

SPRINTING TO THE FINISH

Hutchinson's track and field teams competed in the section meet / A7

UNITED WAY'S NEW FACE

Debra Siemsen is the new UWMC program manager / A2

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021

Jump-starting downtown restaurants

Thai food, rolled ice cream and more are coming soon thanks to EDA contest winners

BY KAY JOHNSON
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Two business proposals have been named winners in the Hutchinson Economic Development Authority's Jump-Start Downtown business plan contest.

The Jump-Start Downtown review committee heard pitches from four finalists June 7. Two were chosen as first-place winners: Flank Steakhouse, owned by Vincent and Amanda Maertz, and Gold Coin, a proposed Thai restaurant owned by Simon Leung and Choua Kue.

In addition, a third contestant — Sweet Rolls & Boba — owned by Mai Thao was chosen for a partial prize, which will be determined by the EDA Board at its June meeting later this month.

"If you think of downtown as an art, entertainment and dining district, this is fantastic," said Miles Seppelt, Hutchinson EDA director. "This is going to draw a lot of people to the downtown area and everyone is going to be a winner."

Seppelt went on to describe downtown's three new eateries as "super exciting."

"I just love we're adding a little bit of ethnic cuisine to the landscape," he said. "That's going to be totally awesome."

Seppelt wasn't the only one excited. The Maertzes said they are thrilled to have won the contest, and sharing it with another business makes it that much sweeter.

"We are absolutely excited, thrilled," Vincent said. "We walked in there with our business plan and told our story of how we got there, holding back tears the whole time."

"I cried when they told us," Amanda said. "We're so happy, over the moon. We're so passionate about what we do."

Joining Flank Steakhouse in earning first-place honors are Leung and Kue, who will open a Thai restaurant in the updated and modernized former Gold Coin building on Main Street North in downtown Hutchinson.

According to Leung and Kue's business plan, they are re-designing the Gold Coin restaurant to attract families and people of all ages who want



Mai Thao, right, was named the second-place winner. Her plans are to open Sweet Rolls & Boba. She will feature Thai-rolled ice cream and bubble tea. Pictured with Thao is her cousin, Ker Her, who will be her assistant manager.

authentic Southeast Asian foods at a reasonable cost.

"Thai cuisine is known for its rich, flavorful curry spices," they wrote. "We use fresh herbs in all of our dishes. ... Beside curries, we have a big range of rice noodle dishes to offer as well. The most famous noodle dish is the pad thai. Pad thai consists of al dente rice noodles, stir-fried with fresh green onion, bean sprouts and your choice of protein or vegetables in a sweet and tangy tamarind sauce topped with peanuts and a slice of lemon."

"Beside the pad thai, we offer other stir-fried noodle dishes, such as drunken noodles, pad seew, curry pad thai, peanut curry noodles. With that

Jump-start to A4 >



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Co-winners Simon Leung and Choua Kue will open the Gold Coin Thai restaurant in the site of the former Gold Coin along Main Street North in downtown



Sweet Rolls & Boba will be serving desserts such as this green apple Thai-rolled ice cream. Mia Thao discovered the popular street food during a visit to Thailand.

Right — Sweet Rolls & Boba will introduce bubble tea to Hutchinson when the new business opens in the Gold Coin later this year.



Seeking solutions to local health issues

New report sheds light on a mixed bag of health problems residents face

BY JEREMY JONES
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With no improvement in mental health indicators, a higher rate of obesity than reported statewide, reports of food insecurity, and lower rates of tobacco and alcohol use, data gathered in the Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services assessment shows a mixed bag of health factors in the three-county area.

Data in the assessment, which was approved in March, was collected through a survey, along with meetings with experts, researchers, service organizations and focus groups. The process cycles every five years, beginning this time with a meeting between Minnesota Department of Health staff, MMS Community Health Services, hospitals and clinics in May 2018. Those groups built the assessment's survey, which was distributed that fall. The survey was sent to 1,800 residents in each of the three counties. Surveys were returned completed by 1,463 adult residents.

The next step for CHS is to follow up with a Community Health Improvement Plan.

"A community health improvement plan is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems in a community," stated a CHS press release. "It is based on the results of community health assessment activities ... and defines a vision for the community's health. The community health improvement plan is the

community's plan, not the community health board's plan for the community."

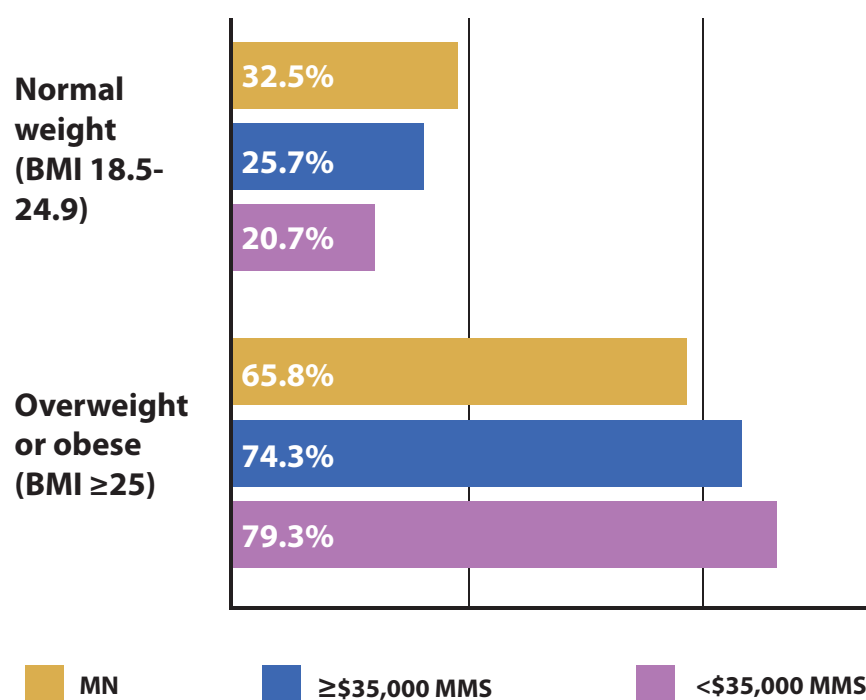
Kiza Olson, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services administrator, said the organization is currently gathering community partners to help build the plan. One key participant will be the Community Leadership Team,

a group of residents involved in mental health, schools and hospitals that has helped advise CHS for more than a decade.

"It's a community team interested in public health or the health of their communities,"

Health to A5 >

Adult Weight Status Based on BMI



Source: 2018 MMS Healthy Communities Survey and 2018 MN BRFSS

City Council forming plan to fill vacancy

Council Member Brandon Begnaud resigning July 15

BY JEREMY JONES
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Hutchinson City Council discussed Tuesday evening how to proceed following the departure of Council Member Brandon Begnaud. But questions remained.

Begnaud, who was elected to a four-year term in 2020, said in a prepared statement he and his family were moving to South Dakota next month, and that they had accepted an offer on their Hutchinson house. He plans to resign Thursday, July 15, and expressed gratitude to the city staff, council and residents of Hutchinson.

"This decision was made after much prayer and supplication to God," Begnaud said. "Trusting God's plan and will in our lives is not always easy, but, as people of faith, we feel it is required of us as Christians (to) follow His calling. ... Although I do not know exactly what



Brandon Begnaud

Council to A4 >



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