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Rosco P. Rafter meets with students participating in the 'Lil Rafters Reading Program. The Rafters have announced an enhancement to the program this year. Submitted photo

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Rafters launch enhanced reading program

FOR CITY TIMES

WISCONSIN RAPIDS – The Wisconsin Rapids Rafters have announced the expansion of the 'Lil Rafters Reading Program by introducing a collaboration with Food + Farm Exploration Center in Plover.

Since its inception, the 'Lil Rafters Reading Program has served as a cornerstone of the Rafters' commitment to local schools and the promotion of literacy among young students. The program reaches more than 1,500 students a year in the Wisconsin Rapids area and is looking to add new schools and classrooms.

Mid-State Technical College is the

program's presenting sponsor and has incentivized reading with rewards and experiences. As a new collaborator, Food + Farm will contribute one free admission to their exploration center for participating students.

"We're thrilled to join forces with Food + Farm Exploration Center to enrich the 'Lil Rafters Reading Program," said Tyler Miller, assistance general manager at Wisconsin Rapids Rafters. "This collaboration between Mid-State Technical College, the Rafters and Food + Farm Exploration Center underscores our shared commitment to fostering literacy and providing rewarding experiences for the

youth in our community. We believe that by combining the joy of reading with the excitement of exploring local attractions, we can inspire a lifelong love for learning."

The reading program encourages students to reach reading goals set by their teachers. Upon completion, participating students will receive an order form for two free tickets to a Rafters home game. Those who reach the halfway point in their reading journey will be rewarded with a complimentary admission to the Food + Farm center. For more information about the program, visit raftersbaseball.com and click on the community tab.

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United Way to distribute federal emergency funds for Wood County

FOR STAR JOURNAL

WISCONSIN RAPIDS – Wood County has been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program.

Wood County has been chosen to receive \$14,160 (Phase 41) to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county. Nonprofit, faith-based organizations and local government agencies providing food, shelter and supportive services in Wood County are eligible to apply for funding.

Applications are available by contacting Stefanie Drexler at stefanie@uwswac.org or 715-421-0390. The application deadline is 4 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024.

To qualify, the organization must meet the following qualifications:

- Be private voluntary non-profits, faith-based organizations or units of government
- Be eligible to receive Federal funds, meaning, must have a Unique Entity

Identifier (UEI) and a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

- Have an accounting system
- Practice nondiscrimination
- Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs
- If they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board.

Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

A local board comprised of representatives from county government and local human services agencies will review the applications and distribute funds awarded to Wood County. The local board has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to FOCUS, Personal Development Center, Soup or Socks and The Wisconsin Rapids Family Center. Past EFSP participation is not a requirement.

UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) REQUIREMENT

All agencies participating in the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) must provide their Unique En-

tity Identifier (UEI). Agencies applying for these federal funds must have a UEI. The National Board used the DUNS previously, but the DUNS is now obsolete and is not acceptable for entities receiving federal funding. The federal government stopped using the DUNS Number to uniquely identify entities. Now, entities doing business with the federal government or receiving federal funds must use the UEI created in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Entities registered in SAM.gov already have a UEI, which is viewable in SAM.gov. Remember to sign into the SAM.gov account to view entity records. All SAM.gov registrants have been assigned their UEIs and can view them in SAM.gov.

United Way of South Wood & Adams Counties serves the community in the areas of education, financial stability, health and safety net services supporting partner programs, community coalitions and initiatives. It also provides 2-1-1 and volunteer center programs and creates collaborative partnerships in the community.

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Six teens injured, two charged, in connection with high-speed chase

FOR CITY TIMES

NEKOOSA – Two south Wood County teens are facing charges after leading police on a high-speed chase and later trying to elude officers on foot. The charges stem from an incident which occurred at approximately 1:45 a.m. on April 21.

According to a press release from

Nekoosa Police Chief Shawn Woods, one of his officers observed a vehicle in the city of Nekoosa ignore a stop sign while traveling at a high rate of speed. The officer attempted to stop the vehicle, but the driver, a 17-year-old teen boy, continued driving and refused to stop.

The officer continued to pursue the

driver into the Township of Port Edwards with emergency lights and siren activated. It was later determined that the driver had reached a speed of 130 miles per hour and was observed by the officer turning off the vehicle's headlights.

See CHASE page 3