



Landoll Company

A new building is under construction at the TravAlong by Landoll site along U.S. Highway 77 near Waterville's east entry.

TravAlong: Work starts on expansion

FROM PAGE 1A

The trailer manufacturer, purchased by Landoll Company of Marysville in 2019, currently has orders for enough refurbished trailers to boost its workforce in the new 80x185-foot facility.

"Once the building is up, we'll need 12 to 15 more people," Shipman said of a crew now at 32.

A large wash bay will be installed to thoroughly clean trailers before they are shot blasted with a new blast booth and system. Phil Landoll, vice

president of Landoll operations, said that once the new building is ready, trailers will no longer need to be shuttled back and forth between Waterville and Marysville shops.

Remaining space in the new addition will be used for final assembly of fully refurbished trailers.

"The city of Waterville has been great to work with, and they are excited about the investment in their community," Landoll said. "The local school has reached out and wants to come tour once it's completed."

Work is expected to be done by early next year.

Company president Don Landoll said Sunbelt Rentals, a national company that rents equipment, uses Landoll trailers to haul its equipment. Sunbelt has a large number of trailers in line for refurbishment at Waterville.

Don Landoll said the process includes stripping the trailers of their wood deck, lights and hydraulic lines and taking them down to the metal before they are washed and refurbished.

Donor to match gifts to VH facility fund

By Sarah Kessinger

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A donor plans to match gifts to a new Facility Enhancement Fund created to benefit Valley Heights school district on the Blue Rapids Circle of Giving Match Day on Sept. 13-15.

The match days are held each year by Blue Rapids Community Foundation.

"Valley Heights USD 498 is excited to announce the creation of the Mustang Facility Enhancement Fund, a community-focused initiative through the Blue Rapids Community Foundation dedicated to supporting critical facility improvements across the district," said district Superintendent Sean Spoons. "This fund will help ensure that Valley Heights schools continue to provide safe, modern and functional spaces for learning, growth and community engagement."

The fund will focus on classrooms and common areas, infra-

structure and technology upgrades.

"Every improvement will help our students thrive," Spoons said.

The district announced this week that an anonymous donor has stepped forward with a dollar-for-dollar matching challenge.

People can give during the Blue Rapids Circle of Giving Match Day, Sept. 13-15, through the Mustang Facility Enhancement Fund. In-person giving is Sept. 15 at the Blue Rapids Community Center.

Or gifts of grain or livestock can be given directly to the Valley Heights USD 498 Foundation and designated for facility maintenance.

"This donor's first priority is updating the existing HVAC unit at Blue Rapids Grade School, with additional interest in supporting the replacement of the high school gym bleachers," Spoons said. "The donor recognizes the importance of maintaining

our current facilities, reducing the burden on taxpayers if the district were to seek a future bond, and avoiding an increase in the mill levy."

Spoons said the donor points out that raising \$500,000 through this initiative would have the same financial impact as adding 15 mills to the district's Capital Outlay Fund for a year — nearly double the maximum 8 mills USD 498 is allowed to levy annually — without touching the mills already dedicated to annual maintenance and upkeep.

"The donor is deeply committed to keeping our schools in their individual communities and hopes others will join in this effort to reduce the financial burden for everyone," Spoons said.

More information on the Sept. 13-15 giving event can be found on the Blue Rapids Community Foundation's web site, www.bluerapidsmatchday.com.

USD 364 pre-enrollment figures show drop from last year

By Julie Perry

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School began Tuesday with fewer children enrolled in Marysville's public schools than last year. Administrators hope the numbers will improve.

The day that enrollment numbers will be reported to the state is Sept. 22. State funds to school districts are based on those figures.

At the Aug. 13 school board meeting, building principals Janine Doebele, elementary school, and Tim Woodcock, junior-senior high, gave pre-enrollment reports. Doebele said the elementary was down by more than 20 students. Almost

every grade was below last year's final counts. The exception was fifth grade, which showed an increase of three students. The largest decline was in first grade, where there are 28 students compared with 44 last year.

Numbers were up at the junior high, with 126 seventh- and eighth-graders compared with 121 last year.

The freshman class was smaller by 18 students, but the sophomore class shows an increase of 21 students. The junior class was down by eight students. The senior class was up by nine.

The district receives \$5,860 from the state for each student. More

state aid is received for at-risk students and those with special needs. An enrollment drop of 20 students could cost the district at least \$117,200, without factoring in at-risk or special needs students. Superintendent Darren Schroeder said administrators have been tracking enrollment figures. He said he budgeted for an enrollment drop this year and hopes this is not the start of a trend.

In other business, the board approved a physical therapy special education cooperative agreement with Crist & Pieschl Rehabilitation, Marysville, to provide services about 12 hours a week. The cost will be \$90 an hour.

Notices sent to taxpayers

The Marshall County clerk's office has mailed about 11,000 Revenue Neutral Rate notices to county taxpayers.

The notices, based on taxable parcels, provide information for county taxing units that have proposed a 2026 budget, or in the case of school districts, a 2025-2026 budget, that exceeds the revenue neutral rate.

Information is provided in the notices about revenue neutral and budget hearing times, dates and locations for the different taxing units.

The revenue neutral rate is the mill levy that would raise the same amount of money as last year based on the new, current property valuation.

The state of Kansas mandated the revenue neutral

rate procedure in 2021. Marshall County Clerk Sandy Wilson said the state will pay for the 2025 mailing.

Revenue neutral rate hearings must be held between Aug. 20 and Sept. 20.

Questions about the notice or a particular budget may be referred to the county clerk, city, school district,

township, cemetery or other taxing district that may have proposed a mill levy that exceeds the revenue neutral rate.

The mailing is not a tax bill. Typically, tax statements are mailed in mid-November, after mill rates are finalized and taxes are calculated.



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