

MCH&HS welcomes first baby of 2019

BY DANIEL BUHRMAN
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It took two weeks, but Memorial Community Hospital & Health System (MCH&HS) welcomed in the new year Jan. 15 with the birth of Gus Franklin Johnson, the first baby born in 2019.

The son of Heidi and Jordan Johnson of Tekamah, Gus was welcomed into the world at 4:27 p.m. by Dr. Sandra Baumberger. He was 7 pounds, 4 ounces and 20 and a half inches long.

He joins siblings Georgia, 8; Ivy, 6; Graham, 4; and Margot, 2. Grandparents are Mark and Jill Johnson of Oakland, Mike and Jennifer Hanna of Leigh and Nancy Hanna of Phoenix.

Heidi said she has had all of her children at MCH&HS. "We really like it here," she said. "You come back and have some of the same nurses, which is nice."

Besides her own children, Heidi also interacts with children daily in her professional life. She is a middle

school English teacher for Tekamah-Herman Schools. Jordan works for Washington County Bank.

Blair Volunteer Fire and Rescue continued an annual tradition, donating a gift basket to the family of the first New Year baby. Blair Volunteer Fire and Rescue members Randy Backman, Brenda Jenny, Bob Tichota and Fire Chief Joe Leonard included many baby essentials in the basket such as a carbon monoxide alarm and a handmade blanket.



DANIEL BUHRMAN | PILOT-TRIBUNE

New Year baby Gus sleeps in his mother's arms on Jan. 18 before heading home to see his family.



DANIEL BUHRMAN | PILOT-TRIBUNE

Parents Heidi and Jordan Johnson sit with newborn Gus inside their MCH&HS room on Jan. 17. The Johnson's said they were able to take Gus home that day.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER RETIRES



COURTESY WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Carol Hanneman, center, was honored Thursday by her co-workers at the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Hanneman, pictured with Capt. Rob Bellamy and Chief Deputy Kevin Willis, served for 15 years as a corrections officer and the Washington County Jail's medical officer.

DIRECTOR: Lisa Scheve departs Gateway Development

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economy in 2018.

Gateway hopes to continue that economic success after Scheve's departure. Scheve announced Jan. 15 that she will be leaving Gateway after three years with the organization for a new position within the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership (GOEDP). Gateway partners with GOEDP to help steer economic development opportunities to Washington County.

"I wasn't looking for a new opportunity," Scheve said. "The position just came open this fall, and I just kind of did some thinking and decided it was something that I was interested in. Working for Gateway was a goal that I had set for myself when I was in high school actually ... I've learned a lot about myself and a lot about the communities that we represent, and it's been very rewarding work. But when you set a goal for yourself, you set another goal ... this will help me be on that path for whatever that next goal is."

Gateway Board President Terry Dutton said Scheve did a great job helping usher in economic development to Washington County, especially in the biotech industry.

"Her speciality was the bio-refinery campus out there with Cargill and Nozymes," he said. "Lisa was very instrumental in getting options out there for some land for some shovel-ready dirt. If there's a new manufacturing company or new plant that comes to town then we have utilities, gas, everything to it."

Dutton said Gateway has and will to continue to focus on attracting new businesses through prepared land and real estate in the future.

"We've been working

on that for the last many years," he said. "I think one of the things Lisa did was keep that going, and even strengthened that. We're on the right track, we know what we need to do, and we have a good team in place, that being the board. We'll find a good replacement for Lisa."

Dutton said Gateway is already aware of candidates within GOEDP. The board will likely begin interviewing candidates over the next month to two months.

Scheve is joining GOEDP as the business development manager for client services.

"I'm like the closer," Scheve said. "So, our attraction and business development team, if they're fishing, they get the fish on the hook, and I reel them back in."

She said she will still be influencing economic activity in Washington County from time to time since GOEDP partners with Gateway, but she is excited to use her new relationship-based job to pursue economic development within the five other counties GOEDP works within — Douglas, Cass, Dodge, Sarpy and Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

"It's a lot of relationship managing, which is one of the things that I really enjoy about economic development," Scheve said.

She also said that she believes Gateway has a strong group of people that will continue the success it has provided to the county over the last few years.

