



**Minnewaska
Area rallies to
hand Benson
girls 63-29 loss**
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**Senior
Living
Special**
• C Section

Swift County Monitor-News

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Lewis Drug, Fischer Eye Center also in new building Do-Mat's opens new Benson grocery store

“Wow!” is one of the most common expressions owners Tim and Carol Mattheisen, and store manager Matt Mattheisen, have heard as people walk through their new grocery store along the south side of U.S. 12 west in Benson.

It was just more than four months from when the first tree was removed Aug. 20 from the building site on which Do-Mat's Family Foods now sits until the doors opened for business last Thursday.

“It looks like a Byerly's or a Hy-Vee,” their customers are saying. “Like a store you would see in Minneapolis.”

The new \$3.5 million store was four years in the planning and construction stages and houses three businesses. Do-Mat's has 17,000 to 18,000-square-feet featuring a bakery and deli with a seating area, a drive-up coffee window, new coolers and freezers that are highly energy efficient, and lights that will save substantially on the electric bill. There will be more freshness to their products as well as expanded variety of grocery goods for customers. There is also a real customer appeal to the new store, Tim Mattheisen said.

It also will be a boost to Benson's tax base with an estimated market value of \$1.3 million.

Lewis Drug, which has just over 3,500 square feet, moved into the building from its downtown Benson location Wednesday. Fischer Eye was expecting to open in its new 2,400-square-foot office space the same day.

Currently, Do-Mat's has 33 employees. However, that number could be changing if things stay as busy as they have been, Tim said.

For three years Tim and Carol's son Matt worked on the plans and financing for the new store with the support and input from his parents. With the new store, they are no longer paying money out on a lease payment, but investing in their own grocery store and its future in the community.



Do-Mat's Family Foods Store Manager Matt Mattheisen and owners Carol and Tim Mattheisen spent over three years planning their new grocery store and oversaw its construction during the past five months.

A partnership ends and a new era begins

Do-Mat's was founded April 1, 1972, when Gene Doscher and Tim Mattheisen bought out Chuck's IGA Store owner Chuck Logan. The two had met while working at the grocery store in the 1960s.

That partnership ended after 35 years when Mattheisen bought out partner Gene Doscher in 2007. Doscher was looking to retire from the business.

When they bought Logan's grocery store they renamed the 3,500-square-foot store “Do-Mat's Foodland” using the first letters of each of their last names. It was located where the Benson Laundromat is today.

Mattheisen started working for Logan stocking shelves and carrying out groceries when he was a sophomore at Benson High School in 1960. He later worked in the meat

department and then moved on to the produce department. Doscher started at Chuck's in 1964.

When he graduated from high school in 1963, Mattheisen got his

draft notice and decided to enlist. Following basic training he was stationed in Germany. When he got

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Do-Mat's Family Foods new sign and logo.

Lucas Olson wins city council election

Lucas Olson was elected Tuesday to complete the three years left in Jonathon Pogge-Weaver's Benson City Council term. He received 95 vote beating out three challengers. Brad Johnson received 47 votes, Mike Fugleberg 42 and Larry Smith 37.

An early morning blizzard, with cold blustery conditions that continued through the day Tuesday, helped hold voter turnout down. Also, with the special council election the only race on the ballot, city officials were not expecting much of a turnout.

Total voter turnout was 222 votes with one ballot cast for a write-in candidate, but though the write-in box was checked, a name was not written in. In the 2015 Benson City Council



Lucas Olson

election, there were 784 votes cast with 1,752 citizens registered. Voter turnout in 2015 was around 45 percent. Voter turnout for the special election is going to be under 15 percent.

Olson, who works at Swift Machine and Fab, LLC, in Benson, was making his first run for local public office. However, even before he filed for office last fall, he started attending council meetings, often with his young

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Talk of using Appleton prison underway at the state Legislature

Earlier this month the Swift County's Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding with Goff Public to provide government and public relations services to help with promoting use of Appleton's empty prison.

Their action came in anticipation that the Legislature could renew the conversation about the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) using the vacant 1,600-bed prison to relieve overcrowding in state prisons.

It would also allow the DOC to take nearly 500 state prisoners sitting in county jails and place them in a facility where they would have access to state education programs. Those programs are aimed at teaching inmates skills that will help them avoid breaking the law again when they are out and ending up back in prison. County jails have no such

programs.

The county's anticipation of the Appleton prison again being on the agenda was well timed. Republicans at the Legislature, led by Rep. Tony Cornish, R- Vernon Center, are leading the discussion about how the Prairie Correctional Facility could meet state prison needs.

