



GET BREAKING NEWS
Text **OSHBREAKING**
to **44636** to receive
news alerts on your
cell phone.

FNB
FIRST NATIONAL BANK - FOX VALLEY
Appleton - Menasha - Neenah - Oshkosh



HEART OF A CHAMPION
Oshkosh North senior Kellyn Cameron's stellar season started with troubling diagnosis and heart surgery. »**PAGE B1**

DEAL OF THE DAY
SUPER TUESDAY
MARCH 6TH



Refer to ad on page 2

Oshkosh Northwestern

www.thenorthwestern.com

MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2012

A GANNETT COMPANY

School turnover troubles board

By Adam Rodewald
of The Northwestern

Viegut's departure revives concerns

An effort to halt turnover among Oshkosh school district leadership has been revived following Superintendent Don Viegut's announcement in early January that he is leaving the district at the end of the school year.

The district has struggled to hold on to its principals and executive administrators in recent years. Low pay and difficult working conditions have been cited as reasons for the high turnover.

Only two of the district's top eight administrators have been in their positions more than two years, and, 11 of the district's 21 principals were hired within the past two years. Several other principals have moved to new

buildings, leaving only six who have been in their current positions more than two years.

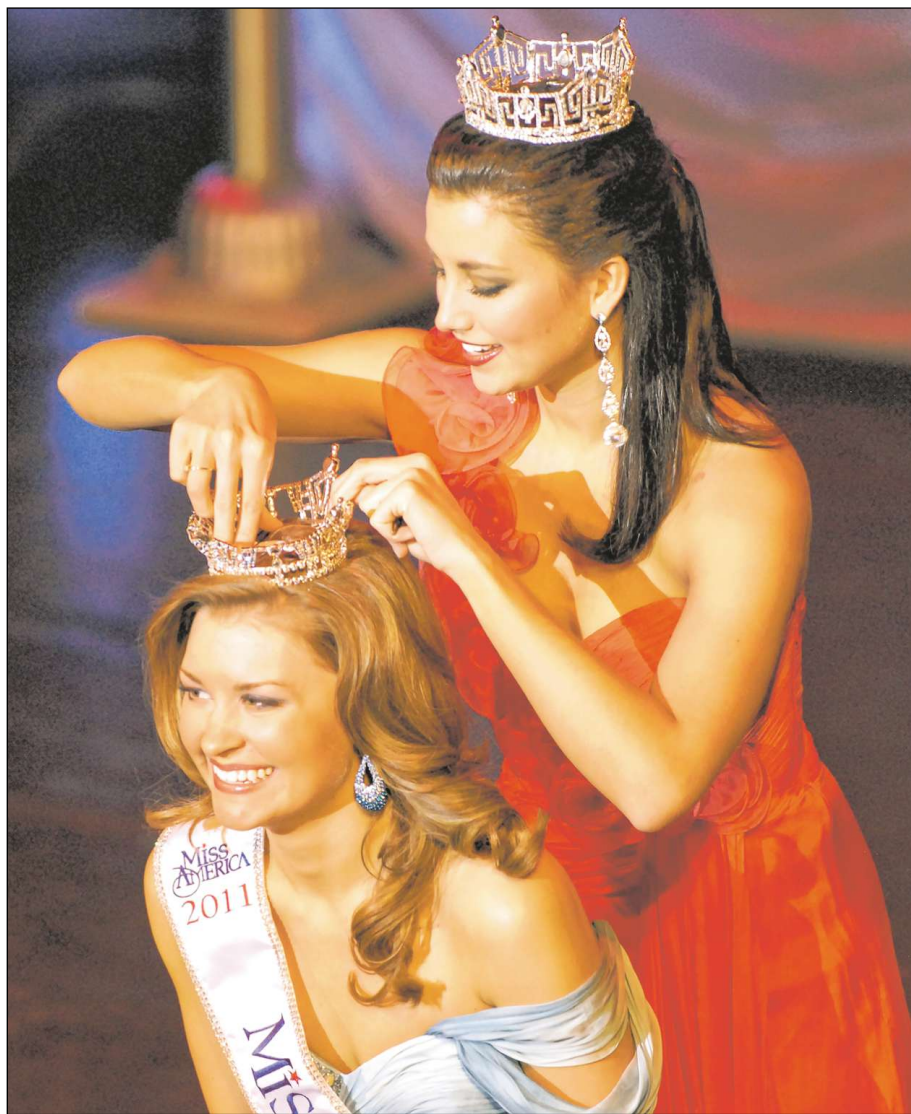
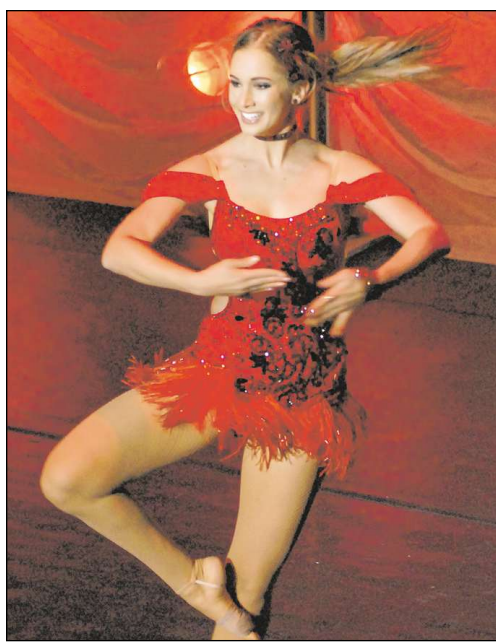
The problem had been on the school board's radar but became more urgent after Viegut announced his resignation in early

