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Three Lakes School District FAB LAB FIRST IN THE STATE	News	4/23/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Last fall, the Three Lakes School District became the first in the state to open a K-12 FAB LAB. It's a place where students can use their imagination to make just about anything with the help of laser engravers, 3D printers, and a mini mill. "There is a volcanic enthusiasm to come here and make stuff," said Dr. Steve Yahr, the FAB LAB Three Lakes director. Three Lakes students of all ages can't wait to use the FAB LAB. On the day Newswatch 12 visited, students were working on their cribbage boards. "We used the Fusion Laser," explained third grader L.J. Terlizzi. "We put it in here and there's a little laser that cuts out the image that you put into the computer." Yahr says the FAB LAB gives students a creative outlet. "They come here, they design it. They make it and discover the joy in making," Yahr added. Yahr spent more than 30 years as an engineer for Lockheed Martin, and he knows that educational tools such as the FAB LAB can help train the next generation of high-tech workers. "It's that skill of knowing you can be creative and wrap a process around it that allows companies to take themselves to the next level in product design and products that they put out in front of the customer," Yahr said. The goal of the FAB LAB is to take the creativity students walk in with and teach the them how to use a problem-solving process to make their vision a reality. "[Employers] are looking for people who can use a process to own a problem and find a solution to it," Yahr said. Because the FAB LAB Three Lakes is a member of the MIT network of FAB LABs, students and teachers are able to communicate through a teleconference system with people working in other FAB LABs around the world. "I can go out over the teleconference system and give a shout out to any of the labs that are online throughout the world and say, 'Hey, this is Three Lakes. We're trying to do X. Have any of you tried to do this before?" Yahr said. "And maybe somebody has done it, and they will help us to understand how they did it." Figuring out how to
Three Lakes School District FAB LAB FIRST IN THE STATE	News	5/14/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Schools will close for the summer in just a few weeks. Even though class won't be in session, you can keep learning. The FAB LAB in Three Lakes will remain open for the summer. The lab allows users to create and design unique items using 3D printing, lasers, and other technology. Teachers hope kids in the summer recreation program will visit the lab during the summer. The instructors think it is important to continue to learn even when school isn't in session. "Learning and trying new things is part of life when you get out there in the world of work, and what better place to learn those things than in school?" said FAB LAB Director Dr. Steve Yahr. "So you're ready for what the world of works asks of you and what you're going to be doing," Teachers from across the state will come to Three Lakes to use the FAB LAB and take a FAB LAB 101 class to learn more about how the technology works. The summer is a great time for teachers to learn. "There's not often a lot of time during the school year—when we are busy with our curriculum, and our students, and our planning or collaborating," said Assistant Technology Director Laura Wipperman. "But summer is the time when we renew and refresh, and we take it upon ourselves to do some professional development. So it's a good time for teachers to engage," Members of the community are welcome to use the FAB LAB during the summer as well.

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Reduced state funding for the Chequamegon- Nicolet National Forest	News	5/29/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Eleven campgrounds in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest closed this year after the U.S. Forest Service reduced its funding and services. The cuts happened because fewer people have been visiting the campgrounds in the last few years, but the Three Lakes Town Board will pay to keep one of its grounds open for the 2015 season. The Laurel Lake Campground in Three Lakes would have closed without the town board's funding. "We didn't like the idea of going through and seeingbefore you get to the Northernaire Bridge, you see a big sign that says 'Laurel Lake Campground Closed' so you probably think, 'What else is closed in the town?'," said Three Lakes Town Supervisor Pat Volk. "We decided we weren't going to let this thing close." The Three Lakes Chain has more than 100 miles of shoreline. Campground funding will go towards maintenance, cleanup, and repairs. "We came up with a cost estimate of \$3,600 to keep it open, but that's a rough estimate," said Volk. "We want to keep it open one season to see how close that is to being what the cost is." The Laurel Lake Campground opened for the season on Friday.
Three Lakes Film Festival	News	6/16/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Wisconsin filmmakers will be heading to Three Lakes starting Thursday, June 18th. The Three Lakes Center for the Arts will be hosting its third annual film festival. Organizers say that it's a great opportunity for Wisconsin filmmakers to showcase their talents. "I think you'll see that, as we do this more and more, more people will show up and understand that they can come here for really good, quality filmmaking and see who's out there on the horizon that are new filmmakers and old filmmakers alike that are from Wisconsin," said Jim Cowee, Board President for the Three Lakes Center for the Arts. The festival will feature films by filmmakers who are either from Wisconsin, or have strong connections to Wisconsin. Organizers say that the event has definitely grown since the first festival in 2013. "We're finding that people are coming from farther and farther away; even sometimes will come and spend the night," said Gay Scheffen, the live events coordinator for the Three Lakes Center for the Arts. Originally, we were just getting people from Three Lakes and maybe Eagle River. And now they come from Phelps and Minocqua and Antigo." Tickets are \$15 each night or \$35 for all three nights. To find out more about specific show times and film details, we have a link to the Three Lakes Center for the Arts listed below.
