



# What you need to know about Central Wisconsin girls

SPORTS, 2B

# Stevens Point Journal

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The Portage County Health Care Center is shown on Jan. 23 at 825 Whiting Ave. in Stevens Point.

GABI BROEKEMA/STEVENS POINT JOURNAL

# Portage County Health Care Center sold for \$2.7M

Jamie Rokus and Erik Pfantz  
Stevens Point Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

STEVENS POINT – After decades of discussion and debate, the Portage County Board on Dec. 16 voted to approve a resolution to sell its nearly 95-year-old skilled nursing facility. The County Board approved on a 15-10 vote Tuesday night the asset purchase agreement and the operations transfer agreement for the sale and transfer of the Portage County Health Care Center at 825 Whiting Ave. in Stevens Point to Galena Healthcare LLC and Timms Hill Health Holdings LLC, both subsidiaries of California-based The Ensign Group Inc. Portage County will receive \$2.7 million for the sale of its skilled nursing

home from Timms Hill Health Holdings LLC, a Nevada-based company. Timms Hill will then lease the property to Galena Healthcare LLC, another Nevada-based company. The purchase agreement also requires Ensign or its subsidiaries to invest at least \$1.3 million into renovations of the skilled nursing facility within the first two years of ownership. 'Now is not the time to sell' Seven county residents spoke against the sale at Tuesday night's meeting, calling for the board to wait one more year or until a new county executive and several new County Board members are elected in April. "Now is not the time to sell," John Bertelson, of Plover, told the board.

Others brought up voter-approved referendums in 2018 and 2022 that provided funds for operational expenses for the health care center as well as a new \$20 million facility, and a promised third referendum on the November 2024 ballot that never happened. "I believe our Board of Supervisors was mistaken not to provide the public another referendum to ascertain the citizens' wishes regarding maintaining [the Portage County Health Care Center]," stated Mildred Neville, of Stevens Point. And others expressed their concern about what the future holds once a privately-owned company takes over operations of the county-owned facility. See SALE, Page 5A

# Marshfield Clinic hospitals earn top honors

Nida Tazeen  
AI-assisted reporter  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Marshfield Medical Center in Marshfield and Marshfield Medical Center-Weston were named Best Hospitals for Maternity Care by U.S. News & World Report for 2026. The hospitals are the only two in central Wisconsin to receive this recognition, according to a community announcement.

U.S. News evaluated more than 900 hospitals

U.S. News evaluated more than 900 hospitals providing labor and delivery services for its ratings released Dec. 9. Overall, 495 hospitals made the final list. The evaluation includes several factors, such as C-section rates, newborn

See HONORS, Page 5A

# Grocery store hours for Christmas

Karen Madden  
Stevens Point Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

Christmas is a time when you want everything to be perfect, but what happens when you discover you don't have any nutmeg for the eggnog or you run out of milk or butter? Fortunately, many grocery stores in the Stevens Point area will be open with shortened hours on Christmas Eve. To help readers find those items forgotten until the last minute, we put together a list of stores that offer grocery items that will be open and closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and their hours. • Aldi, 5632 U.S. 10 E.: Christmas Eve – 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Christmas Day – Closed • Festival Foods, 1600 Academy Ave.: Christmas Eve – 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Christmas Day – Closed

See HOURS, Page 5A

# Rates are down, and the market's heating up

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