

Couple of other Crosby projects in works

Council discusses repair, replacement of streets, sewer lines, water mains

By John Bayer

A street improvement project in Crosby this fall is set to begin soon, the city's engineering firm told the city council Sept. 8.

Joshua Feil of Moore Engineering presented updates on this and other projects throughout the city during the council's regular monthly meeting.

Feil said the contracts for the street improvement project, which the council approved at their special meeting on Sept. 2, have been routed for signatures.

The project involves major repair of a road near the county shop, as well as patchwork throughout the city.

Feil also discussed the state Flexible Transportation Fund Program that helps fund transportation improvements, such as roads and sidewalks.

Feil reported that the county is planning to apply for funds to work on improving County Road 15 from the Crosby Country Club to state Highway 5.

When that project gets underway, that would be the ideal time for the city to work on the old water pipes below, Feil said.

"Rather than take the risk of that water main starting to fail while you have new pavement on it," Feil said.

Feil went on to say that if the county receives the state funding to replace the road, the city would qualify for a Departement of Water Resources grant to cover 60% of the pipe replacement project.

Feil also presented another task order for the council's consideration, for the design and construction of sewer lines to replace older ones.

The engineering costs for the two phases would total \$171,000, with an estimated project cost of over \$1.6 million.

The council voted to approve the engineering fees for both phases, not to exceed the projected \$171,000.

Stray cats
Excessive stray cats continues to (See CITY, Page 12)

See Inside:
Dollar General nuisance case dismissed..... Page 12

Becoming a marching band



Hoyt Sorum, Kylie Ator and Jocia Fuhrman practice marching with the rest of the Divide County High School band in the school parking lot Friday in Crosby. The school recently acquired drum harnesses for the band so it can march in the homecoming parade, which will return for a second year on Oct. 3 (Page 12).

Property tax cap won't affect Divide's '25-26 school budget

Business manager: District is already at maximum for levy

By Jordan Rusche

Divide County School District board members approved a final budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, with minimal changes according to district Business Manager Barb King.

King told board members at their regular monthly meeting on Sept. 9 that the recent state legislation passed to put a 3% cap on tax increases for local government entities like school boards won't have much impact on this year's budget, as the school district is already maxed out on its property tax rate.

"We hit our max on mills before we'll hit that 3% increase cap, so it

really doesn't affect our budget at the end of the day," she said.

The total amount levied for the budget this year is \$3.9 million, or around 118 mills, with about \$2.3 million going to the general fund, about \$334,000 going to the building fund and about \$102,000 going to the special reserve, along with additional mills to other accounts.

King said if the current assessed valuation for properties goes up, that could affect future budgets if it increases by a large amount.

"If we have a big jump in residential or oil or whatever the case may be, those new amounts are not subject to the 3% cap," she said. "They are added to the 3% cap, so the only way it would be affected is if current valuations take an increase."

The project to repair pipes and the HVAC system in the high school and upgrade systems in the elementary school also shouldn't have much af-

fect on this year's budget, according to King.

The board also discussed its current goals from the Be Legendary Training Institute during its board evaluation.

"This evaluation that you're doing is based on, for you guys, we're going to say it's based on the previous four months," said Karen Hinch of the Be Legendary Institute, who attended the meeting online.

As part of the program, the board has a list of goals and objectives it seeks to meet throughout the year and conducts regular evaluations to rank itself on how well those goals are being met.

While the board felt it improved its ranking for some goals, like teamwork and community engagement, other goals related to goal implementation plans and some student outcomes can still be improved on for future evaluations, board members agreed.

JDA job has new applicant

Board will interview local candidate for director; remote hire still being considered

By John Bayer

The Divide County Job Development Authority was introduced to a new candidate for its long-vacant director position during its monthly meeting Sept. 9.

Isaac Bangura is a new arrival to Crosby. Recently relocating from Massachusetts, Bangura is originally from Sierra Leone, in West Africa.

"I think I have so much to offer with my expertise," Bangura said.

Bangura has master's degrees in public administration from Harvard University and in economics and finance from a university in the United Kingdom.

The JDA is still in talks with McKenzie Clayburgh about working as the director as a remote job.

Board member Morgan Ames told the JDA that Clayburgh has agreed to working a trial period through December for a salary of \$39,000. After this, Clayburgh would be hired on at a rate of \$50,000 plus mileage for 2026.

Fellow board member Chico Eriksmoen expressed skepticism of the proposed trial period.

"From now till December really isn't a long enough term to determine what she is or isn't going to do for us," Eriksmoen said.

According to Ames, Clayburgh had expressed that the December date was negotiable.

Rodney Johnson made a motion that the interview committee should again be given the authority to be the hiring committee.

Board President Gary Rust expressed concern about this, despite the fact that this authority had been given in the previous month's meeting.

"Really not in favor of that. So I like the whole board to be on board with everything," Rust said.

The motion did not go to vote.

The next regular meeting of the JDA is on Oct. 14. There was some concern that if the board waited until then to make a hiring decision, the candidate will have taken another job, as happened during the first round of interviews in June.

The board agreed to schedule a special meeting to make a hiring decision after the interview committee has had an opportunity to meet with Bangura.

In other business, the JDA voted to decertify its revolving loan fund from the U.S. Agriculture Department.

"It's currently under the USDA program, so it's federally funded, and with that federal funding, we have the requirements and doing a budget, a lot of paperwork involved," Eriksmoen said. "Every year we're behind."

Decertifying would mean that the JDA has to manage its own revolving loan fund. The USDA would require that the county would pay USDA interest owed.

Suicide prevention awareness



St. Luke's Medical Center employees on Friday dressed in purple and teal, the official colors of National Suicide Prevention Month, observed every September.

Crosby Assembly of God to plan 100-year celebration for 2026

Crosby Assembly of God is preparing to commemorate its 100th year as a congregation next year.

Plans are currently being developed for a celebration weekend, running July 3-5, 2026.

"We're sending out invitations next month," said the Rev. Les Anderson, current pastor of the church, who also grew up in the Assembly of God church.

The church was formed in 1926, a couple of decades after

homesteaders began arriving in Divide County.

Current members, former members, those who may have contact information for former members and people simply interested in taking part in the celebration are encouraged to reach out.

"Just contact the church office and give us an address, and we'll send an invitation," Anderson said.

Crosby Assembly of God's office phone number is 701-965-6535.

'Read Local' initiative hits the road



Journal Publisher Cecile Wehrman's van, parked on Crosby's Main Street on Friday, sports a new vehicle wrap promoting the North Dakota Newspaper Association's "Read Local" campaign (Page 3).