January after about 18 months on the job. His last day with the district will be June 30.

The board has been holding workshop discussions on the issue in tandem with starting its search for a new superintendent. The board also approved a self-

TURNOVER, Page A8

COVER STORY: MISS AMERICA VISIT



From right clockwise: Miss America Laura Kaeppler, right, crowns Raeanna Johnson as the new Miss Wisconsin during the Miss America homecoming gala Sunday at the Grand Opera House in Oshkosh. Miss New York Kaitlyn Monte, second runner-up in the Miss America pageant, sings Katy Perry's "Thinking of You" on Sunday. Miss Arizona Jennifer Sedler, third runner-up in the Miss America pageant, performs a dance number Sunday during the Miss America homecoming event. PHOTOS BY ADAM JUNGWIRTH/OF THE NORTHWESTERN

Crown comes home

New Miss America performs at Grand

By Charles Greenley
of The Northwestern

Laura Kaeppler was crowned Miss America in January, but she was still worried her dog would give her the cold shoulder.

She'd been away from home for a few months, but was back in Kenosha Saturday for a pep rally at her old school, St. Joseph Catholic Academy.

"I was petrified he wouldn't know who I was," said Kaeppler, who attended a Sunday brunch at LaSure's Banquet Hall in Oshkosh.

Fortunately Smokey, a 1½-year-old Shih Tsu/Maltese, remembered her.

The way Kaeppler sees it, many others will, too.

"My name will never not be associated with Miss America for the rest of my life," she said.

When she was declared the winner of the annual beauty pageant, Kaeppler said her life changed in an instant. Though she will be in high demand over the next year, Kaeppler stays upbeat.

"No matter how long the days can be, I wake up happy to be Miss America," she said. "It

truly helps young women realize the sky is the limit."

Kaeppler has already traveled to 14 different states in the past five weeks for numerous appearances, including Sunday's stop in Oshkosh. In addition to the brunch, she attended a VIP lunch and an afternoon homecoming show at the Grand Opera House.