"Gateway would not be who it is without the great board of directors, leadership, investors and volunteers who support it," Scheve said. "There's been a plethora of projects that we have worked on from small to large, and they all have their own unique way of impacting the community."



COURTESY

Blair Volunteer Fire and Rescue members Randy Backman, Bob Tichota and Brenda Jenny along with Fire Chief Joe Leonard dropped off a gift basket filled with baby essentials on Jan. 16 to parents Jordan and Heidi Johnson and New Year baby Gus.

Public meeting on south bypass set for Thursday

BY TERESA HOFFMAN
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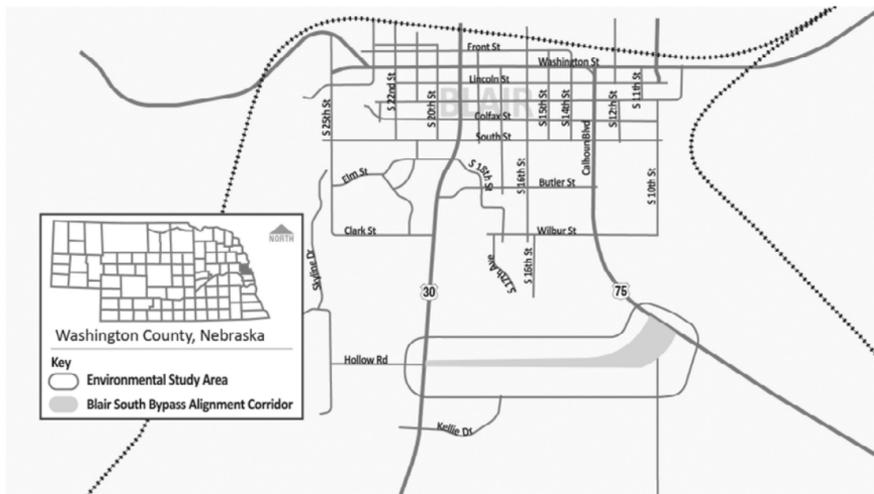
Residents having questions or wanting to comment on the proposed south bypass project in Blair will have the opportunity Thursday as the City of Blair hosts a public hearing on the project.

The evening will begin with an open house at 6 p.m., with several information stations set up for residents to learn more about the project and ask questions one-on-one.

A formal presentation of the project will begin at 6:30 p.m. Blair's Director of Public Works Al Schoemaker and consultants for the project will present the Draft Environmental Assessment to the public and take comments and questions.

Whether they are for or against the project, Schoemaker said this is an important meeting for residents to attend. The goal is for the city provide the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) as much feedback as possible.

"This is the one opportunity for the public to have formal input on the project," Schoemaker said. "It's not to say they can't still make comments, but this is the one time you get to have everything put into record on the project and all the



comments will be put into the formal document."

FHWA, NDOT and various other stakeholder groups, including the mayor, city council and Washington County board of supervisors and area business leaders, have been invited to attend the meeting.

"This is a pretty critical step in the overall project," Schoemaker said.

After the hearing, a report with the comments and other information will be forwarded to the two agencies and if they are satisfied with the information, they will issue what is called a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) report, which Schoemaker said is required in order for the project to move

forward. He expects to have FONSI report by June and, in anticipation of that, he's already begun working on requests for proposals to do the final design.

Once the final design is completed, the project will be ready for bid. Schoemaker hopes to have that work ready by the end of the year or early next year, at the latest. Then the city will work on gaining right-of-way access along the route.

Schoemaker said his goal is to be driving on the road by 2023. Once construction starts, which he anticipates happening in 2021, he said it will be a two-year project. The first year will involve major earth work and the second year will include

paving and other road construction.

Plans for the south bypass date back to 2002 when the city began discussing ways to alleviate truck traffic in the downtown area and sought federal funding to assist with the construction.

The current design work being done is for the first of what city officials hope is three phases for the bypass project. The first phase calls for the bypass road to begin at U.S. Highway 30 and Hollow Road, and then run along the north side of Walmart, curl to the northeast, coming out at the intersection of County Road P35 and U.S. Highway 75. The second- and third-phases of the project have not been designed.

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