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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

History on the move

A historic 150-year-old
barn was found and saved
from the landfill

BY STEPHEN WIBLEMO
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After approximately 80 years, a lost piece of Hutchinson history was returned to its rightful place. And if you were driving on Franklin Street Northwest or Washington Avenue West between noon and 1 p.m. Friday, you may have seen it rolling down the road.

For years, Hutchinson history buffs believed the building known as the Franklin House,

which served as a group home for McLeod Treatment Programs since 1976, was once a barn. But not just any barn. It belonged to the historic Harrington-Merril House site, which was first built in 1858 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

After months of research, that rumor was confirmed, and with no small effort by members of Historic Hutchinson, the barn was lifted and returned to the Harrington-Merril site, where it is now waiting to be fully restored.

CONFIRMING AN OLD RUMOR

When Historic Hutchinson was founded about 20 years ago, Jay Beytien, a founding member and lifelong resident until his death in 2010, used to tell a story about the Harrington-Merril House.

"He said there was a barn there, and that



STAFF PHOTOS BY STEPHEN WIBLEMO

On Friday, the former McLeod Treatment Programs group home on Franklin Street Northwest was lifted and carried about four blocks down Franklin Street and Washington Avenue West to be relocated to the historic Harrington-Merril House site. The building was scheduled for demolition until local historians saved it after discovering it was the original barn built with the Harrington-Merril House in 1858.

barn is the group home," said Jim Fahey, another founding member of Historic Hutchinson. "He told us this story about how a person had come home from (World War II), he was on the fire department, and they hosed this building down to swell it up in the middle of

the summer and somehow moved it."

For years, members of the group paid little attention to the story. Then this past year McLeod Treatment Programs closed its doors and the

Barn to A4 ►

Age is no obstacle for these young TigerBots

Hutchinson elementary
students are taking 'Rhino'
to state competition

BY JEREMY JONES
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What's the first thing you envision when you imagine a robotics competition? If you pictured robots attacking each other, you're not quite there. If you saw robots being used to complete challenges and rack up points, you've got the right idea.

The Park Elementary TigerBots, which represent Hutchinson Public Schools' youngest robotics group in the Lego League, have been busy this year preparing their robot, Rhino, for just such competition. The eight-member team already impressed judges with their score at regional competition, but when they move on to state competition this Saturday, Feb. 26, judges will be paying attention to a lot more than their coding and robot design skills. In this year's theme — Cargo Connection — teams explore elements of how cargo is packed, transported, sorted and delivered.

"Last year the tournaments were all virtual, so all of the tournament interaction was just with adults," said coach Jason Durheim. "It's been so nice to be back in person this season."

The hybrid tournaments this season haven't been the same as a typical experience, but they've allowed students to be around other students and teams.

For the robotics portion of the Lego League, teams take turns operating their robot on the table, navigating through obstacles and completing packaging-themed trials. Each team has the same obstacles to overcome, but the question is who built the robot more reliably able to complete the most objectives? Missions include an air drop, bridge orientation, cargo loading and unloading, and cargo delivery.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Hutchinson Park Elementary TigerBots team of Jacob DeMeyer, Brooklyn Irvin, Mason Krcil, Gabe Magnuson, Logan Piehl, Max Schlueter, Lizzy Tanata and Brezlin Theget may be young, but that hasn't stopped them from impressing judges and qualifying for state this weekend.

Lego League teams are also tasked with exploring a way to improve transportation and delivery infrastructure. The TigerBots decided to tackle the problem of packages sliding around and not stacking neatly when transported. The team designed reusable packages, inspired by Legos, which could be used by any company or individual. Not only must the team come up with the idea, it

must also pitch the idea to a panel of judges. "We call them the Tiger Box," said fifth-grader Gabe Magnuson. "They have studs and anti-studs like a Lego brick, so they don't slide and cause damage."

Fourth-grader Mason Krcil said the packages have a Bluetooth lock, which can be

TigerBots to A8 ►

New legislative map reshapes local politics

Hutchinson will elect a
new state representative,
senator this November

BY STEPHEN WIBLEMO AND JEREMY JONES
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Hutchinson will have a new state representative and senator next year.

According to the state legislative district map released by the Minnesota Judicial Branch last week, which will be used for the next 10 years starting with the November elections for terms beginning in 2023, Hutchinson will no longer be split into two House districts, currently 18A and 18B. Instead, Hutchinson falls within the new District 17A, along with most of McLeod County, as well as a portion of Meeker, Wright and Sibley counties.

Rep. Dean Urdahl represents what is currently 18A, while Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen represents what is currently 18B. However, the new map shows Urdahl's residence in Acton Township will fall in what will be District 16A. Gruenhagen lives south of Glencoe, just over the Sibley County line, in what will become District 17B.

The new district map is part of the state's decennial redistricting process, which uses census data to draw new political borders. This process is left to lawmakers to complete, but with a split Legislature (Republicans control the Senate, Democrats control the House), no map was approved by the Feb. 15 deadline. That meant it came down to a five-judge panel to create the map.

In statements released by the Minnesota GOP and DFL parties, they praised the work of the



Rep. Dean
Urdahl



Rep. Glenn
Gruenhagen



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