approximately 100 tickets still available for purchase. When they get all of them collected, along with a few friends, they will tally that fundraiser. She said Mavis Keena's cookie fundraiser brought in \$1,000 and between Jamie's crafts and Polly Pokrzywinski's bake sale at Old Fashion Christmas they raised \$700.

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Debate over displaying the Ten Commandments in schools

By Ann Estvold, North Dakota Newspaper Association Legislative Intern

North Dakota's school boards already have a state law that gives them the ability to display the Ten Commandments in classrooms, if they are accompanied by other historical documents. Now, lawmakers are debating whether to require posting the commandments in every public K-12 and college classroom.

The debate is among advocates who say the Ten Commandments provide a foundation of morals and values – and that teaching them in schools was once broadly accepted – and opponents who say the compulsory posting of them in public classrooms would violate the U.S. Constitution's ban on establishing a state religion.

One of the bill's sponsors, Sen. Mark Enget, R-Powers Lake, said the commandments are historically and morally important outside of their Christian religious context. "They are pure and good and build strong families which in turn build a strong society," said Enget.

The House Judiciary Committee is reviewing HB 1145, which would require posting the Ten Commandments in the state's public K-12 and college classrooms. The panel held a hearing Jan. 14 and did not make an immediate recommendation about whether the bill should be approved or defeated.

Death of women in top higher ed leadership in North Dakota causes concern

Currently only one woman in a position of leadership among 11 institutions

By Michael Standaert, North Dakota News Cooperative

Former university leaders are raising concern about the lack of women in top leadership positions at North Dakota's 11 public higher education institutions. Currently only one has a woman president or CEO.

This comes at a time when the State Board of Higher Education is beginning the process of filling president vacancies at campuses in Bismarck, Dickinson and Devils Lake. In addition, North Dakota University System Chancellor Mark Hagerott will leave his position toward the end of the year.

Those raising the profile of the issue point out that nationally and within the state, women account for between 50-60% of enrollment and graduation rates in higher education.

They believe leadership at those institutions should better reflect those figures.

"The SBHE's record for hiring women in CEO positions for the last 25 years shows a pattern and practice of discrimination on the basis of gender," said Ellen Chaffee, who served 15 years as president at Valley City State University (1993-2008) and nine of those concurrently as president of Mayville State University through 2001.

Chaffee notes that five institutions had female presidents during the 1990s. That dropped to zero after 2008, until Valley City had two between 2014-2018, and Dakota College at Bottineau hired a woman leader in 2020.

Nationally, rates of women in president or CEO positions at colleges and universities rose by 10% from 2006 to 2022 and currently women comprise around 33% of those top leadership spots across the country.

"When it comes right down to it, in my opinion, there needs to be a concerted effort to hire more diversity," said Debora Dragseth, Baker Boy Professor of Leadership at Dickinson State University who served as vice-president there from 2020-2022.

Dozens of interested people have posted testimony on the Legislature's website, with the majority being opposed to the bill. Dozens of people also attended the hearing in person, although time limits prevented many of them from testifying.

Tim Barton, president of WallBuilders, a Texas based organization that promotes the teaching of Christian history, said the Ten Commandments were taught in schools until after a 1971 U.S. Supreme Court case, called Lemon v. Kurtzman.

The Supreme Court has since reinterpreted aspects of the "Lemon test." In a 2022 case, Kennedy v. Bremerton, the Supreme Court ruled the establishment clause should be interpreted by reference to historical practices and understandings.

In light of the Kennedy ruling, House Bill 1145 would not violate the First Amendment, because there is a long history and tradition of the Ten Commandments being taught in schools, argued Janice Lorrach of the Pacific Justice Institute, a legal nonprofit that describes itself as focusing on defending civil liberties.

"The passage of HB 1145 will enable students in the state of North Dakota

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"It's the right thing to do," Dragseth said. "It's ethical. But also the fact that the majority of college students are female. Who's representing them? Who's walked in their shoes?"

Dragseth calculated that women have served as the top leaders at higher education institutions throughout the state just under 6% of the time over the course of their history.

Five of North Dakota's higher education institutions have never had a formal woman leader, including the University of North Dakota, Minot State University, Dickinson State University, Williston State College, and North Dakota State University (NDSU). NDSU did have an interim woman president for a brief period in 1969.



Ellen Chaffee has voiced concerns regarding the drop in women leaders since the 1990s. Submitted photo

With Bismarck State College, Dickinson State University and Lake Region State College all in the process of searching for presidents, SBHE chair Tim Mihalick said there's an opportunity to add female leaders at one or more of those schools. "From my perspective, and I think of the board in general, I agree, we need more female representation," Mihalick said. "When we get the qualifications that match the institution's needs, I would absolutely

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Freeway the "community dog" and his dad Officer Mattice. Photo by Christine Jensen

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