Three Lakes Tourism Event	News	6/26/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	An event in Three Lakes will bring many tourists to the area this weekend. The Three Lakes Shootout and Fly-in will be Friday, June 26th and Saturday, June 27th. The radar run began eight years ago as a way to raise money for the Three Lakes Fire Department. The event begins Friday with a tour of the Three Lakes Chain of Lakes. Saturday, race boats will run against a radar gun while planes fly into the airport. "The kids love to see all the vintage airplanes. They love to see the boats. They love to see the race boats going down the course as well as the snowmobiles on the water. There are so many things going on. It's quite a sensory experience," said Jim Leatzow. The event brings racers from across the country to Three Lakes. You can watch the races from bleachers or from the water. "You can come by boat and anchor along the race course. We have a set-back for safety. If you anchor your boat, we have shuttle boats that go around and bring people to shore for food, beverage, and bathroom breaks," said Leatzow. The event is free for everyone. There will be shuttle buses available to and from the event.

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Three Lakes Tourism Event	News	6/27/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Hundreds of people grabbed their friends and their boats for the 8th Annual Three Lakes Shoot Out and Fly-In Race Saturday afternoon. The popular event is hosted every year by the Three Lakes Fire Department. "The purpose has always been to benefit our fire department which is all volunteer," said Event Chairman Jim Leatzow. "We started with the primary purpose to build a second fire house, which is now accomplished. Now we're equipping it and helping other fire departments in the area as well." Racers came anywhere from Texas to Canada and New York just to be a part of the two day event. The goal for racers was to have the fastest time from a standing start in 1,000 feet. "The fastest we've ever had was three years ago we had a 2,000 horse power boat go from a standing start to 163 miles an hour in 1,000 feet," said Leatzow. People could also watch as planes flew overhead to see the races. Pilots who came in were offered a free meal to enjoy the show. The race featured about 90 people this year. Visitors said this may have been the best year since the races started eight years ago. "It's a great event," said Germantown resident Tom Wiesen. "They treat you really well up here. It's a family friendly environment. A lot of great boats, a lot of people from all over the area come to race." Volunteers say the event is very special to the community. "The Three Lakes Chain has a legacy of boat racing, and part of this is to show that performance boating can be done responsibly," said Leatzow. "There aren't that many events, especially for boaters, where people come out to watch next year. "It's a family friendly event where it costs nothing, but you're helping a town and just coming out to enjoy the day and now the beautiful weather," said Leatzow.
Measure to Increase in Sales Tax on the Ballot April 7th	News	4/1/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	voters in Rhinelander will decide on April 7 if the city should raise its sales tax by one-half cent for every dollar. The proposal takes the form of an advisory question on the ballot; if voters approve the measure, the city would still need help from the state legislature. Rhinelander wants to increase its 5.5 percent sales tax to 6 percent as part of a Premier Resort Area Tax. That increase would only apply to items purchased at what the Wisconsin Department of Revenue considers "tourist-related retailers," a category that includes businesses ranging from toy stores to restaurants to sewing supply shops. State law dictates that all of the money collected from the Premier Resort Area Tax would go toward infrastructure improvements. "When you have a bad street, you also probably have also bad infrastructure underneath it, and that's what the issues is," Rhinelander Mayor Dick Johns said. "You can cap those streets, but you've got to really do the work on it in order to do it right." Rhinelander City Administrator Blaine Oborn says this is the only type of sales tax cities are allowed to put in place under state law. Eagle River is one of five Wisconsin cities that have passed the tax. Voters approved the increase in 2006. According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, in order to enact a resort area tax, at least 40 percent of a city's property value needs to be used by tourism-related retailers. However, a city can seek an exception from the state Legislature to levy the tax. Rhinelander would seek that exception if the advisory vote passes. Rhinelander city leaders estimate that two-thirds of the sales tax increase will be paid by commuters and visitors. "Everybody who comes into the Rhinelander area is going to pay the tax, and [doing that] is much easier than trying to do it with [just] 7,000 people on the tax-roll," Johns said. According to city estimates, Rhinelander generates around 66 percent of the \$3.8 million dollars of Oneida County's sales tax revenue. However, the city doesn't receive any of t

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Revitalization of Downtown Rhinelander	News	4/2/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Businesses in downtown Rhinelander pay taxes to the Business Improvement District. That money then helps Downtown Rhinelander Inc. promote tourism and economic growth in the area. But some disaffected business owners started a petition to dissolve the BID because they felt like they weren't getting their money's worth. After collecting enough signatures from fellow business owners, that petition will now move forward to the city council. If the city council verifies the signatures and accepts the petition, the BID will dissolve, and Downtown Rhinelander Inc. will lose about half of its funding. "[For] the majority of [business owners], it did not boil down to a personal thing in the sense that they felt DRI wasn't necessarily doing its job or [was] totally inadequate or uselss," said DRI Executive Director Maggie Steffen. "It turned out to be more of money factor." DRI used to receive \$100,000 from the BID every