Cornish, who is the chair of the state House's Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee, also led the effort in the House last year. He has toured the Appleton prison and believes it can meet the state's prison needs.

Last year's legislative effort to reopen the prison either through the state's purchase of it or through a lease ran into significant opposition from those who wanted to reduce the prison population through sentencing reform. Far too many people who are non-violent drug offenders

are needlessly sitting in jail, they argued. Too many who are in jail are minorities who face a higher likelihood of ending up in jail than whites who commit similar crimes, they say.

Opponents of the Prairie Correctional Facility also are adamantly against state tax dollars going to “enrich” a private prison corporation through a lease arrangement. CoreCivic, formerly Corrections Corporation of America, owns the prison.

Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton has also opposed use of the Appleton prison, favoring instead sentencing reform to reduce the number of inmates sitting in jail as well as reducing the number headed to prison in the future.

However, based on current DOC prison population projections

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‘January thaw’ is on its way

After a stretch of days where the temperatures fell below zero 12 of 13 days a “January thaw” is finally on the way. For the next week, highs are supposed to be in the mid-30s to pushing 40. Lows are supposed to be in the 20s and could even remain above freezing at 33 degrees a couple nights.

While we can't always count on a January thaw, we sure welcome when they come to break up a particularly long stretch of bitterly cold days.

During the first 15 days of January low temperatures averaged a minus 6 degrees while highs averaged just 14.5 degrees. There have been seven

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Administrator job offer delayed

After interviewing three candidates for the Swift County administrator's position last Friday, the Swift County board of commissioners voted to postpone the discussion and potential job offer until its Tuesday, Jan. 17 meeting.

Commissioners interviewed Kelsey Baker who is the executive director of The Legends at Heritage Place in Sartell; Larry Timmerman who is the senior program evaluator for Ramsey County Health & Wellness/Economic Growth and Community Investment; and Bradley Alberts who was the the Pope County coordinator at the time the interview was scheduled.

However, ahead of the Friday interviews, the Pope County Tribune in Glenwood reported that Alberts had “abruptly” resigned his position during a performance evaluation. His resignation came during a Dec. 27 end-of-the year meeting.

The report gave no reason as to why Alberts had resigned. He had joined the county May 31, 2016.

Mattheisens open new Do-Mat’s grocery store...From 1

out of the Army, Mattheisen went to work for the Star Tribune in Benson and the Twin Cities before being transferred to Alexandria. But his goal was to get back to Benson with the thought in his mind to eventually follow through on a discussion he had with Doscher before leaving for the Army – forming a partnership to buy Chuck’s IGA.

“In 1966, I decided I didn’t want a company car, and benefits, and more money, so I came back here for no car, no benefits and less money and more hours,” Mattheisen told the Monitor-News in 2007. Returning to Benson he again went to work at Chuck’s IGA rejoining Doscher.

Six years after Mattheisen returned home the chance to fulfill the dream of buying out Logan was realized. “You guys want to buy the store?” he asked the two. It was something they had talked about, but the question took them by surprise.

“Between the two of us we probably had \$10 in our pockets,” Mattheisen said. But Logan agreed to finance the sale, carrying the contract with no down payment. They borrowed money from what was then Swift County Bank for the inventory, with Fairway Foods co-signing for them, and they borrowed \$120 to put in the cash register.

On April 1, 1972, they became 50-50 partners in the business. “April Fools Day, a couple of fools went into business,” Mattheisen told the Monitor-News with a laugh.

They started with six full-time employees, which included themselves and their wives, Dianne Doscher and Carol Mattheisen. As their children got older, they too went to work at the store.

Four years after buying Chuck’s IGA, the two needed to expand the business and leased space at Countryside Plaza in 1976. The new store more than doubled their floor space to 8,000 square feet. Along with the bigger store came a staff twice what they had started with.

The new store included a flooring and decorating business. In 1982, the floor covering part of the business was discontinued with the wallpaper covering business sold to Don’s Flooring.

In 1986, Do-Mat’s again found it needing a bigger store and added another 4,000 square feet. The name of the grocery store was also changed to Do-Mat’s Fairway Foods. Nine years later, in 1995, the store added a bakery.

As the business grew, so did the need for more space. In 1998 another 5,000 square feet was added bringing the store size to 17,000 square

feet. The addition included an expansion of the bakery as well as the addition of a deli and a seating area for customers. Dianne Doscher managed the bakery and deli, and did wedding cakes.

