

As the April 11 filing deadline for petitions and candidate nominations draws near, city officials throughout Wells County are busy preparing ballots for North Dakota's June 14 election.

Harvey

Harvey City Auditor Karen Nordby told the Herald-Press, "We have three city council seats, and the mayor's seat is up for re-election, but it's early yet. We've had some people come in for forms to file to run for election, but as of yet, we don't have the names of the candidates. I do know that (current mayor) Ron Volk completed the petition to run for mayor, though."

Nordby advised people interested in running for the seats to visit City Hall.

"We encourage anybody who wants to run; they can come in to pick up a petition. After April 11, they can still run as a write in (candidate)," she noted.

Fessenden

Fessenden Auditor-Treasurer Jean Gross said that four council seats are vacant in that city.

"We have three four-year term seats, and one two-year seat," Gross noted.

Keith Middleman and Mark Evans occupy the seats whose terms expire this year, Gross indicated she was not sure if any were running for re-election. Another seat is open due to the resignation of Ronald Widiger.

"We do have a two-year term seat," she said. "Cheryl Colby filled an unexpired term. It was an appointment for two years. Since the election is coming up, she has to run for office."

Gross continued, "We have a measure on the ballot this year. It's to have voters designate the Herald-Press as Wells County's



official paper of record."

Hamberg

Hamberg Auditor-Treasurer Carol Schneider told the Herald-Press the measure would appear on that city's ballot, as well.

"We have a mill levy on the ballot for the ambulance," she added. "We also have one (vacancy) up for Alderman. Roger Pforr was the alderman and he's running again."

Bowdon

Bowdon City Auditor-Treasurer Lindsay Widicker noted three city council seats would appear on that city's ballot.

"The reason we have three seats is we had a council member (Larry Tebelius) pass away midterm, and we opted not to fill it. That seat has been vacant since September. The mayor's seat is also open. We have Trevor Larson who is running for mayor, and his council seat is not up for election, so we'll have to appoint someone to fill the seat. We also have Hans Widicker running for city council. He would be running for Larry Tebelius' open seat," Widicker noted.

Larson is running to replace Allen Hoff, who will not run again for the mayoral seat.

Widicker indicated Larson's vacant seat would likely be filled by appointment.

"If there's a petition to hold a special election (for the seat), we'll hold a special election," she added.

Widicker said she was not aware of an ambulance mill levy on the Bowdon ballot.

"I'm the business manager for the ambulance (in Bowdon). Maybe we're raising it slightly; I think in past we've done three mills. The Bowdon ambulance is a district ambulance and I believe in the past we've assessed three mil levies, and initially, I've filled out the paperwork (for them). I don't believe (the levy) has been on the ballot every time. I don't think ours is really changing this year," she said.

Sykeston, Hurdsfield

City officials from Sykeston and Hurdsfield were unavailable for comment when contacted about their election. A report on their elections will be published in a future Herald-Press issue.

sanded and scraped on that for a month," Kraft continued.

He said his favorite part of his remodel work was copper sheeting installed on the bar's wall, giving the room a warm glow.

Kraft, his family, and employees worked hard through March to prepare for the bar's grand opening in April.

"Now I'm getting loaded with accessories, tables and chairs and a popcorn machine," he added.

that gives chances to win prizes.

Pointing to a big screen television above the bar, he said, "That's the first prize we're going to have out of the machine, and there's some other prizes. It's new. We're the first in the area to have this."

The bar also has pull tab machines familiar to most patrons, and a pool table sits at the center of the room for games and tournaments.

Kraft indicated he will spend

Regular said he expects to be a regular visitor to his former home town, both to visit his mother, Betty, who is in long-term care at St. Aloisius Medical Center, and to touch base with old friends.

"I love it. I always did. I still have my shop here. I built it when my dad was alive. That's what kept me coming back, well, of course, my mom was still here. And it's kind of centrally located," Kraft said.

Future of emergency medical services in N.D.

by Anne Ehni

Members from Fessenden, Harvey, Bowdon, Maddock, Esmond and nearly 20 other ambulance services attended a meeting in Rugby Tuesday, March 29, to discuss the future of emergency medical services in North Dakota.

The purpose of the meeting was to get information to, and feedback from, providers, the public and the legislative representatives. "Emergency Medical Services is changing in North Dakota. We want to discuss where we're at, where's the future, and how we get to where we want to be," said Dr. Jeffrey Sather, Trinity Hospital, Minot, who is the medical director for several ambulance services in North Dakota.

Currently, there are 128 ambulance services in the state and most are facing two primary concerns - people and funding. Kelly Sears, N.D. Department of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma, said, "The crisis is now. Some ambulance services are experiencing call failure and excessive response time." This is due to lack of volunteers. She said that in recent years four ambulance services have closed and 17 others are on the brink of closure.

Curt Halmrast, president of N.D. EMS Association and Oakes Ambulance, said that there is not a decline in providers, but there are fewer active personnel. Several reasons for this were proposed, including rigorous training requirements, burnout and a generational change in commitment to local causes.

Funding is another concern that was discussed. While EMS services in larger communities have a paid staff, the majority of the 128 services in the state operate on a volunteer basis. In recent years, when state enjoyed a rich economy, state dollars have been awarded, in the form of grants, to compensate ambulance services for their staff time. Even some of the volunteer services were awarded a staffing grant. In 2015, an additional \$2.5 million was allocated to EMS from the state budget. These state funds are intended to help with training, staff and equipment needs.

In addition to state funds, 63 percent of the ND ambulance services operate on a district mill levy. Those services that don't have local support

Fessenden, Bowdon, and New Rockford ambulance services are all supported by tax dollars at a local level. Harvey's service is not. At the upcoming June election, residents in the Harvey Ambulance District will have the opportunity to vote on a local mill levy for Harvey Ambulance Service.

through a mill levy may face financial hardship, as the state faces challenges in upcoming budgeting.

"We have serious challenges ahead of us," said Senator Jon Nelson, Rugby. "I can't, with any degree of certainty, predict what the future will hold for these grants. I hope we can at least sustain the levels where we're at, but there is no promise of that."

Some rural ambulance services that rely heavily on state funds may need to consider other means of providing emergency medical care. If communities cannot support an ambulance service, and state funding not adequate to meet their needs, there are options.

Sears explained that some ambulance services may dissolve and rely on emergency responders who carry basic equipment in their personal vehicles. "These responders would be able to provide basic care until an ambulance arrived from a more distant community," she said. "These are called quick responders," she explained. By law, quick responders are not required to provide emergency services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because of this, there is less pressure on quick response services to maintain a full roster of volunteers. Under state law, Quick Response Units cannot transport patients.

"Should we, as citizens, require a minimum level of emergency medical care anywhere in the state?" Sather asked. The answer to that question is in the hands of the people of the state, he said.

"There are 37 percent of the ambulance services who don't receive local support through a district mill levy." District 14 Representative Robin Weisz, Hurdsfield, posed the question, "If the people in those communities don't support their EMS locally, how can we convince the urban legislators to support those services with state tax dollars?"

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