year. The funding cut could impact some DRI programs, but it won't stop Steffen or the rest of DRI from moving forward with their plans to promote the community. "We have a lot of great things already in process that we're going to keep continuing because the BID is only half of our budget," she says. "We do have another 50 percent of our budget to work with, and we're going to reevaluate things and decide where we want to prioritize and move on from there." Although the success of the petition may indicate that some businesses no longer support DRI, Steffen says the group still enjoys a lot of support from the community as a whole. "We have a lot of supporters, community in general as far as volunteers, businesses that help support all of our programs and our events and things like that," said Steffen. "They all believe and realize that having an advocate for the downtown is truly important. You need to have that voice." Steffen say it's too early to know exactly what projects would have to be cut if the petition goes through but, regardless of the outcome, DRI leaders think it's important to maintain

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Prosecutors moving forward on meth charges against 38 year old Rhinelander man	News	4/8/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The case against a 38-year-old Rhinelander woman facing several meth charges will move forward. Prosecutors believe Jaime Rickert helped buy material for the production of methamphetamine and then helped cook that methamphetamine at her downtown Rhinelander apartment. Rickert faces five felony charges, including manufacturing and delivering amphetamine, knowingly possessing methamphetamine waste, and possessing methamphetamine precursors. Investigators say Rickert and 40-year-old Michael Steinmetz, Jr. took part in the meth-making process. Thitty-six-year-old Crystal Schirmacher, 35-year-old Jesus Fernandez, and 47-year-old Carrie Steinmetz also face charges for allegedly purchasing material used to make meth. According to the criminal complaint, Rickert purchased instant cold packs, muriatic acid, and lithium batteries at multiple stores on multiple occasions from February 2015 to March 2015. According to testimony Wednesday, those chemicals and materials are all used in the meth-making process. Investigators say Steinmetz was manufacturing the meth in plastic bottles using a method called a "one pot." "Michael (Steinmetz) did not want to show Rickert how to actually do it, because she wasn't shaking it properly, because it needs to be shaken to a certain extent for a long period of time," an undercover Rhinelander Police officer said. Prosecutors believe the group cooked meth in an apartment at 28 North Brown Street between December 2014 and March 2015. Investigators say Steinmetz told them that on one occasion the "one pot" got so hot, it actually burned the suspects gloves during the production process. "They would dump all of the waste in the toilet, and flush it down," an undercover Rhinelander Police officer said. "They would cut out the bottles and then throw the bottles away in the garbage in the back of 28 North Brown Street." According to testimony, investigators found trace amounts of meth at Rickert's apartment in downtown Rhinelander. Informants also told investigators that she had been using meth
Measure to Increase in Sales Tax on the Ballot April 7th Approved	News	4/8/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	People shopping in Rhinelander could see a slightly higher sales tax on some items next year. At the polls on Tuesday, Rhinelander voters overwhelmingly supported a proposal for the Premier Resort Area Tax. The city is looking to add a half-percent sales tax on tourist-related purchases in the city. The money will support infrastructure projects in the city, such as fixing potholes. Rhinelander Mayor Dick Johns worked hard to pitch the plan to voters. "This is your opportunity to help yourself, and this is a chance that we have to do it, and we have to bring this to you, so you have to do what you need to do," Johns said. "They did it." Now the state legislature needs to sign off on the plan. Rep. Rob Swearingen, R-Rhinelander, has submitted the proposal as part of the two-year state budget. Legislators should decide by June whether to include the proposal in the final budget. Rhinelander's mayor hopes the 2-to-1 vote margin in favor of the tax will sway lawmakers. "I'll tell you, this ought to make an impression on the people that have to carry the problem for us in the state legislature," Johns said. "This has to help them." City Administrator Blaine Oborn told us the tax would likely take effect sometime next year if the legislature approves it.

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Rhinelander High School Mascot in the Final for Mascot Challenge	News	4/10/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	You can't find another high school mascot named the Hodag. The mythical creature serves as a source of pride for Rhinelander for all sorts of reason, and you can now add another reason to that list: The Hodag advanced to the championship round of the statewide Wissports.net Frontier Mascot Challenge late this afternoon. The bracket started with 64 mascots, but now it's down to two after the Hodag won more online votes than the Washburn Castle Guards in the semifinal round this afternoon. The competition has helped stir even more Hodog pride in the community. "The one thing about the Hodag is everybody knows Rhinelander because of the Hodag. It's just unique," Rhinelander High School Activities Director Brian Paulson. Rhinelander football player Luke Roberts loves wearing the Hodag logo on his uniforms. He's being recruited by Big Ten schools such as Michigan State, Illinois Minnesota, and Wisconsin. He'll have pride in being a Hodag when he takes his sixth unofficial visit to Madison on April 19. "I'm going to carry it everywhere I go because like I said, we're so unique," Roberts said. "I don't know, I like this town a lot, the Hodag is just a cool thing to have. I'm going to tell all my buddies that I'm a Hodag." The Hodag will take on the Polar Bear from Hortonville next week in the championship round. The winning school will receive \$1,000 contribution to its general fund. Cast your vote for the Hodag at the link below.
