

WASHINGTON COUNTY Enterprise



GIRLS BASKETBALL: Blair bonded during winningest Bears season since 1999 **1B**

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020

BLAIR, NEBRASKA 68008
18 PAGES, 2 SECTIONS
VOLUME 126, ISSUE 10
WWW.ENTERPRISE.PUB.COM
ONE DOLLAR

Blair YMCA hires new CEO

Organization receives generous donation

BY LEEANNA ELLIS
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The Blair Family YMCA Board of Directors has hired a new CEO, and for the first time in its 25-year history the organization is debt free.

Brandon Palmer of Gretna will start his new role Monday.

Palmer was the director of sports and recreation at the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center for the Salvation Army in Omaha for the last eight years. He also served as the director of youth development and sports director from April 2007 to June 2011 at the YMCA of Greater Kansas City in Kansas City, Mo.

Palmer has a bachelor's degree in sports and recreation management from Hastings College and a master's degree in leadership from Bellevue University.

"Brandon is a complete package with regards to what we were looking for at the YMCA, with regards to his level of engagement of management of staff, engagement with members, engagement with donors and overall understanding of the needs of operating a nonprofit entity," Board President Jason Fowler said. "Just a very well-rounded individual with many years of experience and a high level of energy."

Palmer said the supportive community and

the uniqueness of the Blair facility made the CEO role attractive.

"I've been responsible for every department within a YMCA independently and this opportunity provided me the oversight of those departments collectively," he said.

For the first time, a Blair Family YMCA CEO will start his role in a debt-free situation. The YMCA received a "generous donation that allowed us to retire all debt," Fowler said. The donation was received from the Dillon family.

"The ability to come into a nonprofit that is debt free makes a world of difference with regards to what that new CEO is going to have to focus on," Fowler said.



LEEANNA ELLIS | ENTERPRISE

Brandon Palmer starts his new role as the Blair Family YMCA CEO on Monday.

"They get to focus on exciting new things rather than paying for the old things."

While the YMCA will be debt free, Fowler said

Palmer will still play a key role in fundraising.

A lack of debt, Palmer said, sets the tone.

"I think it gives you a

clean slate with regards to expansion of programming, expansion of structure,

SEE **YMCA, 10A**

STRIKE UP THE BANDS

Blair ensembles perform for annual Soup and Salad Supper



PHOTOS BY JOE BURNS | ENTERPRISE

Above, the Blair sixth-grade band plays at the Blair Band Soup and Salad supper Monday in the Lela Neve Auditorium at Blair High School. Below, Bassoon player Taylor Mostek, left, and alto saxophone players Riley Yanak, Alyssa Lode and Aubrey Bruck and the Blair seventh-grade band perform at the annual Blair Band Soup and Salad Supper on Monday evening at Blair High School.

STAFF REPORTS

Blair Community Schools showcased its students' musical talent during the 31st annual Blair Band Soup and Salad Supper on Monday in the Lela Neve Auditorium at Blair High School. The event, which

is a fundraiser for the instrumental music department, featured performances from all bands grade 6-12. Those who attended enjoyed chili, cinnamon rolls and a salad buffet.

Funds from the event are used for activities and trips for band members.

See more photos on page 9A.



Barron appointed new county court judge

BY LEEANNA ELLIS
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Washington county has a new county court judge.

Gov. Pete Ricketts appointed Francis W. Barron III of Arlington to the County Court, Sixth Judicial District, which consists of Burt, Cedar, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Thurston, and Washington counties.

Barron, 37, has served as Burt County Attorney since January 2015. His duties as county attorney have included prosecuting felony cases, dealing with child support matters, and representing and advising the Burt County Board.

Barron has also run a private practice in Tekamah since 2009, where he has focused primarily on civil litigation. At the practice, he has handled family law, corporation formation, and debt defense cases, and he has also represented the Winnebago Tribe.

Barron is looking forward to his new position.

"I'm very excited and very grateful to (the governor) for making that decision," he said.

He made the decision, he said, to apply for the judgeship because of his love for the law.

"I really love the law and I want to help people," he said. "This really is an opportunity to actually do both."

Barron holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Longwood University in Farmville, Va., and a Juris Doctor from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Mich. He is a member of the Nebraska Bar Association as well as the Dodge County Bar Association, where he



Francis W. Barron III

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-Francis W. Barron III

served as president from May 2017 to May 2018.

Barron has taken part in the Nebraska Leadership Academy and volunteers as a coach for Arlington Youth Sports and the Fremont YMCA.

He fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge C. Matthew Samuelson.

The primary place of office for Judge Barron will be Washington County. He will also cover Burt County and assist one day per week in Dodge County.

Barron's move to county judge will leave an opening for the Burt County Attorney. Barron's chief deputy is expected to take over in the interim. The Burt County Board of Supervisors will then appoint someone to serve the remainder of Barron's term, which is just less than three years.

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