

Sasquatch 12U finishes runner-up at Deer Park tourney

See SPORTS, Page A5



Soccer referee certification course

See SPORTS, Page A6

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NEWSSTAND

Kansas to rock Festival stage today

The songs are as classic as the band that performs them.

“Carry On Wayward Son,” “Dust in the Wind,” “Point of Know Return,” “Fight Fire With Fire,” “Hold On,” deep cuts and more.

Music fans and lovers of classic rock will have a chance to hear iconic Kansas tunes as the legendary band headlines the Festival at Sandpoint stage today at War Memorial Field.

With a career spanning five decades, Kansas has firmly established itself as one of America’s iconic classic rock bands. This garage band from Topeka released its debut album in 1974 after being discovered by Wally Gold, who worked for Don Kirshner. Since then, the band has sold more than 30 million albums worldwide.

With a catalog that includes 16 studio albums and five live albums, Kansas has produced numerous gold and platinum records. The band appeared on the Billboard charts for more than 200 weeks throughout the 1970s and 1980s and played to sold-out arenas and stadiums across North America, Europe and Japan.

“Carry On Wayward Son” remains one of the top five most-played songs on classic rock radio, and “Dust in the Wind” has been played more than 3 million times.

In the summer of 2020, Kansas released its 16th studio album, “The Absence of Presence,” which debuted at No. 10 on Billboard’s Top Current Albums chart. The wide-ranging progressive rock album, released by InsideOut Music, followed 2016’s “The Prelude Implicit,” which debuted at No. 14 on Billboard’s Top 200 Albums chart.

Along with constant touring, Kansas remains a fixture of classic rock radio and popular culture. The band continues to reach new audiences through its presence in commercials, live sports broadcasts, and popular video games such as Rock Band, Guitar Hero and Grand Theft Auto. Kansas has also been featured in the documentary “Miracles Out of Nowhere” and made a guest appearance on The CW’s “Walker.”

See FESTIVAL, A2

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City sets maximum budget of \$49.9M

By JACK FREEMAN

Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — The Sandpoint City Council voted unanimously to adopt the city budget’s maximum budget amount at \$49.9 million.

This decision does not adopt

any specific budget items for the 2026 fiscal year, instead it sets the limit of what the city can spend and maintain a balanced budget. The council voted 5-0, with Councilor Joel Aispuro absent, without much discussion.

“All we are doing with this is

setting that top line,” Sandpoint Mayor Jeremy Grimm said.

In the process of adopting this maximum, the council set a public hearing on the proposed budget for its meeting Aug. 20.

The limit marks a slight decrease of around \$500,000 from

the 2025 fiscal year budget maximum. The city does not have to spend the full amount budgeted for 2026, but with this adoption it is no longer allowed to budget for more than the \$49.9 million amount.

See BUDGET, A3

City Council sets public hearing on new and increasing fees

By JACK FREEMAN

Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — The public will have a chance to weigh in on new and significantly increasing fees at an upcoming public hearing Aug. 20.

The hearing was set at Wednesday’s Sandpoint City Council meeting after a discussion on updating the city’s fee schedule. None of the fees presented at the meeting were adopted; after the public hearing, the council will be able to adjust the fees at a later time.

Among the topics discussed Wednesday were new or revised fees for the James E. Russell Sports Center, War Memorial Field and the Sports Complex, the shooting range and parking passes. Planning fees would see the most significant

increases, to account for staff time used, according to Jason Welker, Sandpoint’s Community Planning and Development director.

James E. Russell Sports Center

Reshaping the JER Center’s fees was one of the first directives from Welker to Ryan Wells, the center’s new supervisor. Wells is proposing eliminating the daily play fee and moving to a monthly or annual membership focus.

“That was the number one friction point at the sports center, people really don’t like having to take out cash or swipe their card,” Welker said of the daily play fees. “This is the fee structure that Ryan determined was very competitive for the region ... we do expect this to lead to a relatively large uptick in membership.”

The annual memberships will be billed monthly and be priced at \$79 for general membership, \$49 for Bonner and Boundary County residents and \$39 for Sandpoint residents.

“The expectation is that if you sign up for annual membership, you are committing to paying for a year,” Welker said. “For a lot of people that \$400 annual commitment was too much put into something before they’ve had the experience.”

The monthly option increases the price each month by \$20 to \$99, \$69 and \$59 per month, respectfully.

See HEARING, A3



A front facing view of the James E. Russell Sports Center.

Photo by JACK FREEMAN

Tifft sentenced 20 years in child sex abuse case

By CHLOE COCHRAN

Staff Writer

SANDPOINT — A county resident guilty of sexually abusing a minor has been sentenced to serve 20 years in prison.

Micheal John Tifft, 32, pleaded guilty by Alford plea April 8 to one count of lewd conduct with a minor. As part of the plea agreement, the second count of the same charge was dropped. The charges stem from an abuse incident that occurred sometime between April 22, 2019, and April



Tifft

differently at sentencing than a standard guilty plea.

Tifft was handed a 20-year

prison sentence — seven years fixed and 13 years indeterminate. He will be given 357 days for time served.

A criminal complaint indicates that count one of lewd conduct with a minor was charged based on an allegation that Tifft engaged in oral to genital contact with the victim. Count two, which was dismissed as part of the plea deal, alleged that penetration took place.

According to a probable cause affidavit, Bonner County officials became aware of the abuse

as a result of a 911 call received in April 2024.

Court documents indicate that the victim experienced one instance of abuse within the 2019-2020 timeline. According to a probable cause affidavit, the victim was woken up in the middle of the night by Tifft as he was sexually abusing the child.

Anyone who suspects sexual abuse should contact the Bonner County sexual abuse 24/7 helpline at 208-265-3586. For an alternate helpline, call 208-263-6714.

See LAW, A3

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