



# AMERY FREE PRESS



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## Amery enrollment down 30

By Tom Stangl  
Publisher

Preliminary enrollment numbers for the Amery School District show a drop of 30 students from the same time last year. The official count, taken on the third Friday of September, compared to the same count taken last year, shows a total enrollment of 1639. Last year's count was 1,669.

The official enrollment, which includes adjustments for open enrollment, will be submitted to the state this week, and will be different from the count on Friday, which measured the actual number of students physically in the buildings. The comparison made here is to the same count taken last year.

### 2012 Count

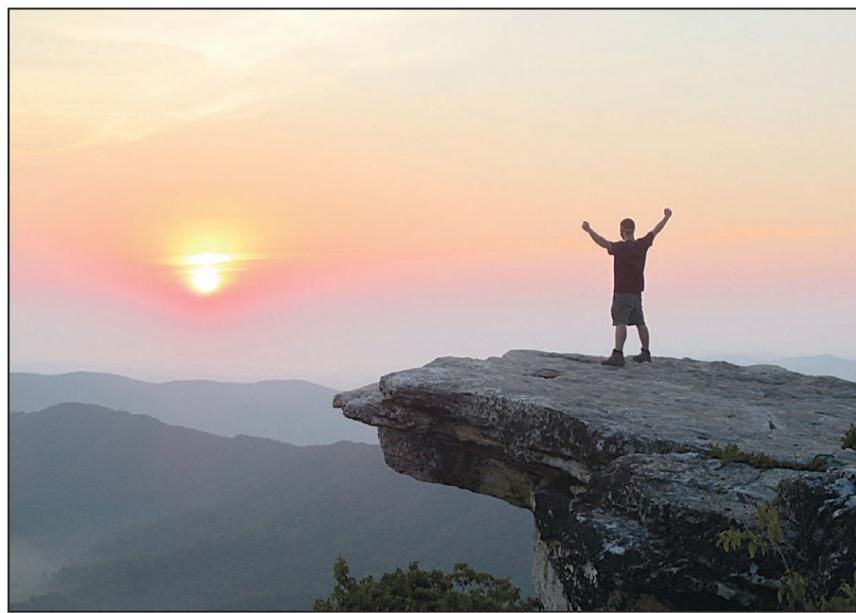
Early Childhood:	5
4-year Kindergarten:	85
Kindergarten:	120
Grade One:	112
Grade Two:	109
Elem Total:	431
Grade Three:	120
Grade Four:	120
Grade Five:	111
Intermediate Total:	351
Grade Six:	115
Grade Seven:	105
Grade Eight:	107
Middle Total:	327
Grade Nine:	131
Grade Ten:	109
Grade Eleven:	145
Grade Twelve:	145
High Total:	530
Grand Total:	1,639

## Band performance, outdoor movie Friday

The Amery Warrior Marching Band is going to San Diego in December to march in the Big Bay Balloon Parade and perform during the Holiday Bowl.

Come listen to the band this Friday, September 28 during the football game and stick around for the special 'encore' performance after the game while preparations are made for a free outdoor movie on the field.

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Amery native Dallas Nustvold greets the sunrise at McAfee Knob in Virginia. Nustvold walked the 2,184 miles of the Appalachian Trail this summer. (Photo Contributed)

## Simply Amazing: An Amery man's Hike through America

By Breanna Draxler  
Contributing writer

From Springer Mountain, Ga. he headed north, through stifling heat and chilling snowstorms. He scrambled over boulder piles and forded swollen rivers. He trudged through civil war battlefields and freshly laid cow pies before reaching Katahdin, Maine.

Dallas Nustvold traversed all 2,184 miles of the Appalachian Trail this summer. It took him 140 long days, but his post-trip exhaustion was no match for his concurrent enthusiasm.

"Every day was like the best day of my life," he said.

It has now been a month since Nustvold reached the trail's final summit. The soreness has subsided and he has shaved his bushy wilderness beard, but Nustvold is still on a high from the hike. He recounted his journey wearing the same clothes he had hiked it in—a pair of synthetic black shorts

and a shirt from the Amery Fall Festival Run.

Nustvold, now 23, got the idea for the hike when he was still a student at Amery High School. His English teacher suggested he read *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson, which describes the Appalachian Trail. Nustvold only made it through the first paragraph of the first page before the hike rose to the top on his to-do list.

"I remember reading it and being like, 'I'm going to do that someday.'"

On April 3 of this year, after graduating from the University of Minnesota, Nustvold's nagging someday was replaced by today.

Nustvold arrived at the trail's southern starting point lugging a backpack that weighed 51 pounds. He had three pairs of shoes, four knives, and absolutely no idea what he was doing.

"I had all kinds of extra

junk," he said, laughing at his initial state of over-packed unpreparedness. "I had never done anything like this."