Food Pantry been helping locals for 10 years	News	4/11/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry celebrated its 10th anniversary Saturday with an open house featuring food and drinks. Rhinelander Area Food Pantry Executive Director Guy Hansen thinks the pantry's welcoming environment has helped it become a long-term success. "Everybody that comes to the pantry, the customers and the volunteers both just love the arrangement," Hansen said. "It's so nice, it's cheery, it's open. I think we had more volunteers than we had before, partly because it's just a nice place to work." The pantry moved to its current location last October because it outgrew the old one. Volunteers typically serve about 450 households a month. "Since we've been open 10 years, we have actually served at one time or another over 3,000 households. Now obviously most of those have come and gone, but 3,000 households," said Hansen. "We have distributed almost 4 million pounds of food." The open house also gave visitors the chance to tour the pantry. Visit the link below for more information about how to volunteer and donate.
Former Rhinelander Business Owner to serve more time for insurance fraud	News	4/17/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A former Rhinelander man will spend even more time in prison for an insurance fraud scheme. John Henricks was sentenced in federal court in June of 2013. At that time, he was ordered to pay \$1.3 million in restitution and spend 10 years in federal prison. At a hearing yesterday, Federal Judge Barbara Crabb ruled that Henricks has willfully failed to make even minimal efforts to pay restitution. She added an extra two and a half years to his prison sentence, so Henricks will now serve 12 and a half years. John Henricks used to own Custom Collision in Rhinelander, during which time he defrauded 19 car insurance companies over the course of six years. Prosecutors say he also coerced employees into participating in the fraud.

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Local Food Pantry adds greenhouse	News	4/19/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry has added a new greenhouse at its current location so people will now have more vegetables to take home. For the last nine years, the pantry grew its vegetables at the Rhinelander Area Community Garden, but it now needs more greenhouse space. "We were doing it in small pop-up greenhouses and in our homes," said organizer Tom Jerow, "[but] thanks to the Rhinelander Kiwanis, who provided the funding and much of the labor for this construction, we were able to build this greenhouse." Organizers are growing tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, and broccoli. These vegetables are being grown ahead of the gardening season so they can be ready to plant in May. "It's always great to grow vegetables, and a lot of our customers enjoy growing vegetables, and we're able to provide a few for them in the past, but now with the expanded space we'll be able to provide much more," said Jerow. Organizers say they've received a lot of positive feedback so far.
Rhinelander-Oneida Airport 3rd in state to offer TSA pre-check screening program	News	4/30/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Some of the travelers who use the Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport will have an easier time getting through security. The airport became the third in the state to offer the TSA Pre-Check screening program. "What we've moved toward in recent years is [a] more intelligence-based, risk-based approach to security that has led to some five million passengers every week experiencing some form of expedited screening," said Carrie Harmon of the Transportation Security Administration. People who enroll in the program don't need to remove their shoes, light jackets, or belts. They also don't need to take their laptops or bags with liquids and gels out of their carry-on luggage. "It enables passengers that we consider low risk, that we know more about, to get through more quickly," Harmon added. "It's good customer service. And then it gives TSA more resources to focus on passengers we know less about." About half of Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport flyers are already enrolled in the program. Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport Director Joe Brauer experienced the program's benefits a few weeks ago. "They announced the flight. By the time we went through security, it was almost less than a minute," Brauer said. "And on the reverse side, I was coming out of Wichita, Kansas and such like that, and it took less than five minutes and such. It's a great customer service enhancement for our people." More than 140 airports across the country use the TSA Pre-Check Program, including the ones in Milwaukee and Madison.
Rhinelander Soccer Team to Compete in England raising funds for the trip	News	5/3/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A Rhinelander soccer team will head to England this summer to compete against teams from around the world. They're now holding fundraisers to help pay for the trip. Fourteen girls, coaches, and chaperons with the team Hodags vs. the World will play throughout England this August. They have to raise about \$30,000 to pay for flights, hotels, and other expenses. The team held a thrift sale this weekend at Trig's in Rhinelander to help meet their goal. "We are wrapping up our thrift sale," said Rhinelander Soccer Club Coach Kim Frederickson. "We have been fundraising since about last August, trying to get plane tickets and hostel funding for the girls to be able to go to England to play some soccer games over there." The girls will play in Manchester, Liverpool, London and possibly Scotland. The coach says they're about two-thirds of the way to their goal, and the girls say the community support means a lot. "It's going to mean a lot to us," said player Brooke Mork. "We get to play a lot of teams over there and stuff, so it's going to be a lot of fun." For more information on how you can help, go to the Hodags vs. The World Facebook page.

