



THE CHARGER

McFarland prepares for Christmas parade

Payton Wurtz | Christmas editor

The most wonderful time of the year is upon us, and the tiny town of McFarland is joining in on the festivities.

McFarland will host its inaugural Christmas Parade and tree lighting at 5 p.m. Saturday.

The parade will go down main street in McFarland with special appearances from each school in USD 329. A tree and park lighting will follow the parade around 5:30. Attendees are then invited to a cookie and hot chocolate reception at the McFarland Senior Center.

The Wabaunsee Charger high school band will perform a collection of Christmas songs in the parade. "I think it's really cool to be adding another parade to our schedule, and especially being a Christmas parade it will be really fun," band teacher Jamie Rogers said.

FCCLA to present entrepreneur showcase

staff reports

FCCLA is hosting a Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase for students ages 6-14.

This showcase gives young entrepreneurs an opportunity to sell items they have made. Visitors can buy a variety of items such as jewelry, food and other assorted crafts. A full list of vendors is available at whscharger.com.

Wabaunsee Junior High student Conrad Cassel organized the event as part of his S.T.A.R. event for FCCLA for National Programs in Action.

The response has been good, with 38 young entrepreneurs from the area signed up for the event. Cassel said he is pleased with how the event has come together. "I might do this fair again on my own next year," he said.

The showcase takes place from 9 a.m. - noon Saturday at the Alma Community Center, cash sales only.

Girls wrestling prepares for debut season

Jacob Meseke | editor in chief

Wrestling isn't just for boys anymore.

Girls wrestling is coming to WHS, with more than half a dozen on the team.

Although WHS has had a few girls wrestlers in the past, none have participated in high school since KSHSAA officially separated the activity from boys wrestling in the 2019-2020 school year.

As with every new program, the team faces some challenges.

"Some challenges we face are that all but one of the girls haven't wrestled before," head coach Tyler Douglas said. "There are some girls who are familiar with wrestling. A challenge is teaching everyone from scratch, which is a great problem to have because everyone is in the same boat."

Despite the lack of experience, Douglas expects big things in the girls' first season.

"I would like to have in our first season a couple of state qualifiers. Based on the athletic talent that has shown up to interest meetings, we have a high probability of having multiple state qualifiers."

Douglas said one of his main pitches when recruiting wrestlers was opportunities for scholarships.

"The opportunities in this sport for girls might be better than men. A girl wrestler at the high school level has a higher probability of receiving a full ride scholarship to college than a boy does simply because of how Title IX works. Presenting these opportunities could open the eyes of girls and regular people in this community to the idea that girls can wrestle and be successful here and at the next level," Douglas said.

"I decided to go out with a bunch of my friends and we thought it would be fun. My dad also suggested that I should go out," junior Sienna Jones said.



Katelyn Glotzbach, Kadence Guinn, Emily Meyer Payton Wurtz and Sophilla Castillo pose during team pictures. Not Pictured: Sienna Jones, Jenna Donaldson and Mandy Clark. The boys open the season Saturday at Wamego, and the girls compete for the first time December 10 at Clay Center.

FEAR THE STAMPEDE

The Wabaunsee Booster Club will host Fear the Stampede at 6 p.m. Friday. Club, rec, junior high, and high school basketball and wrestling teams will be introduced.

The club will offer a meal to purchase and an alumni scrimmage for both boys and girls basketball will follow introductions. There will also be a very special halftime show.

The support for the sport is increasing in Kansas. Last year there were about 1,500 girls wrestlers in the state. There were 178 schools with girls teams represented at the state meet last year. According to NFHS there are 21,124 girl wrestlers in the nation with 2,890 teams.

The girls had their first practice November 14. There are some things that the girls are getting used to.

"The first couple practices were kind of rough because we were doing a lot of things that we weren't really used to doing. Wrestling is just different from any of the other sports I've done. I thought I was in shape after cross country season, but after practice I realized that I'm not. Overall it's been fun though," junior Sophia Castillo said.

The girls will have a slightly different schedule than the boys, although most meets are combined. State combines 1-4A (1-3A in boys), and will take place February 22-23 in Salina.

The girls first meet will be on December 10 at Clay Center.

"I hope to gain more experience and see how meets work as a wrestler in my first meet," Castillo said.

Listen to Castillo, Jones and Guinn discuss the first week of practice on the *Seniortis* podcast, available at whscharger.com.

Drama students prepare for fall play

AJ Grutsch | editor in chief

WHS drama is less than two weeks away from hitting the stage.

On December 10, the drama class will perform scenes from "Nothing Serious" by Rich Orloff.

The drama class consists of three students, junior Miguel Hernandez and freshmen Zoey Stone and Pierce Shanks. They all play multiple roles to fill more parts of the play, however other students are pitching in to help make the play complete.

"It's difficult to choose a play with such a small cast, and they are all new this year," director Brendan Praeger said. Drama recruited students from outside of the class to perform

several other scenes. "It makes rehearsal difficult, but I'm glad more students have the opportunity to join the play," Praeger said.

All of the students are relatively new to the acting scene, making this their first ever play performed as a group for an audience. "I feel nervous about the performance because I will be performing in front of a hopefully big audience. I also don't want to mess up in front of my family," Stone said.

When asked what they had learned practicing, Stone said, "I have learned that sometimes you just have to push your worries and insecurities to the back of your mind and just push through them and act like you are a confident person even if you're not."

Hernandez said timing was very important and that expressions matter too. All students had mentioned memorizing lines as one of the biggest challenges when getting ready to perform. When you need to learn multiple parts, there are more lines to memorize.

While this play may have more roles than students, the class thought this play suited them more than any other. Hernandez said, "At first we wanted a serious, well thought out play that would tantalize the audience, but most of us were new to this so we decided to go with nothing too serious."

Check out "Nothing Serious" at 7 p.m. December 10 in the WHS Auditorium. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for students.

District receives electric bus grant

Jenna Donaldson | staff writer

USD 329 received a grant worth almost \$800,000 to cover the cost of two new electric buses.

The grant is funded through the Lion Electric school bus program. According to USD 329 transportation director Clint Thompson, an average school bus runs \$80,000 new and these ones are about \$375,000 new. "It allows us to get our foot in the door and have them without having to come out of pocket for us. We'll have basically \$750,000 worth of equipment that would be free with zero cost to our school," Thompson said.

One challenge the district faces with transportation is the age of its fleet. "Instead of coming out of pocket for five different buses at eighty to ninety thousand a piece, this gives us the chance to eliminate some of those fees and get some new units in," Thompson said.

USD 329 had to meet several requirements in order to receive the grant. "To apply for the grant you have to have buses that you can submit, donate, or scrap over for the next year," Thompson said. Once the application is done, the district can go through the process of getting the equipment.

"We will be donating two buses that are currently not in our fleet. Once we get our units, we'll let them take the old ones. We'll get two working ones for two scrap ones," Thompson said.

The new buses will require different maintenance than our current ones. Outside of charging them daily, there would be no transmission and oil changes. The grant does include funding for the required charging stations as well.

The new buses should be coming as fast as this spring or summer. "There's a timeline to deliver as late as 2024. We've been able to expedite the process through some stock units in California. If we're really lucky, at the end of November," Thompson said.

THE CHARGER

"The mission of the Charger newspaper and related media is to inform the students and school community about relevant issues in a fair, accurate and timely manner, to advocate for all students and serve as an open forum for student free speech."