Nustvold looked to his fellow hikers for companionship and expertise.

"You form friendships quick. You have to because you're never really around people for too long," he said.

Nustvold referred to his friends by their trail names: Sketch, Juggles, and Count Daddy. They came from places as disparate as Minneapolis, East Tennessee, and England. Each fell into step with Nustvold, some for a few miles, some for a few hundred.

"You're kind of like a family out there. Everyone's trying to make it to Katahdin," he said.

Nustvold structured his days in relation to the sun. He rose around five o'clock, early enough to watch the sunrise. He hiked up to 36 miles a day,

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## Informational presentation on bus outsourcing draws crowd and questions

By Tom Stangl  
Publisher

The Amery School Board and a crowded media center full of bus drivers and concerned residents heard a presentation from Kobussen Buses LTD Monday night.

Joe Kobussen, President of the Company, made the presentation to the board and fielded questions from the board and audience members.

The two-hour meeting was an informational presentation only, and by law and board policies, no decision or even discussion of the matter was held by the board.

Board President Darren VanBlaricom prefaced the presentation by pointing out that there has been a "significant amount" of disinformation about the issue and where the board is in the decision making process. He pointed out that the board had received a one sheet proposal and decided that it was their duty to do due diligence and explore the proposal, thus the

meeting. VanBlaricom also pointed out that the board felt that a matter this significant would need to be discussed at length with the community and have people on board before proceeding, if the board proceeded.

Kobussen used a PowerPoint presentation, explaining that the firm had been in business for 75 years and that he and his brother, Dan, are the third generation of the family involved in the business. His father drove a milk truck to a dairy in 1938, going by the school at the same time. Eventually, some of the farmers asked Kobussen to take their children to school.

In 1998, the company started out with 75 buses.

The company now serves 425 school districts with over 425 school buses, owns 31 luxury motor coaches and 35 para-transit units. They employ over 700 professional drivers at seven sites

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## Stocking keeps Walleye in North Twin, Pike Lakes

By Breanna Draxler  
Contributing writer

Recreational fishing is naturally popular in the City of Lakes, but not all of Amery's fish are naturally occurring. Fish stocking keeps certain species in the lake in order to keep summer and ice fisherman on the lake.

"North Twin and Pike Lakes have really great production of Large Mouth Bass and Northern," said Jon Bergquist a former DNR wildlife biologist who now works with the Amery Lakes District. Panfish thrive, too.

But neither lake has a tremendous natural spawning habitat for walleye, he said.

Walleye is the table fish of choice for many anglers in Amery, so fingerlings have been stocked in North Twin and Pike Lakes almost every year since 1997.

Stocking augments the species' numbers and helps keep the panfish population in check.

"I help control those, too" City Administrator and fishing-enthusiast Darcy Long added with a smile.

The Amery Lakes District conducted its 2012 walleye stocking last Friday. The fish were hatched this spring at Gollon Bait and Fish Farm in Dodgeville, Wis. After approximately five months in captivity, each fingerling now measures between six and eight inches.

The District stocks the lakes with fish this size to increase their chance of survival. In the past, the DNR has used fingerlings that measured only two inches, or fry as small as ¼ inch. These tiny fish cost less since they require less

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## Knutson featured as 'classroom superhero'



Amery Kindergarten paraeducator Marie Knutson takes a lap with one of the first graders during lunch last week. The "Walk and Talk" program, started by Knutson and Tammy Wassberg, has been recognized nationally. (Photo by Tom Stangl)

By Tom Stangl  
Publisher

The National Education Association (NEA) and Jeep's classroom superhero program has recognized Marie Knutson, a kindergarten paraeducator at Amery's Lien Elementary, for her work establishing the Walk and Talk program.

The Walk and Talk program involves up to 350 students (kindergarten through second grade) walk and run on a quarter-mile track three times a day prior to lunch and two recess breaks (morning and afternoon).

It has been nearly three years since the program began. The fitness program started in the spring of 2009 after the School District of Amery sent Knutson and paraeducator Tammy Wassberg to a training day involving playground issues.

Almost immediately, Knutson and Wassberg came up with the idea for Walk and Talk and organized a meeting with the principal, teachers, ESPs, and a district official.

"We came home from the

conference and I believe there was a track meet starting," Knutson recalls. "Tammy and I looked at each other and realized that a track was the answer," she said.

It would be impractical to take the children to the track, so Knutson and Wassberg brought a track, of sorts, to the playground.

They used GPS units to measure a 440-yard track on the grass behind the school's playground equipment.

"Tammy and I create a new path each year to keep things interesting," she said. "We use the same white-line marker that coaches use on the football field to spray lines."

There are many positives, Knutson says, especially for children who may need to burn off excess energy.