As with previous expansions, more store space, services and products meant more employees were needed with the payroll expanding to 35 people.

When Matt was asked when he started working at Do-Mat’s both Tim and Carol chimed in saying, “When he was eight months old!” That is how old he was when Do-Mat’s moved into what was then the Countryside Plaza in 1976. “He was crawling when we went into the other store and he never left,” Tim said.

Matt says he was probably in seventh grade back in 1989 when he really started working at the store. Today he is the general manager and the go-to person when things need fixing. However, he is hoping that he won’t be doing much fixing in this new store, unlike in the old one where his skills were more often tested.

Financing for the new store

Do-Mat’s received gap financing backing from the Swift County Rural Development Authority (RDA), the Upper Minnesota Valley

Regional Development Commission’s (RDC) Revolving Loan Fund, and from the Rural Electric Economic Development, Inc. (REED) Fund through Agralite Cooperative.

The REED fund provides business and community project financing in partnership with commercial and other economic development lenders to leverage private investment and make a difference in the region it serves. The businesses don’t have to be in the Agralite service territory, but simply show they would provide a benefit to the company’s customers, Mattheisen told the EDA.

The REED fund provided \$600,000 toward the \$3.7 million project with the RDC giving \$125,000 and the RDA \$100,000. Do-Mat’s also received funding through the cooperative it belongs to. KleinBank of Montevideo provided the private financing for the project.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is one of the guarantors of the project through its Rural Energy for America program. It can provide up to 75 percent of the backing for the private lender on the project. It also allows the loan to be extended up to 30 years.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is one of the guarantors of the project like the Small Business Administration.

Appleton prison use again raised at state Capitol...From 1

Minnesota could have more than 1,100 prisoners than it has room for under current sentencing laws. Some changes have been made in the state’s sentencing guidelines on drug crimes jail terms, but they are not expected to have enough of an impact to reduce the need for more jail space.

Last week, the Minneapolis Star Tribune carried a story on the latest effort in the Legislature to promote use of the Appleton prison and the opposition to its use. Reporter Andy Mannix wrote that in his proposed bonding bill “Dayton is asking the Legislature for \$53 million for corrections, some of which could help put a dent in overcrowding. Of that, \$5 million would go toward a renovation at the Lino Lakes prison, which is projected to free up to 60 beds. Some \$3.5 million more would help expand early release programs for qualifying inmates at facilities in Togo and Willow River.”

He further points out that neither Dayton nor the other opponents of leasing the Appleton prison has come up with a plan that would adequately reduce prison overcrowding.

Another opponent of using the Prairie Correctional Facility is Commissioner of Corrections Tom Roy. In an email to Mannix, Roy said “his department will continue to use county jails as de facto prisons — which cost the state about \$9 million in contracts last year, according to department data. Admitting it’s ‘not a preferred prison alternative, Roy said the jails will ‘satisfy our need into the foreseeable future.’”

alternative, be cheaper than building, and quiet the arguments of those who oppose use of a privately owned prison.

Those who have proposed a lease have clearly stated that should the state lease the Appleton prison it would use its employees to state it and it would implement state education programs for inmates. Those assurances have done little, if anything, to quiet opponent’s opposition to using the prison.

The 1,600-bed privately-owned prison has sat empty since it was closed in February 2010. It has been keeping a minimal staff on hand for basic maintenance at the facility. CoreCivic has also invested several million in upgrades to the facility over the past years ensuring that it is ready should the State of Minnesota be interested in housing prisoners in Appleton.

Those who support buying the prison think the state could get it at a bargain price.

Last August the Obama administration announced a phase out of the federal government’s use of private prisons. With the announcement, CoreCivic stock fell 35 percent. It owned 74 prison facilities and managed 11 government-owned facilities at the time.

In a memo last August, Bureau of Prisons Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates told the bureau to start reducing “and ultimately ending” the Justice Department’s use of private prisons. The announcement follows a recent Justice Department audit that found that the private facilities have more safety and security problems than government-run ones.

It now may have more prison facilities and beds than it will be able to use in the future, leading it to conclude it needs to reduce the overhead of financially supporting moth-balled facilities like the Appleton prison.

Last year, Swift County’s Rural Development Authority spent \$17,000 in lobbying expense with Goff Public with The Appleton Project spending \$10,000, the Appleton Economic Development Authority \$5,000 and the City of Appleton \$10,000, for a total expense of \$42,000.

