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Racine County's Daily Newspaper

The Journal Times

Peter Jackel

Wilks has been Christensen's right-hand man for 25 years **SPORTS, PAGE B1**



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SOME AFTERNOON SNOW 36 • 20 FORECAST, A8

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VILLAGE OF WATERFORD

Brewpub proposals sought

Trustee: 'We're back at square one' for fire station site

CHRISTINA LIEFFRING
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WATERFORD – After two years of trying to get a brewpub developed in Downtown Waterford, the conditions for the project have

changed so significantly that the village has gone back to the drawing board.

At Monday's Village Board meeting, Village Administrator Zeke Jackson stated that previously the village had believed that Fire Station 1, 122 Second St., had a deed restriction that did not permit the village to sell it. The riverfront station, which in recent years been used only for training



Jackson

This new development raised the question of what is the most

and storage of reserve equipment, has been touted as a possible location for a brewpub. Now, after further investigation, Jackson stated that there is no deed restriction.

fair way to move forward. After all, the village is on its fifth developer for the project; previous developers' proposals mostly fell apart because they could not own the building: no building ownership meant no collateral for loans and made investment in the physical space risky, officials said.

It also opened up several options moving forward: Lease or sell? White-box it or leave as-is?

Stick with the current developer on-tap or open it up with another round of request-for-proposals? And will opening the project up scare away the current developer?

Please see **BREW PUB**, Page A5

■ **More Waterford area news:** Tichigan firefighters do community outreach in Waterford Woods neighborhood. **Local, Page A9**



CAITLIN SIEVERS, CAITLIN.SIEVERS@JOURNALTIMES.COM

LEARNING COMPUTER LANGUAGE

Katie Katzke, a data analyst for Children's Wisconsin, helps Red Apple Elementary School fifth-grader Frank Zimmerman with his computer coding work on Monday afternoon. Children's Wisconsin has a partnership with Red Apple to teach its fifth-grade students to code as part of the regional pediatric hospital's effort to create a talent pipeline. Read more about the program in the Feb. 18 A+ section.

ELIZABETH RAE OLSZEWSKI

'Rising star' lawyer lost Sunday

Crash victim was a talented attorney, beloved aunt

ADAM ROGAN
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UNION GROVE – Elizabeth Rae Olszewski was a "rising star." By the time she was 32, not even eight years into her career as an attorney, she had already secured several multimillion-dollar settlements for clients.

Her boss, Patrick A. Salvi, founder, chairman and managing equity partner of the Chicago-based law firm Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C.,

wanted Olszewski to move to Chicago and start practicing there, rather than working out of the firm's Waukegan, Ill., office.

Olszewski didn't want to do that. She was living in Mount Pleasant, near her family and where she grew up in Union Grove, and that's where she wanted to stay. She loved her niece and nephew and family.

On Sunday, she was with her family when she died. She was 32.

Tragedy

Salvi said that Olszewski had been in an SUV with her family, returning home from a performance

Please see **OLSZEWSKI**, Page A3



BRIAN GUIDO, PHOTO COURTESY OF SALVI, SCHOSTOK & PRITCHARD P.C.

Elizabeth Olszewski, pictured here at the law office of Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C. in Chicago, was killed Sunday in a car crash on Highway 20 in Yorkville. She was 32.

RACINE COUNTY

Mental health website launched

Variety of resources available at the click of a mouse

ADAM ROGAN
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RACINE COUNTY – When Jonathan Delagrave became Racine County executive in 2015, one of his primary goals was to improve access to mental health assistance in the county.

In the next step of that campaign, the county has launched a new website – RacineCountyFamilyResources.com – to make it easier to find mental and behavioral health help.

The county announced the launch of the website Monday. According to its announcement, the site includes a directory of behavioral and mental health providers in the community, as well as other interactive tools, and more than 30,000 articles, fact sheets and reports to learn from.

On the site there are links that can help:

■ Parents find behavioral health help for their kids.

