

Handbags for Haiti
A group of area women offer a lending hand to Haitian women and children.
- section 1, page 4



Cheeseheads melt against Silver Eagles
Monona Grove's boys basketball team improved its record to 8-1 with a big win over Monroe last week.
- section 2, page 1



The Herald-Independent

Thursday, January 14, 2016

Our 128th Year - No. 8 - \$1 - Section One

Newspapers' resources to merge in new venture

Expanded edition will debut Feb. 25

Your newspaper is getting bigger and better: *The Herald-Independent* and *The McFarland Thistle* are merging, starting with the Feb. 25 issue.

With a combined circulation of nearly 4,000, about 10,000 readers each week, the paper - to be known as *The Herald-Independent and The McFarland Thistle* - will be the largest weekly newspaper in the Hometown News LP group of newspapers that stretch from Lodi to Milton.

"We're keeping the same great local news content in a larger newspaper," said Hometown News executive editor Chris Mertes, noting that having the two papers together will allow more news, features and sports coverage from the communities of

McFarland, Monona and Cottage Grove. "Our dedication to serving our communities and readers with the best possible local news and sports coverage is not changing," said Robb Grindstaff, general manager of Hometown News. "The opposite, in fact. This consolidation of resources enables us to continue to serve our communities and improve our coverage for the foreseeable future."

This isn't the first time the communities have shared news coverage. *The McFarland Community Life*, the predecessor of *The Thistle*, also contained news from Monona when it was jointly owned by the same group that owned the *Monona Community Herald* before it was sold to Hometown in the 1990s.

"Both papers' circulation were up nicely last year, and our readership continues to grow, but advertising has been pretty static," publisher Brian Knox said. "Many

of our advertisers have just plain not recovered from the credit crunch. Cottage Grove, Monona and McFarland have been growing together for years, and now our advertisers will be able to reach a wider audience at a more cost-effective rate."

"Newspapers in Monona and Cottage Grove have a long history, with today's paper tracing its roots back 128 years," *Herald-Independent* managing editor Kevin Passon said. "This merger is another page in that history. While many changes have occurred over the years, the one characteristic that has remained the same is the commitment to local news coverage and other content - and that won't change now, either."

The launch of the combined newspaper is taking place Feb. 25 to coincide with a Showcase issue - when nearly 23,000 households in Monona, McFarland and Cottage Grove will receive the first issue

free with a copy mailed to their homes.

"The combined newspaper will enable the award-winning, experienced journalists who staff the paper to continue to tell the stories important to community readers," Mertes said.

Passon will serve as managing editor of the *Herald-Independent* and supervise the staffs of both newspapers. Tom Alesia will remain as managing editor of the *McFarland Thistle*.

The staff and management welcome suggestions and ideas from readers for improvements the newspapers can make in local coverage and content.

To contact Passon about Monona or Cottage Grove stories, e-mail kpasson@hngnews.com.

Formed in the early 1990s, Hometown News LP is a Wisconsin-owned group of community newspapers and shopper publications headquartered in Fort Atkinson.

SILVER CONNECTION



Submitted photos

Above, from left, Lesley Goff, Andryi Nahirniak and Serenity Beasley performed with Monona Grove Silver Connection at Saturday's show choir competition in Colby. The group took fourth runner-up, in addition to winning best crew. Below, at left, Silver Connection crew members Ella Walker, left, and Brittany Smith display their best crew trophy. Below, at right, performers included, from left, Jenny Harvey, Grace Wallner and Isabel Wollerman.



TOWN OF COTTAGE GROVE

Professional services costs, warranty hinder water main project

Town, village continue talks about work near Gaston Road

By Nicole Poley
Reporter

Concerns about a plan for the village to install a water main in the Gaston Road right-of-way in the town of the Cottage Grove continue to be discussed, most recently be the village utility commission Wednesday night.

And, during its Jan. 4 meeting, the Cottage Grove Town Board, which approved a resolution at its Dec. 21 meeting, discussed correspondence from the village negotiating the conditions of that resolution. Travis McDermott of MSA Professional Services, the village engineer, was at the meeting to answer questions and share information back to the village.

While the village agreed to most of the terms and conditions included in the town's resolution, the correspondence returned to the town included some new details. First, the village agreed to take responsibility for damages to the road due

to frost heave for one year's time.

In addition, the village did not go along with the town's request for the village to pay all costs incurred by the town for professional services, and said it would only pay up to \$10,000 for these services.

The village also decided to switch construction from the north side of the road to the south side of the road.

"The village proposes that the water main be constructed on the south side of Gaston Road," the correspondence states. "The south side, which has been expressed by the town as the side in bad condition, will be fully reconstructed. The north side will receive repairs to damages created during construction. The side of the road not involved in the installation of water utility will not receive a 2.5-inch mill and overlay as requested in the town's terms and conditions."

During the Jan. 4 meeting, the town board discussed the village's response, as well as suggestions from Town Attorney Connie Anderson, who was not present. Several town board members expressed

See **Road**, section 1, page 6

INDEX

Church directory.....sec. 1, p. 5
Classifieds.....sec. 2, p. 4
Community.....sec. 1, p. 4
Crossword puzzle.....sec. 1, p. 3
Online poll.....sec. 2, p. 6
Sports.....sec. 2, p. 1



New candidate for county board seat

Cottage Grove area to get new representation at county level.

- section 1, page 2

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