"After the walk or run, you can see that they focus better and are able to cope with unstructured play," Knutson says. "We have seen a great reduction of behavior problems in classrooms and improved behavior on evening bus routes."

"The improved behavior on the bus was something that we weren't expecting," Knutson said. "By burning off some extra energy, many of the issues that were previously unresolved from the playground and continued into the classroom have simply gone away."

Lien Elementary Principal Cheryl Meyer is pleased with the results of the program. "The drop of discipline required in the classroom and on the bus is wonderful," she said.

"The program also helps encourage exercise, which is so important in the battle against childhood obesity," said Meyer. "Promoting exercise, fitness and wellness throughout the day is essential."

"Walking is something that people can do to improve their health their entire lives," Knutson said.

When the weather turns snowy, Wassberg and Knutson will walk the course in their snowshoes to pack down the snow. If an icy spot pops up, the course is changed.

## Nustvold: Has continued hiking since trip

**Continued from page one** always with the goal of ending atop a relative rise in order to watch the sunset below him.

From his mountaintop campsite on the 4th of July, Nustvold kicked back to enjoy 20 simultaneous fireworks displays as well as a lightning storm that lit the sky up in a fitting display of red, white and blue.

To fuel his hike, Nustvold initially packed boxes of ramen noodles, granola bars and instant oatmeal, with instructions for his mom to mail them to pick-up locations along the trail.

"I got sick of oatmeal by Virginia," he said with a smile.

Nustvold—at this point already 20 pounds lighter than when he began—realized he needed to ramp up his caloric intake if he was going to make it to the end. In addition to greasy diner dinners he began eating copious amounts of Hostess Honey Buns and candy bars.

"I probably ate 400 Snickers bars over that whole trip," he said.

Along the trail Nustvold showered in waterfalls, ponds, and rivers, the same bodies of water that served as his sources of drinking water. They were sometimes cool and clear,

sometimes warm and fetid, and sometimes dried up altogether.

After hiking through a particularly dry stretch, Nustvold learned of the joy that hikers call "trail magic." These anonymous gifts come in many forms, most often from people who live near the trail or have hiked it before. After six hours and a steep climb without anything to drink, Nustvold found a cooler of bottled water free for the taking.

"It really was magic. It would be there when you needed it most," he said.

Such generosity was not uncommon along the trail, Nustvold said, and those who offered it expected nothing in return.

Nustvold's favorite and most frequent accommodation was the small tent he carried on his back, but he also splurged on the occasional air-conditioned hotel with cable TV. On one particularly cold and rainy night in Virginia, Nustvold and 20 of his compatriots crammed into a hiking shelter designed for eight people. Everyone shared the small space, along with warm food and hot chocolate.

"It felt like Christmas Eve," Nustvold said.

By the time he reached the final summit in Maine, the

now-experienced hiker had pared his pack down to the essentials, little more than lightweight sleeping gear, a water filter, stove and a single set of clothes. Including water and three days' worth of food, it weighed a mere 30 or 35 pounds.

"You don't need much to be happy," he said. "All you really need is what you can carry on your back."

Nustvold's zeal for hiking has not waned since his return to Amery. He recently walked the length of the Stower Seven Lakes Trail, which measures 13 miles or approximately one half of one percent of the Appalachian Trail. He plans to prioritize the simplicity and challenge of hiking in his life from now on.

"I'm already ready for my next one," he said.

## Band: 'Avengers' to be shown

After the football game The Avengers (pg-13) will be shown. Bring your family, friends, lawn chairs and blankets. Concessions available. Movie sponsors: Coleman & Hartman, SC and Kops & Kids.

## Fish: Newly-stocked fingerlings should reach legal size in two years

**Continued from page one** time and fewer resources to raise, but their size makes them more vulnerable, too.

"Basically it's just a predation issue," said Aaron Cole, a DNR biologist and the District's fish manager. "There are a lot of mouths out there."

"If you've got a fry, even a bluegill can eat that," Cole said.

The larger fingerlings make more economic sense considering their greater likelihood of survival, Cole said.

"Every little fish that went out there is a buck 65," Bergquist said. But he has never heard a complaint about the cost of the fingerlings from any of the District's residents.

The decision to stock the lake is based on DNR recommendations and public input from the District's annual meeting each September. Stocked fish are certified by a sampling lab to ensure that no diseases are introduced to the lake with the fish.

The walleye fingerlings made the 250-mile journey from Dodgeville by truck. They were transferred from the truck's ten water tanks via flexible four-inch hose to the lakes. Since the fish farm sources different fish species to many bodies of water in the area, volunteers were careful not to bring the hoses into direct contact with the lake water to prevent the transfer of aquatic species between lakes.