Goff Public charged its nonprofit/local government rate of \$175 per hour for its work. Other expenses, such as mileage, would be billed at the federally set rate.

In passing their resolution to fund Goff Public’s assistance in 2017, the county board made the following points:

- The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) is housing over 500 inmates in county jails, where they cannot receive critical rehabilitation services available in state correctional facilities;
- The DOC projects the state prison population will grow by an additional 500 inmates by 2020;

- The state will continue to face financial challenges such as interest, debt service, maintenance, and annual operating costs associated with any new facility construction or maintenance of existing, aging facilities;
- Up to 350 people from 24 surrounding counties worked at the Appleton prison when it was in use, generating \$15.2 million for the regional economy;
- Many ancillary businesses in the region and their workers benefitted when the Appleton prison was in use;
- The cost of leasing the Appleton prison is \$6 to \$8 million per year, plus operating costs – substantially lower than constructing and maintaining new, permanent correctional facilities;
- It is practical that the state do its due diligence to fairly consider the costs associated with leasing and operating the Appleton prison before constructing new, permanent corrections facilities.

2016 fire deaths second lowest...From 6

someone in a fire,” West said. “Everyone must take fire prevention seriously so the number of deaths keeps falling.”

West said it is difficult to pinpoint a reason for the drop in fire deaths. He is hopeful Minnesotans are realizing the danger and power of fire and taking fire prevention in their homes more seriously.

prevention tips:

Cooking

- Never leave a hot stovetop or oven unattended; stay and look while you cook.
- Keep anything flammable (oven mitts, aprons, paper towels) three feet from heat sources in the kitchen.

- Do not leave space heaters unattended and turn them off while you’re sleeping.
- Plug space heaters directly into the wall, not an extension cord or power strip.

Open flames

- Leave three feet between a candle and anything that can burn; use flameless candles.

Smoking

- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Use a deep, sturdy ashtray.

Place it away from anything that can burn.

- Do not discard cigarettes in potted plants, leaves, mulch or other vegetation.
- Complete extinguish cigarettes. Use a metal container filled with water or sand.

Heating

- Keep space heaters three feet from anything combustible.

Meet *Your* Eye Care Team!



Dr. Todd Trudel

Dr. Todd Trudel is originally from the small town of Cando, ND. In 1990, he graduated from the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago, Illionois. Dr. Trudel has been serving the Benson community for over 24 years.

“Thank you for your patronage over the past 24 years and we look forward to many more!”

Benson Family Eyecare



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Where our focus is ***YOU!***

• Dr. Todd Trudel

• Dr. Jacob Bollman

• John Dvorak, MD

Monitor Crossword - “Be very, very quiet”

Across

1 Apple tablet computer

5 Yanks

9 Andy's TV son

13 C.I.A. worry

14 Four Corners state

15 Outlook alternative

16 Hula hoop support

17 Tomb Raider Croft

18 Caravan's stop

19 Big name in children's clothes

22 Darjeeling drink

23 Slam

24 Knife or club

28 Pallid

29 Piece of glass

31 Bemoan

32 Daisylike bloom

35 Vegetarian staple

36 In ____ (harmonious)

37 Quick severe punishment

40 Birthday party staple

41 Chalupa alternative

42 Hides a mike on

43 "____ to Joy"

44 Possesses, old-style

45 Outlaw

46 Muscle that tightens

48 Monetary risk

49 Tampa Bay NFLer

52 Doula's urging

56 Can't stand

59 Yours and mine

60 Length x width

61 Banished leader

62 Upscale hotel chain

63 Smooth (out)

64 Track event

65 Actress Winslet

66 "Stop that!"

Down

1 "Open a window!"

2 Aplomb

3 Letter opener?

4 School seat

5 A Sooner Stater

6 Ogden resident

7 Vestments, e.g.

8 Kind of carpet

9 D-Day beach

10 Dance step

11 Son of junior

12 Golfer Ernie

15 "Look for yourself"

20 Eyeball benders

21 Confess (to)

25 Comedian Richard

26 Cup division

27 Makes out

28 "Where ____ you?"

29 Way to cook eggs

30 Big top?

32 Broad necktie

33 Color variation

34 Arcade coin

35 "____ does it!"

36 Go up

38 Great balls of fire

39 Strip

44 Dwelling place

45 Blues legend Smith

47 Simple bread

48 Too well-done

49 Beast of burden

50 Apply to

51 Rooters' refrain

53 Catch

54 Night prowler

55 No longer due

56 Hesitation sound

57 Hacker

58 Coupling

Answers on page 9B