The show at the Grand featured nine women performing, including all four runners-up from this year's Miss America pageant. Among the performances: Fourth runner-up Noelle Freeman, Miss California, performed a traditional dance where she tapped and kicked a tambourine; third run-

ONLINE
See more photos and video from the event:
www.thenorthwestern.com

ner-up Jennifer Sedler, Miss Arizona, danced to Latin-flavored song "Hip Hip Chin Chin"; second runner-up Kaitlyn Monte, Miss New York, sang Katy Perry's "Thinking of You"; and runner-up Miss Oklahoma, Betty Thompson, performed an Irish step dance.

Kaeppler sang two opera songs and also passed down her Miss Wisconsin crown to Raeanna Johnson, which elicited a standing ovation and raucous cheers from the audience.

Karen Tessier of Oshkosh, who attended the homecoming gala, admired the poise,

WINNER, Page A7

Hotel owners moving forward

Financing first, then renovations

By Jeff Bollier
of The Northwestern

If there was one thing about the condition of the former City Center Hotel that almost made Rich Batley happy, it was that he didn't have to worry about what to keep.

After decades of only minimal investment and upkeep, there was little left of value for the hotel's new owners.

"I'm almost glad it's in the shape it's in because then you know you're starting from scratch," Batley said. "There's no question about holding on to anything."

Batley, John Pfefferle and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Foundation partnered to buy the 179-room, downtown hotel for \$2.1 million last month and immediately set an aggressive schedule to finance, gut, renovate and re-brand the property by early 2013. Batley and Pfefferle, who are partners in Appleton's Copper Leaf Hotel and Neenah's Best Western Bridgewood Resort, have their work cut out for them, but they look forward to the challenge and the potential their partnership with the UW Foundation holds in store.

"We're taking nothing for granted. I'm confident we will do a good job making this hotel look

HOTEL, Page A8

INSIDE



USE OF IEDS IN SYRIA RISES SHARPLY

Experts think rebels are getting outside help. >> **PAGE A6**



0 40901 51816 7

50¢ Retail
For home delivery pricing, A2

INDEX

AdviceA5	CrosswordB4	SportsB1
Area & StateA3	EditorialA4	TV ListingsA5
ClassifiedB5	LotteryB3	USA TodayA6
ComicsB4	ObituariesA7	WeatherA2

TODAY'S WEATHER

Partly sunny

High 35 | Low 26

»Five-day forecast/A2



2012 CHEVY SILVERADO

0% FOR 72 MOS*
+ \$6,000 in savings! **



BERGSTROM
GM of Oshkosh
355 N. Washburn St.
(920) 966-1166
bergstromauto.com

2012 GMC SIERRA

0% FOR 72 MOS*
+ \$6,000 in savings! **



GMC
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE
WI-5001464117

*To approved credit. **Includes all applicable rebates and incentives. Ends 3/12/12.

Hotel

Continued from Page A1

like new and we'll have the right rate structure to be competitive," Batley said. "But nobody is going to give it to us. We're going to have to go out and earn it. But we expect that and we're OK with it."

Demolition and financing are likely to preoccupy the partners and their community partners for the next month or two before actual remodeling can begin.

Oshkosh Area Community Foundation CEO Eileen Connolly-Keesler said she expects to meet with potential investors by the end of the month. Connolly-Keesler said many of the potential investors in the project are the same ones who committed to the project last fall before the Wogernese Hotel Group and UWO Foundation withdrew their offer to purchase the property in late October.

"Most never left the table," Connolly-Keesler said. "They were all still hoping we were going to pull a deal together."

It took hope from the community, the involvement of both the UWO Foundation and OACF, the city's investment in downtown revitalization, the groundwork laid by the Wogernese partnership and a well-timed call to bring Batley and Pfefferle back to the table almost four years after they first attempted to buy the property. At that time, the hotel was in foreclosure and was owned by Bankers Bank of Madison.

"We probably came within 30 days (of buying it) in late '07 and early '08," Batley said.

