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Council debates mandates

By SCOTT DAVIS
Staff Reporter

On Tuesday, August 24, Cheney City Council members discussed mask mandates in the wake of surging COVID-19 infection in the region. According to City Administrator Mark Schuller, the City will follow State masking guidelines and CDC recommendations in all city facilities and properties; extending to employees, volunteers, and program participants.

To uphold masking requirements within the community, Councilmember Paul Schmidt suggested the possibility of police officers distributing tickets to those who don't adhere to mandate requirements. "I'd certainly like to ask our city attorney if that's something we could look into, in regard

to civil infractions," Schmidt said. "If we're going to have a requirement, and if it's not enforceable, then why have it?"

This proposal received strong pushback from Councilwoman Jill Weismann, who categorized ticket distribution as an unreasonable, escalating strategy for upholding edicts handed down from the Governor. "Our police officers have more than enough to do than give somebody a citation for not wearing a mask. Everyone knows that's what the current mandate is. I think you're going to start a civil war inside a grocery store, which used to happen in the beginning of the pandemic. To start something like that, in my own opinion, is a big

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Scott Davis | Cheney Free Press

Senior Airman Desiree Cober reaches down to unharness Eli, and he returns her efforts with a smile.

Fairchild dogs show off skills

By MATT STEPHENS
Staff Reporter

FAIRCHILD AFB -- In celebration of National Dog Day, Fairchild Air Force Base showcased the skills of both military and morale dogs on Aug. 25.

Airmen based at Fairchild demonstrated both military canines and a support pooch during the presentations.

Trained military dogs like 5-year-old Belgian Malinois, MWD Fanni, are on base to help protect residents and visitors.

Staff Sgt. Raymond Dwoznik said the military work dogs do receive some basic obedience training before being registered and moved on base. That enables an easy transition into the training methods used by handlers on base.

Dwoznik also clarified that everything is tracked and recorded in training.

The kennel master continued to explain while serving and work-



Scott Davis | Cheney Free Press

MWD Fanni sits ready awaiting her training commands.

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Roger Harnack | Cheney Free Press

Breaking away

Cheney resident Riley Petek was among a number of cowpoke taking part in the Lincoln County Open Rodeo over the weekend in Davenport. Pictured, Petek missed her mark in breakaway roping Friday evening in the rodeo arena in Davenport. For more photos of local southern Spokane County contestants, see Page 12.

Local man joins Cheney news team



Matthew O. Stephens

Stephens to cover Medical Lake, Airway Heights

FROM STAFF AND NEWS SOURCES

CHENEY - A local photographer has been hired as a reporter at

the Cheney Free Press. Matthew O. Stephens, 39, of Cheney, will be covering the cities of Medical Lake and Airway Heights for the Cheney Free Press.

"Matthew's photography skills will bring a much-needed facelift to the newspaper," Publisher Roger Harnack said. "And his local

knowledge will be an asset for both the newspaper and readers."

Pursuing a lifelong passion of working with his camera and informing people, Stephens has already hit the ground running, having covered news in Cheney and Medical Lake, and photographing high school sports teams and

Webb's Slough spring boat racing in St. John.

He replaces Riley Kankelberg on the West Plains beats; Kankelberg recently completed her internship and returned to Western Washington.

Stephens has an associate degree in applied sciences in journalism, and a bachelor of arts in

journalism/history.

He is also a small business owner, as he runs Matthew O. Stephens Photography locally.

Stephens also brings a knowledge of digital and social media to the newspaper.

He said he has a deep

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Dogs

continued from page 1
ing on base, the work dogs receive excellent veterinary care.

Fairchild only works with two dog breeds, German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois. Both breeds are well-known for being efficient work dogs and are thought to be genetically optimal for military or police work.

The canines are trained in both narcotics and explosive detection.

That means the dogs can be utilized by law enforcement agencies.

Emphasis is placed on training for utilization in real-world situations.

Built on a base of controlled aggression, the training helps the dogs learn to apprehend and control suspects in a less-than-lethal method.

This was witnessed with Staff Sgt. Christopher Maldonado, as he acted as a training decoy and target for MWD Fanni during the demonstration.

Fanni showed incredible speed, power and determination when charging Maldonado. She also showed fierce intelligence as she redirected her focus when given a command as she was in mid-air.

Fairchild Air Force Base dogs are trained to aid in more than simply catching suspects, though.

They can also serve as what Dwoznik terms as "over-watch".

When positioning as over-watch, the dog will sit and guard the suspect while the handler finishes other tasks such as searching the suspect. These four-legged defenders can also help escort those detained to police vehicles, which helps deter the person in custody from running.

These dogs can also be deployed.

Regardless of the work they face, these determined dogs are ready to get the job done. These canines aren't the only dogs working on base though, as a very casual canine helps alleviate mental, emotional, and stress related issues.

Upon entering the chapel on base, visitors can expect to be greeted by 1.5-year-old Eli, a Blue Heeler mix rescued from Heaven With a D Rescue out of Deer Park.

Sr. Airman Desiree Cober said Eli was adopted and has undergone some training to be-

come the Morale Dog for Fairchild Airforce Base.

Cober said as a rescue, Eli was apprehensive at first, but has emotionally grown and bonded with many of the people he helps.

Eli can help people come in and "ground" themselves or find a moment of respite during stressful times.

Eli helps Cober advise and counsel anyone struggling with their mental health.

Visitors can go to Eli whenever they need to and find he carries supportive and resource-based literature along with a mini med kit and snacks in his vest.

He is always greeting guests with a smile, and gently reminds folks he is always trying his best in the form of a patch on his vest.

At times, Fairchild residents may find even themselves missing family, or potentially feel lonely. Eli's services can help alleviate stress and feelings of isolation. The young dog's skills have been proven to be extremely valuable during the pandemic, with isolation being stressful for many.



Scott Davis | Cheney Free Press

MWD Fanni the 5 year old Belgian Malinois charges her target which is Staff Sergeant Christopher Maldonado in his decoy training gear.




Scott Davis | Cheney Free Press

MWD Fanni bites and holds onto Staff Sergeant Maldonado until she is instructed to release as part of her training.

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