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Revitalization of Downtown Rhinelander	News	5/8/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Rhinelander keeps filling empty storefronts and adding restaurant variety at a fast pace. The community will get three new restaurants within about a month. In a year's time, four restaurants, and two large retail stores have opened. "It's definitely a much bigger pace here," said Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Dana DeMet. "There's a lot more new places that people are still trying out, and there are a lot of places that have been here for a year that people haven't had the opportunity to check out yet. So the pace is definitely quickened. I attribute that to availability of real estate," DeMet thinks the local economy mirrors some national trends, including investors opening their pockets to invest more in local businesses. "We decided that we want to do a small ma-and-pa Italian beef Chicago dog place, and it kind of steamrolled into a bigger restaurant to bring more Italian food to the area," said Mike Cinfio, owner of Dominic's Italian Beef. Cinfio says he spoke with a lot of people traveling outside the area to get Italian food. Many people also said there wasn't enough ethnic food in Rhinelander, but it looks like the some new restaurants will help to change that perception soon. Dominic's Italian Beef will open in Rhinelander this June.
Revitalization of Downtown Rhinelander	News	5/12/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Businesses in downtown Rhinelander don't want to lose customers when a major stretch of road gets torn up next year. The construction will come in advance of sewage renovation project along with a streetscape project, and local businesses want to make sure they make the most of possible upgrades. Downtown Rhinelander Inc.promotes the downtown area and its businesses. Workers, businesses and community members met Tuesday night to focus on how to move forward as they prepare for a major utility reconstruction project that should start on Brown Street in 2016. "You don't want to have people start setting different consumer pattern," said Downtown Rheinlander Inc. President Dan Kuzlik. "If they find that, 'well I don't want to go downtown, so I'm going to go to this place outside of town,' and then all of a sudden that pattern sets up." DRI lost about half of its funding source after a Business Improvement District dissolved last month. But workers believe they could form something like a Friends of DRI group to help with funding. "There are business people within those places that would like to do something," Kuzlik said. "We're not going to call it a membership or anything, but they want to be a patron in some way." DRI leaders say they've got funding for about 18 months under their current plan. However, the group is reevaluating programs and deciding what it can do to last longer than that.
Former Rhinelander City Administrator starts a new job	News	5/13/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Rhinelander's City Administrator will start a new job in southern Wisconsin in July. Blaine Oborn accepted a job as Lake Geneva's City Administrator. Oborn has been Rhinelander's City Administrator for almost four years. "[I'm] really excited about my new opportunity, but certainly excited about my effort here and I want to, you know, this is a valuable community," says Oborn. Oborn says the city will continue to improve. "Roads and other infrastructure needs to be improved, and the downtown streetscape project is an area," Oborn says. "It's been a lot of planning and a lot of preparation work for that, so I'm really excited that will likely move forward in 2016." Oborn says he thinks the city council will appoint an interim city manager soon.

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Boom Lake Log Jam hopes to attract non- locals to event	News	5/14/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce hopes to bring more people from out of town to the Boom Lake Log Jam. It plans on doing that by using grant money it got to advertise the event. The chamber got a \$20,000 Joint Effort Marketing, or JEM, grant from the state to promote the event. This will be the second year the event has been held. Last year the chamber got a \$10,000 JEM grant for the event. Chamber leaders think they got another grant because of last year's success. "It's indicative that the first year's event went well, that people enjoyed it and that the Department of Tourism sees promise in this type of event," says Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Dana DeMet. "As part of the grants you have to file official reviews of the event, what you did, what changes you'll make for the following year." The advertising will be aired through the entire state. The chamber is trying to direct the most marketing to central Wisconsin and the Fox Valley. Visitors may notice some changes at this year's event. "Our best bloody Mary competition which will be Saturday morning, we're also introducing log rolling from the YMCA of the Northwoods. So not only will you be able to do two man sawing, but you'll also be able to get out and do some log rolling in Boom Lake, and then we're also adding a whole new, actually a whole new event as part of the log jam which is the Boom Lake Log Jam Canoe and Kayak Paddle Race," DeMet says. The Boom Lake Log Jam will be held June 19th through the 21st.
Rhinelander Close to Premier Resort Area Tax	News	5/15/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	It appears Rhinelander is one step closer to having a Premier Resort Area Tax. The state legislature's joint finance committee passed the proposal Thursday night. The city of Rhinelander wants to add a half-percent sales tax on tourism-related purchases. The money will go to infrastructure projects in the city, like roads. Rhinelander voters overwhelmingly supported the tax increase in the April election. The state assembly and senate need to pass the proposal which is part of the state budget. It would then go to Governor Scott Walker for his signature.