■ A symptom checker to help people identify what issues they might be facing.

■ An online library of "prescription and over-the-counter medications for all health conditions."

Please see **MENTAL HEALTH**, Page A5

news+ membership ■ Interactive crosswords, sudoku and more
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CLASSIFIED	B5	LEGALS	B5	NATION/WORLD	A4	PUZZLE CORNER	B7
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ENTERTAINMENT	A2	MONEY	A14	OPINION	A7	WEATHER	A8



6 18134-01000 2

Fast-moving GOP farmer aid would cost approximately \$36M annually

MITCHELL SCHMIDT
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MADISON — Republican-led farm aid legislation proposed as a revision of Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' efforts earlier this year would provide farmers with tax credits and health insurance deductions that would cost about \$36 million annually — if it can get through the session on time.

Dubbed by Republicans as “bigger and bolder” than the \$8.5 million investment first proposed by Evers during his State of the State address, the package of five bills includes an estimated \$9 million in annual health insurance deductions for sole proprietors such as farmers and a three-year targeted tax credit for the state's smallest farms that would cost about \$27 million per year. The GOP effort also includes amended versions of two of Evers' bills.

Farmers would be able to apply the tax credit to up to 66% of property taxes on buildings “exclusively used for farming.” The credit would be capped at \$7,500, and claimants would have to make at least \$35,000 in annual farm income to be eligible.

At a committee meeting Tuesday, Rep. Travis Tranel, R-Cuba City, estimated the credit to cost \$27 million. He pointed to the state's recently announced added tax revenue as a potential source of funding.

“This bill would put \$27 million directly into the



Erica Dynes, Capital Newspapers
Dorothy Harms pets a red Angus cow at her farm in Reedsburg.

pockets of farmers at a time when their No. 1 issue is cash flow,” Tranel said, describing the credit as a short-term fix.

In the first year, farmers would be able to request the credit from the Department of Revenue. It would transition to a refundable tax credit in the two following years before the credit sunsets.

Some Democratic lawmakers, including Evers, have questioned if the bill will get money to farmers in a timely fashion, but Tranel said funds should be available by late spring or early summer.

Facing a struggling agriculture industry, hundreds of Wisconsin farms shuttered last year. Wisconsin farmers received more than \$432 million in federal aid between September 2018 and November 2019, according to data provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Another bill would allow

self-employed individuals to deduct their health insurance from their taxes.

Rep. Amy Loudbeck, R-Clinton, said about 85% of Wisconsin farmers were self-employed in 2017. Of the estimated \$9 million cost of the bill, about \$2.5 million would go to farmers, while the remainder would go to other self-employed small businesses.

“This is I think a really progressive tax bill,” said Rep. Dave Considine, D-Baraboo. “The rest of that is going to go to the working poor.”

The GOP proposal also would direct UW-Madison to compile a report on ways to best serve the state's farmers and conduct research on technology specific to agriculture.

Another bill would require the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. to work with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to increase state exports of

farm products including milk, meat and crop produce. Under the bill, up to \$5 million would be allocated to expanding exports in the 2021-23 fiscal biennium.

Evers had originally proposed spending \$1 million on expanded exports, with funds made available immediately.

Democratic committee members Considine, Rep. Don Vruwink, D-Milton, and Rep. LaKeshia Myers, D-Milwaukee, voted against the proposal, citing the delay in funding and potential logistical challenges of having two state departments collaborate on the effort.

Republicans also amended Evers' bill to award grants to dairy processing plants only if they produce no more than 50 million pounds of processed product per year. The grant would provide \$1.2 million — split over two years — to eligible plants.

Evers initially proposed dairy processing grants and increasing dairy export spending in his 2019-21 budget, but the items were stripped by Republicans.

With the Assembly expected to adjourn this month and the Senate likely closing out the session next month, the bills have little time to reach Evers, who has final say over whether they become law.

“We're on a very tight time frame,” Assembly Committee on Agriculture chairman Gary Tauchen, R-Bonduel, said.

