



Winter storm rages
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A cardinal takes flight from a snow-covered bird feeder during a break in the snow this week. Kari Rappe of Medford captured this image. *The Star News* invited readers to share pictures from the recent winter storms. See more pictures on pages 10 and 11.

Credit costs questioned

Gilman board members question costs vs. benefit of program offering college credit to high school students

BY MANDEE ELLIS
 REPORTER

Board members governing the Gilman School District questioned the benefit of paying for students' college credits at a meeting on Monday, March 16.

Currently, the district partners with Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) to offer a series of courses that lead into a degree program which provides students with dual credits, or credits that fill prerequisites for high school graduation as well as college degrees simultaneously. This is designed to allow students to get a jumpstart on a college degree as dual credits are paid for by the school district.

"I am concerned about the cost associated with this," said board member Lynn Rosemeyer. This conversation came up after the board had already discussed the impending referendum and cutting costs to save the district, and subsequently local taxpayers, money.

"Many schools are having a conversation, especially as budgets get tighter," said district administrator Walter Leipart. He informed the board that if a student enrolled in a course through CVTC fails, that student is on the hook for repaying the district.

Rosemeyer went on to state that she was worried that high schoolers were taking up classroom space for college students who have already graduated high school and used the example of her granddaughter who had trouble getting into CVTC's nursing program because it was full. Leipart reported that CVTC assured the district that the courses in which high school students can enroll are earmarked for that population, ensuring space for other students in regular classes. Rosemeyer stated she did not believe that was happening at CVTC.

Board member Lauren Zach questioned if high schoolers were eligible for financial aid, and Leipart informed her they were not. Board member Val Kulesa asked, "Can we charge them?"

"You can cap it and say 'you can access it, but you have to pay for it,'" Leipart stated, suggesting capping the program at 18 credits and allowing students to take additional credits beyond that, but at their own cost. "We need to look at the legality of saying 'no' to pay for it."

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Dairyland Rail Commission organizes

Group seeks to acquire, reopen 27-mile Spencer to Medford rail line for freight and passenger train traffic

BY BRIAN WILSON
 NEWS EDITOR

Local rail advocates are seeking to bring Kansas-based WATCO to the bargaining table to acquire and bring back into operation a 27-mile rail line between Spencer and Medford.

At their organizational meeting held Monday night at the Dorchester Municipal Building, members of the newly-formed Dairyland Rail Commission voted to send the CEO of WATCO a letter officially informing him of their intent "to begin discussions regarding acquisition of the line and request that WATCO designate a representative for negotiations."

Commission members also formally approved working with attorney John Varda of DeWitt Law Firm of Madison for the acquisition process and grant writer Libby Ogard of Prime Focus of De Pere. Both Varda and Ogard have

See DAIRYLAND on page 4

PAGE 13: Gilman board faces tough choices on sewage treatment



SPORTS: Medford hosts home archery tournament



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