Drs. Foster and Smith Oneida County's largest employer acquired by PETCO - Local Jobs look to be safe	News	5/15/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The questions started getting asked last fall. Drs. Foster and Smith had just announced it would sell its pet supply company to San Diego-based Petco. Would people lose their jobs? Would Foster and Smith leave Rhinelander? Would the name change? Three months after the sale became official, answers seem to be getting clearer. Foster and Smith will likely remain one of the largest employers in Oneida County. The jobs appear to be safe. That's due, in part, to a priority of company founders Race Foster and Marty Smith. Nearing retirement, they wanted to sell, but only to the right company. "Their exit time was coming, and the question for them was, 'What happens to the company?' Now, we're part of a large company with lots of resources, so, in that sense, it's been a very positive change for the long-term stability of the company," said Drs. Foster and Smith Internet Marketing Manager Gordon Magee. When they looked to sell, they specifically wanted a buyer that would stay in Oneida County. 'We were looking for a company that would keep the jobs in Rhinelander," said Magee. "That's one of the things that, at this time, is the Petco plan. That was a very important thing in selecting Petco, for sure." The company says not much has changed since the sale became official in February. Petco seems to be committed to Rhinelander into the future. "Petco actually bought the property. They own the property here, which is a really important signal of what their plans are for the long term," said Magee. "If someone was going to buy a company and close it down, they would lease the property, and that's not what happened." Petco especially liked some features of Foster and Smith, features it plans to develop. "I think we could see some expansion of the call center over time," Magee said. "Live aquaria was a big part of that, as well. It's a really unique feature that Foster and Smith has. We're a national leader in that area. Another area in which we're a national leader is the pharmacy."

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Revitalization of Downtown Rhinelander	News	5/16/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Downtown Rhinelander Incorporated, or DRI, had its third annual "Open House for Available Properties" Saturday. Available downtown properties for rent or sale allow people to view the properties. The DRI offers people a map and list of the openings. The event has had success in past years. "If they've taken the time, they're serious. They may not quite be ready to take that step, but they're serious enough that they want to see what's up here, and maybe make their decision based on that. So every single time we've done this, we've managed to be lucky and have somebody come through and actually rent a property downtown," said DRI Executive Director Maggie Steffen. There are about eighteen businesses available this year. Event organizers say the number of vacancies this year suggest that the downtown is becoming more prosperous. "The downtown in the sense that it's a living, breathing thing, and it changes all the time, so yes there are a few properties that were available last year, maybe even available the year before, but that's diminished," said Steffen. In the last week, the vacancies available have changed three times. Event organizers see this as a positive sign of growth in the area.
Rhinelander City Administrator position filled on interim basis	News	5/18/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A familiar face will serve as Rhinelander city administrator for the time being. Phil Parkinson started in his position as interim city administrator on Friday. Parkinson is Rhinelander's former city attorney and administrator. He retired from city hall in 2013. Parkinson is filling the position for now after Blaine Oborn resigned last week. Oborn accepted a job as the city administrator of Lake Geneva. The city council will meet in the next few weeks to begin the process of finding a permanent replacement.
Two more arrested on Meth Charges	News	5/18/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Two people arrested in January for making meth in their Rhinelander home face more punishment for another apparent attempt to manufacture the drug. According to the criminal complaints, investigators received a tip in February that Nitscke bought muriatic acid, an ingredient used to make meth. The store confirmed Nitschke bought the chemical. At the end of March, the Oneida County Sheriff's Office received a different complaint about illegal dumping in the Township of Stella. When investigators went through the garbage bag, they found numerous prescription pill bottles belonging to Healy and Nitschke. They also found marijuana pipes and containers with suspected marijuana, along with a manual titled "Methamphetamine Shake and Bake Guide." Investigators checked logs at local pharmacies and found Healy and Nitschke made multiple pseudophedrine purchases in the span of just more than a month. Pseudophedrine is another ingredient used to make meth. Special Prosecutor Jodi Bednar-Clemens says more charges could be on the way for Healy and Nitchske. The Oneida County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant on the home Friday and apparently found meth and meth-related waste. Bednar-Clemens asked Judge Patrick O'Melia to set a \$10,000 cash bond for both Nitschke and Healy. "I don't know what it's going to take for this individual to conform her activities to the dictates of the law," Bednar-Clemens. "We all know how serious the methamphetamine problem is in our community, and I really believe, your honor, that Ms. Healy is a large cause of that problem." Healy's attorney, Richard Shawl, said Healy had been trying to get better. Shawl said Healy checked herself into rehab a week before she was arrested. "That, in fact, was where she was arrested, and her treatment was interrupted by this proceeding," Shawl said. "And while that is something that the law enforcement community certainly has a right to pursue, it's also antithetical to one of the stated goals of proceeding to criminal prosecution, and that's rehabilitat

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Meth Charges filed	News	5/20/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A Rhinelander man faces charges for a third time for allegedly making meth. 48-year-old Richard Nitschke was first charged in January for making meth. He was charged again on Monday for planning to make meth in April, and now faces more charges for making meth in May. In total, he faces 13 drug-related felonies. According to court documents, Nitschke is accused of making meth at a house in Minocqua. Nitschke also allegedly bought ingredients and supplies to make meth in St. Germain, Tomahawk, and Wausau. He's also accused of burning meth waste by putting it in oil, covering it with paper in a cardboard box, and setting it on fire. Nitschke is held on a \$5,000 cash bond.