Olszewski

From A1

of “The Lion King” in Milwaukee when she was killed.

The SUV was westbound on Highway 20, near 63rd Drive in Yorkville, when an eastbound SUV crossed the centerline and crashed head-on with the vehicle Olszewski and her family were in, Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmaling said.

Nine people were reported injured, and one is still in critical condition, Lt. James Evans of the Racine County Sheriff's Office said Tuesday morning.

“At this hour, some of them are fighting for their lives,” Schmaling said Monday evening.

Olszewski was the lone fatality as of Tuesday morning.

Intoxicants are not suspected as a factor, according to the Sheriff's Office's preliminary investigation.

“As far as the weather and road conditions,” Schmaling said, “we had extreme weather. We had a lot of snow, a lot of sleet and icy road conditions. And I believe that is a contributing factor to this very unfortunate incident.”

Tough, friendly, lovely

Salvi held Olszewski in the highest esteem, both as a lawyer and as an individual.

As a person, Olszewski “was extremely friendly and empathetic; a lovely, lovely person,” Salvi said. And as an attorney, Olszewski was “a tough lawyer, a tough litigator, a zealous defender of her clients.”

Hearing the news “was heartbreaking,” said Racine-based attorney James Pitts, whose firm had employed Olszewski while she was attending John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

Pitts described his former employee as “incredibly dedicated,” considering she was basically working full time at his firm while pursuing her juris doctorate degree.

“Elizabeth was a vibrant and brilliant litigator who loved her clients and job fiercely, but more importantly, she was an amazing and kind human being. She was not just my colleague, she was my dear

friend,” stated Tara Devine, a managing partner at Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard's Lake County office where Olszewski worked.

In the first case Olszewski took to trial in 2016, her team won a \$1.6 million jury verdict after a woman with a cognitive disability was left alone in a group home, despite having numerous falls.

“I think I'll always remember that case because it's the first case I took to trial, but also for the justice we were able to get for the family,” Olszewski is quoted as saying on the firm's website. “I like the challenge of overcoming various obstacles for my clients in order to achieve justice.”

“I became an attorney because I'm dedicated to getting justice for my clients,” she said in a video from the law firm. “It's like telling a story about what happened, from beginning to end... It's difficult not to get emotional during the trials.”

That same year, she helped collect \$6.6 million in damages for the victim of a hit-and-run, followed by an \$18.5 million settlement the following year after a child “suffered a serious brain injury due to a delay in the diagnosis and treatment of meningitis.”

Every year since 2017, she was named as a “Rising Star” by Illinois Super Lawyers and was recognized as an Emerging Lawyer by Law Bulletin Media, an honor given to the top 2% of Illinois lawyers who have practiced no more than 10 years or are younger than 40.

“She not only had huge potential, she had great success,” said Pitts, who said that Olszewski would reach out to his firm in Racine occasionally if she wanted to go over a case that had Wisconsin ties.

“Her clients just loved her,” Salvi said.

Olszewski also volunteered with the “Waukegan 2 College” program, where she would mentor youths with “limited resources” during the college application process.

Locally educated

Olszewski was hired right out of law school by Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C.

“Ever since her childhood years,” the law firm wrote



PHOTO COURTESY OF SALVI, SCHOSTOK & PRITCHARD P.C.

Elizabeth Olszewski was described as a “dogged” attorney. Pictured here she is working at her desk with Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C. Olszewski was killed Sunday in a Highway 20 traffic accident.

in a tribute on its website, “Elizabeth knew she wanted to be a lawyer.”

She graduated magna cum laude from John Marshall in 2013, after receiving undergraduate degrees in political science with a concentration in law and criminal justice in 2008 from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in

Somers.

“The UW-Parkside learning community is deeply saddened by the news of this tragic accident and extends its condolences to the family and friends of Elizabeth Olszewski,” the university said in a statement.

She is an alumna of Union Grove High School.

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