A total of 3,000 fingerlings were deposited into North Twin Lake, and the same quantity at the Shoreview Landing on Pike Lake. The fish initially swam near the dock, adjusting to the 62-degree water and the plant life in their new, natural habitat. Late morning sunlight reflected off the fish's eyes, giving them the glassy, golden look for which the walleye is named.

Despite the number of fish that flowed through the pipes that morning, only one appeared to be a potential goner. It hovered below the surface of the water on its

side. "Do we get a rebate on the one that's dead?" joked Kay Erickson, the City Council's Lake District representative.

Despite being raised on a farm, the fingerlings adjust quickly to life in the lake.

"When they get in there they know what to do," said Terry Lauffer of Gollon Bait and Fish Farm. Lauffer drove the fish to Amery and is always impressed by their resilience.

"It's amazing," he said. "It's automatic."

Although North Twin and Pike Lakes lack ideal walleye spawning habitat, both boast excellent

food resources for the fingerlings, Bergquist said. Survival depends on the lake and the year, but if all goes well the fish should reach legal size within two to three years.

Dick Pelc lives on Pike Lake and is an avid walleye fisherman. His luck fishing walleye provides anecdotal proof of the success of past stockings.

"I caught half a dozen off of my point there. That's how I know they made it," Pelc said.

Less than an hour after the fingerlings were released into North Twin Lake on Friday, there were no signs of walleye visible from the boat landing. That's a good sign, Bergquist confirmed.



Terry Lauffer of Gollon Bait and Fish Farm shows off a walleye fingerling at the boat landing on North Twin Lake while Bruce DeLong, a board member of the Amery Lakes District, looks on. (Photo by Breanna Draxler)

## Proposal: Current bus drivers would be given priority in hiring

**Continued from page one** in Wisconsin: Kaukauna, Neenah, Oshkosh, Sun Prairie, Oconto, Orfordville and Bloomer.

In Western Wisconsin, they provide transportation for the casino in Turtle Lake, the Bloomer School District and next year, the Turtle Lake School District.

Kobussen pointed out that the business model of the firm is based on safety programs. The firm has WIDOT certified trainers on staff, a partnership for a WI decision driving course at FVTC and Chippewa Valley Tech College and a sleep apnea awareness program. They are certified by The Department of Defense and the Transportation Safety Exchange.

The firm's first goal, according to Kobussen, is to hire local drivers. They feel they know their routes the best and are a valuable resource. Current drivers would be given priority on current routes. Driver pay would remain consistent with current pay. Drivers working 30 hours a week qualify for health insurance, with 60 percent of the cost paid by the company and 40 percent paid by the employee. They also provide a 401k, life, dental, vision and disability. There is a 20 percent match on the 401k and employees are eligible after 1,000 hours of work.

Drivers have 25 to 30 hours of training, training on discipline and continuing safety training, as well as CPR and Safety training.

Kobussen uses computerized

routing, making the routes as efficient as possible. Kobussen said that they perform motor vehicle registration, background checks and drug and alcohol testing on their drivers. They subscribe to a service that keeps them updated on their drivers.

The reasons they can provide the same service at a lower cost is because their core business is transportation. They buy buses, fuel and parts in bulk.

The proposal to the district is to charge the district for their transportation costs and pay the district on a lease or lease purchase basis for their bus fleet and facilities.

A contract would be negotiated at a fixed rate. The contract would have fixed annual increases or be tied to the consumer price index. There may be a fuel escalator clause.

There were several questions from the audience.

There were questions about seniority and how the drivers would negotiate for a raise. Drivers' experience would be taken into consideration, but there is no seniority. When a contract is negotiated with a district, a comparable wage scale for drives is put in place with built in step pay increases.

The firm would not charge students to ride the bus, or charge more for special needs children. Teachers that have a commercial drivers license (CDL) would be allowed to drive buses, but would become Kobussen employees for the time they are driving bus.

Many of the questions were answered with "if the district approves the policy, we will do it."

A person asked what the driver turnover had been for the company in the past five years – 14 percent. How many lawsuits had the firm been involved in over the same time frame? One – a bicycle had hit a bus, and Kobussen was sued.

Another person asked how many routes had been eliminated in their districts. In Pesigo, four routes had been taken out. In Oshkosh, over 12 years, 13 routes had been removed.

Who makes decisions on inclement weather? The district.

Do drivers get unemployment in summer? Yes, even if they are underemployed.

Will drivers get to take students on field trips, or will a coach be brought in? Drivers will be allowed to drive school buses.

Will drivers be allowed to do after school driving for extra curricular activities? Yes.

What is the average age of their buses? 15-18 years. New buses are purchased each year.

Will the bidding be open to other companies, and what is the timeline? There is no timeline at this point, according VanBlaricom. The sole purpose of the meeting was to get information.

There will be more public information before any action is taken, the audience was assured.

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