Oneida County Veterans Group hold Memorial Day Ceremony	News	5/25/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A Northwoods veterans group wants people to remember those who died serving our country. The Oneida County Veterans Council held a Memorial Day ceremony in Rhinelander on Monday. The Rhinelander High School band and choir performed at the ceremony. Mayor Dick Johns was the speaker. Event organizers hope people take time on Memorial Day to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. "Veterans Day is for all veterans. Armed Forces Day is for all armed forces, and so forth. But Memorial Day is specifically to honor those that have given up the ultimate sacrifice, that have died for the freedoms that you and I enjoy," says organizer Ray Zastrow. The ceremony was held at Rhinelander High School because of the rainy weather. The group is thinking about holding the ceremony at the school every year. "We're talking that possibly we could use this in the future because this really is handy," Zastrow said. "It's handy for the band and the choir. So we may hold it here on a regular basis. We're going to have to make that decision." The ceremony was originally supposed to take place at the Oneida County Courthouse.
Meth Trial	News	5/26/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Prosecutors hope evidence from a garbage bag will help convict a 48-year-old Rhinelander woman of trying to make meth. Andrea Healy was bound over for trial after a preliminary hearing in Rhinelander on Tuesday. According to the criminal complaint, investigators found a meth-making manual titled "Methamphetamine Shake and Bake Guide" inside the garbage bag in late March. They also found drugs prescribed fro Healy and 49-year-old Richard Nitschke. Healy faces charges for allegedly possessing meth and trying to manufacture the drug. Healy had already been arrested in January on similar charges. Her defense lawyer, Richard Shawl, argued in court Tuesday that the garbage bag doesn't tie her to meth charges. "The indication is that this is relevant to an alleged manufacturing that occurred between April 1 and April 30, and we have no connection," Shawl said. The medication had been dated for December 2014, according to the criminal complaint. However, Oneida County Circuit Judge Michael Bloom ruled against that argument. "The date of the bottle is not relevant," Bloom said. "The date when the garbage was deposited would potentially be relevant, but the date on the bottle would not." The criminal complaint also asserts that individuals told investigators Healy and Nitschke had possessed meth while visiting a home in the Town of Nokomis in April. After her most recent arrest, an investigator asked Healy whether she had meth in April. "And in that interview, Andrea Healy told me that she had brought the methamphetamine to the Dalka residence," the investigator said during testimony Tuesday. Nitschke also faces charges connected to this case. Police believe the pair also purchased ingredients several times in March and April intending to make meth. Healy is due in court again next month.

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Positive Behavior program working at RHS	News	5/27/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Students at Rhinelander High School hoped they would be driving home in a new car Wednesday afternoon. The prize was part of the school's year-end celebration. The car was the top prize connected to the school's Positive Behavior Initiatives and Supports policy. This is the third year that the school district has been involved with the initiative. Throughout the year students who display good behaviors, such as being on time and assisting others in the classroom, can receive special green cards. These cards are collected and are put into drawings in which students can win prizes such as free pizzas from Dominos. The drawings are a weekly event, but the green cards are also held over the year for an end-of-the-year grand prize drawing. Brittany Haakenson, an art teacher at Rhinelander High School, has been very involved with the initiative and the planning for Wednesday's assembly. She was excited for the work the initiative has been able to accomplish and for the grand prize: a new car. "It's totally random and whoever gets that special key-there is going to be six keys that won't open the carbut there will be that one winner," said Haakenson. The program has proven to be very effective. Faith Carris, a junior at Rhinelander High School, has also been involved with the initiative throughout the year. She feels that it is having a positive effect on students. "I do believe it is a good thing because it is helping our non-tardy policy," Carris said. "We have had less and less tardies each year." In fact, the initiative has cut the number of tardies almost in half since it started three years ago. The school is extremely grateful for the community's support of the initiative. The school plans to utilize PBIS more and more in the future. While the car giveaway certainly was the main event for the celebration, other students were recognized as well. Some of those students were members in a new Distributive Education Clubs of America program. This program is new to Rhinelander High School and is based off its Futur
Motorcycle Deer Accident	News	5/28/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A Rhinelander man went to the hospital after his motorcycle hit a deer near Merrill Wednesday night. Lincoln County deputies tell us a call came in just before nine Wednesday night. The caller did not provide the exact location of the accident but believed they were on State Highway 107. A deputy found the crash site on Highway 107 near Sugar Maple Road. The driver, a 51-year-old man from Rhinelander, suffered injuries that could be life threatening. He's being treated at a hospital in Wausau. The 49-year-old woman riding on the back of the motorcycle was not hurt.
Tails on Trails - YMCA	News	5/30/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	Dog lovers came out to the YMCA of the Northwoods in Rhinelander Saturday afternoon for the second annual "Tails on the Trails" event. Pet owners could walk their dogs on the Stoney Pines Trail behind the YMCA. Every lap on the trails earned the owners a ticket for prizes later in the day. The Northwoods K-9 Sports club brought out equipment for owners and dogs to use. "We just like to show off our agility and let people try out the equipment because it's good exercise for the dogs and its good experience for the dogs out here," said Northwoods K-9 Sports member Debra Zimbler. Even in the rain, the event was a success. Owners encourage people to get out more with their pets and to join the event next year. "It's a great event," said Zimbler. "I think it really is important to teach people to work with their dog and get out with their dog. Walking is obviously healthy. I just think it's a great event." The event was free for everyone. Prizes were donated by Pawz n' Clawz in Rhinelander.