Terms of that deal could not be worked out, but Batley said he and Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce CEO John Casper would call each other every three or six months to stay in touch.

Casper said he and Oshkosh Area Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Rob Kleman spent the last two or three years talking with four or five different groups that had expressed an interest in the hotel, but a deal could never quite be stitched together. And when the WHG proposal fell through, Casper said Pfefferle and Batley were the first people who came to mind.

"We looked at the properties they own and felt it was important to have someone local and someone whose properties have the reputations that the Copper Leaf and Bridgewood have," Casper said. "They certainly saw the opportunities here and the city's renovation of the Convention Center helped seal that deal. It showed them the city was serious

"From everything I'm hearing, downtown will be supportive and they'll embrace this project. It should really bring more life to the whole area."

RICH BATLEY,

City Center Hotel owner, partner with John Pfefferle

about re-establishing the convention business."

Casper added that everything from the river walk urban trail system to the reconstruction of North Main Street and redevelopment efforts along Marion Road and in the South Shore were key selling points as they talked with the Pfefferle and Batley.

Batley said when he and Pfefferle saw UWO and the community foundations actively involved in the effort to revive the hotel, it helped convince them to take another look at putting a deal together.

"With both of those foundations coming in, that convinced us to take another good look at this," he said. "Even back in '07 and '08, we knew we'd have to have people from Oshkosh involved."

Connolly-Keesler said Oshkosh is "very lucky to have them at the table," and she's sure Batley and Pfefferle had to put a lot of time into making the deal work for them, too.

"I'm sure several people were working on this for 40 hours a week for several weeks to make this work," she said. "I'm hoping that we've uncovered all the challenges and dealt with them early on."

Batley said he's growing more anxious to get started and recently brought almost two dozen managers from the Copper Leaf and Bridgewood down to tour the site to help generate ideas and suggestions for ways to improve the site.

"From everything I'm hearing, downtown will be supportive and they'll embrace this project. It should really bring more life to the whole area," he said. "The property has great views of the river. It just needs that interior improvement and modernization. And I'm sure our design team will do a great job with that."

Jeff Bollier: (920) 426-6688 or jbollier@thenorthwestern.com

Turnover

Continued from Page A1

evaluation policy and is working on an overhauled superintendent evaluation in effort to improve governance practices.

The issue will come up again Tuesday during a special board meeting at 6 p.m. in the District Administration Building, 215 S. Eagle St.

Administrators remaining in the district said they think others are leaving because of long hours, a tense environment and low pay.

"I don't believe pay is ever the number one issue, I believe it's a mixture of working conditions and the difficult realities of what we're dealing with in school systems today," said Deputy Superintendent Dave Gundlach, who oversees principals.

Administrators consistently work 10-12 hours in the office and then bring work home in evenings

and on weekends, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Shelly Muza said.

"That's not to say that others in comparable public or private-sector jobs aren't working long hours, but putting in that time consistently every single day starts to become a problem," Muza said.

Oshkosh spends the least money on administrative costs on a per-student basis out of all 424 districts in the state, according to a Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance analysis. The district spent \$592 per student, compared to the state average of \$913.

"That's nothing to be proud about," board member Stephen Dedow said. "We are way understaffed."

Dedow said he has observed and interviewed central office administrators about retention issues and found people feel overworked and disrespected, particularly at board meetings.

"They talked about trust. They talked about a really

ONLINE

See the database for teacher/ administrator pay: www.thenorthwestern.com/interactive/article/99999999/OSH0101/399992112/010-2011+Oshkosh+Teacher+Salaries

tense worked environment where they're on their toes all the time and can't get work done. I thought that was interesting that only a small minority had something to say about compensation," Dedow said.

The district has typically paid administrators near or below the state median despite Oshkosh being one of Wisconsin's larger districts.

The board last discussed administrator retention during a Jan. 31 meeting with a consultant from a superintendent search firm.

