

'Polar' opposites



JACKIE TAYLOR | LINN COUNTY NEWS

Warm spring-like weather prompted decorative pear trees to bloom around the region; though considered an invasive species, the tree is beautiful this time of year. That, contrasted with snow that hit Sunday afternoon along with below-freezing temperatures nipping anything blooming or popping out of the ground. The hyacinths took a beating with 15-degree weather and icy snow, but the season is young and more flowers are hiding underground.

La Cygne Calvary Baptist Church opens children's closet

A new children's clothing exchange is open at Calvary Baptist Church in La Cygne featuring nearly new children and baby clothing.

Located at 320 Locust Street, the exchange is open Tuesday from 1 – 5 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. – noon.

Clothing is free with the donation of another piece of clothing; there is an abundance of baby clothing.

LGRW Scholarship Brunch scheduled

The Linn County Republican Women Scholarship Brunch is scheduled for Saturday, March 28 at 10 a.m. and will be held at the La Cygne Library Swan Room. Republican families/students are welcome to attend and put their name in a hat for one \$400 scholarship per high school in Linn County. Come eat brunch with us; speaker featured is Kristen Bielenburg.

Pleasanton council contracts financial advisor

BY BARBARA PROFFITT
LINN COUNTY NEWS
LINNCOUNTYNEWSREPORTER@GMAIL.COM

During the meeting on Monday, March 16, the council heard from Joey McLiney and Max McLiney, McLiney & Co., on what being the city financial advisor would entail. McLiney began by noting that he currently acts as fiduciary for several local entities and neighboring cities.

McLiney then walked the council through a presentation he brought with

him in regards to financing debt, and stated that in looking at city funds and obligations it appears that most of the debt is through SRF, state revolving loan fund.

"This is all I do... my family has been doing exactly this since 1928, this is all we do is help municipalities borrow," stated McLiney. "We've been doing this continuously for four generations."

McLiney went on to outline what his duties would be if contracted to the city as municipal advisor and how it would benefit the

city. "I make recommendations – when it comes to selling your debt, I like to sell competitively," McLiney stated.

He then referenced a past project he had taken on and explained and noted how he could best benefit the city with funding needs.

City counselor Jacklyn Paletta reviewed and clarified the scope of contract specifics regarding pay for McLiney and his company, which he confirmed he would not be paid unless the city opts to use or

do something he recommends. Paletta also asked about ending the contract and McLiney stated that, per the contract, his company can be hire and fired at the will of the council.

Council member Sandy Haynes then stated her concerns are where the city is, currently, regarding financing and McLiney stated that the city is not as bad off as it appears to be.

He then referenced the fact that the city currently has three bond issues that are at 2.5 percent.

"With those, you're un-

der the market and you're under the inflation rate," he stated, "so you are paying back dollars that are worth less than when you borrowed them."

"That works out well, I would never tell you to refinance 2.5 percent," he continued.

McLiney then spoke to other debts the city currently has, such as a CAT excavator financed at almost six percent and added, "Well, that's too much."

Another council member mentioned a dump truck, SEE **FINANCIAL ADVISOR, A2**

Commissioners hear presentation on the next phase for opportunity zones

BY BARBARA PROFFITT
LINN COUNTY NEWS
LINNCOUNTYNEWSREPORTER@GMAIL.COM

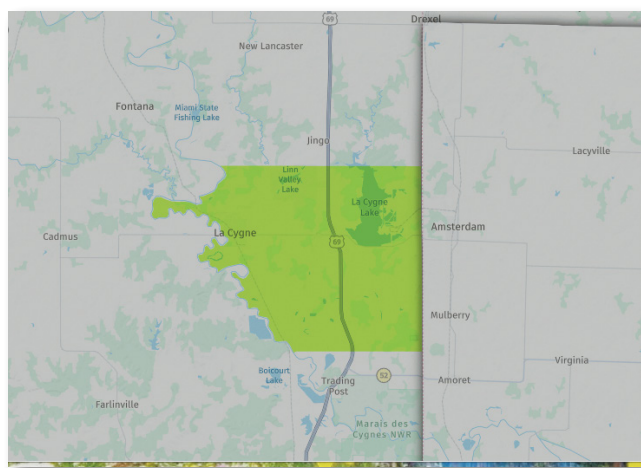
During the meeting on Monday, March 16, the commissioners heard from Paul Hughes regarding opportunity zones selections via a tele-video conference.

Hughes noted the Opportunity Zones program was made permanent under the One Big Beautiful Bill. He then gave a background on the program. Hughes added that under the new bill, the number of tracts has been updated

and added that the funds have to go through a pass-through program. He then spoke to the leverage it has in multi-family housing and small businesses.

Hughes noted that under the 2.0 program coming up, it does have a few changes and some of them won't re-qualify.

Commissioners asked that future information be sent to the commissioners as there is no county Economic Development department at this time. Hughes will provide the mapping tool, so that commissioners know which areas and tracts are



SUBMITTED MAP

Green area outlines the opportunity zone.

eligible for the program.

Johnson asked if the county would play a

financial role in the program and Hughes replied

SEE **OPPOR. ZONES, A2**

Pleasanton Fire Chief broaches subject of junior firefighter program

BY BARBARA PROFFITT
LINN COUNTY NEWS
LINNCOUNTYNEWSREPORTER@GMAIL.COM

Pleasanton Fire Chief Jeff Wisdom spoke to the Pleasanton City Council on Monday, March 16, noting he had been approached once again about starting a junior firefighter program within the city department—SEE **JUNIOR FF 2, A2**

Fire Chief asks about expanding Junior Firefighter program

BY BARBARA PROFFITT
LINN COUNTY NEWS
LINNCOUNTYNEWSREPORTER@GMAIL.COM

During the meeting of the Linn County Commissioners on Monday, March 16, Linn County Rural Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Randy Hegwald spoke to the board about the possibility of expanding the Junior Firefighter Program to lower the age to 14 or 15.

Hegwald stated that while doing community outreach recently, he was approached by several community members asking if the program could be expanded to allow students in their freshman year, or as young as 14 or 15 years old. He noted that several of the younger students would like to start earlier, giving them more time in the program—SEE **JUNIOR FF, A2**



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