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RHS Building Trades Program completes their house	News	5/30/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The home is for a local family. Students had an open house Saturday that showed off all of their hard work. Nearly every day since October, 28 students have worked on the three bedroom house. They're part of the Rhinelander High School Building Trades Program. Students were shingling in the middle of winter and working in the house when it didn't have heat. It's something instructors think builds character. "I think it hits home. It's something special about it. I often say it's not a worksheet that they're just going to get a good grade on and throw away. It's something that they can drive by years from now and show their significant other, and they're a part of that. I think it's got some pretty special meaning that way," said Residential Carpentry Instructor Russ Germain. Instructors say that working in the elements can be a challenge, but it was a big confidence builder for the students. Construction was completely new to the majority of the students. However, they were still able to build a house that even comes with solar panels. The project created a lot of lasting memories. "Definitely one of my biggest memories. It's so different compared to just sitting in the classroom all day like in a math class. Just coming out here every morning to an actual job site and working. It's definitely my standout for my senior year," said Rhinelander High School senior graduate Ben Quade. Instructors emphasized the importance of a building's efficiency. The complete energy bill for the house will be under \$50. The area family will move into the home this June.
Summer Reading Program	News	6/4/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A new program lets kids stay active reading their favorite books in the summer. The Rhinelander District Library now offers a new reading program called One Thousand Books Before Kindergarten. The free program is for children who have not yet entered into Kindergarten. It is an incentive-based program that encourages reading and celebrates hard workers. Staff members at the library say it is a great way for kids to practice their reading skills at an early age. "It's kind of an early literacy push to get kids ready for their school years," said Assistant Librarian Denise Chojnacki. "The goal is to really up the literacy factor, so that when kids get to school they really have that good back ground behind them." Kids can work through the one thousand books and earn prizes along the way. Even re-reading books counts towards the final tally. Kids who participate can look forward to incentives for every one hundred books that they read. "For every one hundred books that they read, they get an incentive or a prize. We just have a little basket full of prizes for them to choose from; stickers and Culvers treats, pencils, buttons," said Chojnacki. "And then they finish the program in their own time frame. It can take anywhere from nine months to two years." This free program is another way the library hopes to keep kids reading. Parents can sign their children up at the library's Children's Department desk.
Revitalization of Downtown Rhinelander	News	6/22/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	A new business in downtown Rhinelander hopes to help save people money. The Festive Frog will open Tuesday, June 23. The new store offers planning and consulting services for weddings and parties. You can also rent or purchase silk flowers and arrangements. "We can help you with getting your venues, your caterer, your DJ, whatever you want," said Mary Wright from the Festive Frog. "We can take you from the very first lines of planning until the very end." Downtown Rhinelander Inc. helped the new store get started. Owner Jeanne Pederson has been selling silk flowers from her home for many years, but it was always her dream to open the store. "The beauty of doing work in silks is [customers] see everything ahead of time," Pederson said. "There's no surprises, there's no disappointments. They have pre-approved everything. And to see the look on their faces when we have hit it, and made their dream come true, is the best." Now that the store will open, the women hope to finally plan their first winter wedding. There will be an open house Tuesday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

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Rhinelander Fire Department Training for new members	News	6/30/2015	6,7,8AM Noon & 5PM	1 minute	The newest members of the Rhinelander Fire Department will spend part of the next few weeks training, practicing some of their most important safety techniques. Tuesday, that practice included tearing open a Chevy Prizm. "It is very important," Rhinelander Fire Department Deputy Chief Dan Bauer said of the training. "Like I said, the quicker we can get the patient out of there, the quicker medical staff can take care of them and get them to the hospital, and get them to the appropriate facility. The quicker they can, the better chance of survival." Firefighters use incredibly strong tools to spread, cut, and tear pieces of a vehicle. Tuesday's practice session let firefighters perfect all of their techniques. "There are all different types of equipment lying out here just in case one technique doesn't work, so we can switch to different," Bauer said. Those techniques could come in handy soon. The summer months bring more tourists to the roads, which means more chances for crashes. Firefighters caution that you should try to stay awake and stay calm if you get in a crash. "We'll tell you what we're going to do, and try to not move because if you have a neck injury or that you don't want to be moving around," Bauer said. "Just sit still and let us get the vehicle open, and let us get in there and extricate you." The training will help keep people safe, but it also helps department leaders build a team. "I like to see their progress and see them actually learning and becoming more proficient at each step that they take," Bauer said. This is the first week of training for the newest firefighters. They're already working on the clock, but they'll keep training over the next few weeks.