Senior Associate Bill Attea from the firm Haz-

ard, Young, Attea and Associates told the board retention issues usually stem from micromanagement, a lack of strategic direction and not having an adequate workforce.

He said the board must take ownership of the issue and serve as a model to the rest of the district on how to change the culture causing the turnover.

"Again, it starts with the board. The board sets the tone," Attea said.

Adam Rodewald: (920) 426-6632 or arodewald@thenorthwestern.com

Fox Tax IRS APPROVED PROVIDER
www.foxtax.com

SHORT FORM - \$35 & UP
LONG FORM - \$50 & UP
BIZ/RENTALS - \$85 & UP

Prices include both Federal & State Preparation with E-Filing

566 N. Main St., Oshkosh
920-235-7077

Aurora Vision Center
FIRST TIME EVER!!

Major Sunglass Blowout Sale

40% OFF Sunglass Sale
(prescription and non-prescription)

In-stock items only. Some restrictions apply.

This offer cannot be combined with insurance, coupons, previous purchases and other discounts.

March 1 to 31, 2012

Aurora Vision Center inside Aurora Health Center
700 N. Westhaven Drive
Oshkosh, WI | 920-456-2002
Aurora.org/VisionCenter

- Please bring your most current eyeglass prescription.
- Eyeglass specialists are on-site with a large selection of designer frames.

Stop in for a FREE eyeglass adjustment.

Payment options: Visa, MasterCard, check or cash.

CHECK OUT OUR COMPETITIVELY PRICED CONTACT LENSES. Current prescription needed.

TONY'S
Auto Collision
Best of Oshkosh
Hwy 41 * Oshkosh

PLAYERS
Serving 11AM-10PM Sun-Thurs
Serving 'til 11PM Fri & Sat
YES! We have PAN PIZZAS!
5th & Ohio | Oshkosh
303-1400

March is Senior Health Month!

Are your Senior Pets as healthy on the inside as they look on the outside?

20% OFF Geriatric Blood Panel
(includes a Chemistry with CBC, urinalysis and thyroid level)
Expires 3-31-12

Call now to book your appointment!

New Patients Welcome!

Animal Hospital of Oshkosh

1961 S. Washburn St., Oshkosh
235-2566
www.animalhospitalofoshkosh.com

Imagine being...

10 & done! MORTGAGE

Imagine Mortgage Free!

If you've been waiting for the right time to refinance, this is it!

Imagine the money YOU can save when you refinance to this life-changing low rate. Being mortgage free might allow you to remodel your home, take a dream vacation or maybe even retire early—you decide.

RATES AS LOW AS*
3.25% / 3.36%
NOTE RATE APR

I saved over \$8,000 & knocked two years off my mortgage!
Ron Reihl
Member/Owner

COMMUNITY FIRST CREDIT UNION
We'll Find A Way!

3 Easy Ways To Get Started
Visit Us
Call Us (920) 966-2424
Logon www.communityfirstcu.com

APPLETON, DARBOY, DE PERE, GREENVILLE, HOWARD, NEENAH, MANITOWOC, NEW LONDON, NICHOLS, OSKOSH, WAUPACA

Lowest rate available 3.25%. Rate based on credit score and account relationship. Checking with direct deposit required for best rate. *\$20,000 new money required. Maximum 80% loan-to-value (LTV) on single family owner occupied first mortgages only. LTVs over 80% carry different closing costs and require private mortgage insurance. Non-refundable closing costs of \$500. Construction and purchases not eligible. Payment example: Monthly payment on \$100,000, 10 year amortization, 80% LTV, note rate of 3.25%, APR of 3.36% results in 119 payments of \$977.19, final payment of \$977.23. Example includes \$500 closing costs. Payment example does not include taxes and insurance. Rate subject to change without notice. Maximum loan amount \$249,999. Loans of \$250,000 or more may require additional closing costs, see a Mortgage Lender for details.