

LOCAL

Helicopter to fly over river for work on power lines

MidAmerican aerial crew to replace conductors

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Beginning Wednesday, aerial transmission work over the Mississippi River will begin and is expected to last through the next week.

A contract aerial line crew will begin work on a MidAmerican Energy transmission line replacement project that will occur over the river, west of the I-74 bridge, between Moline and Bettendorf and will include the Rock Island Arsenal and Sylvan Island.

Aerial crews will replace overhead conductors to enhance the transmission line's safety and reliability along with replacing marker balls to ensure lines are visible to aircraft, according to a notice issued by MidAmerican Energy.

People in the area may notice a yellow helicopter flying at a low altitude alongside the transmission line or hovering and should not be alarmed. The helicopter will be flying equipment and specially trained linemen in harnesses to the top of the transmission towers and alongside the head lines.

Depending on the weather, aerial work is expected to last through next week.

Man gets 21 years for child pornography

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A Davenport man must serve more than 21 years in federal prison as the result of a child pornography investigation.

George Winston Taylor, 65, received a 260-month sentence for receiving child pornography and must also pay \$48,000 in restitution, according to a news release issued Tuesday by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa. Upon completion of his prison term, he must also serve five years of supervised release.

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Davenport man accused of firing gun takes plea

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A Davenport man awaits a January sentencing after entering a plea agreement on a 2021 firearms case.

Scott County authorities accused Brady J. Robinson, 26, of firing a gun once at a residence on Nov. 17, 2021, in the 1700 block of Grand Avenue, Davenport. Investigators think the shooting stemmed from a verbal argument with the occupants and that Robinson intended to frighten them.

Court records state that Robinson admitted to the shooting.

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NIKOS FRAZIER PHOTOS

Students at Rock Island High School pose for a photo with German exchange students on Friday in Rock Island.

Lifestyle change

German teens and Rock Island teens exchange lives

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Sixteen German high school students are to board flights home Wednesday after spending two weeks attending Rock Island High School.

Rocky is one of two local high schools, along with Bettendorf, to offer the German-American Partnership Program (GAPP). Due to COVID-19, this is the school's first GAPP exchange group since 2018.

Seven Rocky students visited Germany in June, staying in Rottenburg am Neckar. They stay with a host family who has a child in GAPP, and vice-versa for the German group while in Rock Island.

"The idea of GAPP is to open the borders between two countries and to try and establish friendships and connections between the two different countries, which I think is very necessary in our times," said Christiana Rude, the German students' GAPP coordinator.

Romy Neu, a junior at St. Meinrad Gymnasium school in Rottenburg, was excited to see the students she met over the summer again.

"I love meeting Americans. They are always so friendly," she said. "I was excited to stay with my host family and live that American lifestyle, because everything is super different ... the people, the schools. Here, I think everything is more relaxed."

She and her peers were "shocked," she said, to see students using their cellphones at school — something that's not allowed at her school. One classmate, junior Luis Hornung, was surprised by the short time Rocky students have to travel between classes.

"I always feel a bit stressed, because the building is so big, and all the stairs look the same, so I always have to look to my exchange student and go with them," he said. "In Germany, we have double lessons, then a 20-minute break. Here, the lunch break is only 30 minutes, and in Germany we have an hour and 30 minutes."

Hornung also said German students are allowed to leave school for lunch, contrary to Rocky's lunch protocol.

Junior Lotta Grathwol particularly noticed the differences in scenery and infrastructure here compared to Germany.

"Everything is bigger," she said, listing cars, streets and fields as examples. "Houses are very far apart, which you don't see in Germany. I really like the cities. I think they're really pretty, and I really like the rivers. I love the views when you drive and can see the rivers."

Grathwol admitted the Quad-Cities confuses her, however, because she never knows which city she's in. She also found pre-tax pricing and tips confusing.



American and German students ask questions during a German class at Rock Island High School on Friday in Rock Island. Rock Island High School hosted its German foreign exchange program for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



From left, Jake Osborn, Lucan Hansen pose for a photo with German exchange students, Luis Hornung, Romy Neu and Lotta Grathwol on Friday at Rock Island High School.

Hornung thought the differences in public transportation were particularly noticeable.

"There's a lot more public transportation in Germany. Here, not many people use the bus," he said. "So I thought it was very cool that our exchange students could drive cars."

Rocky senior Lucas Hansen also saw these differences from his experience in Germany.

"I feel like there's a little more to do in Germany, because everything is so close together, and we could just take the bus or train," he said. "The cities had a lot more history, and just a lot of cool things you wouldn't see here."

Another Rocky student, sophomore Jake Osborn, agrees.

"I feel like it's a lot cooler for us to go there. But it's also very cool for them to come here, and for us to give them the same experience

they gave us hosting," he said. "I was pretty excited, but nervous at the same time to host people."

Nick Eli, German teacher and Rocky's GAPP coordinator, said schools become involved with GAPP by requesting a partner school through the program's website. GAPP will then pair the interested school with a foreign counterpart that is similar in its surrounding area's population.

"GAPP has a handbook for teachers who are interested in becoming coordinators. The GAPP coordinator, i.e. German teacher, is responsible for organizing and planning the school groups' exchange trip to Germany, and the partner school's visit from Germany," he said. "It is an incredible amount of work that begins in the fall of the year before traveling and continues until the end of the visit by the German group."

Since 2004, Rocky students in GAPP visit Germany in the summer of even years, then host German students the following fall.

"We participate in GAPP for various reasons. First and foremost, it provides an opportunity for our students to experience a two-way home-stay exchange," Eli said. "Another reason is that GAPP provides our group with grant money to cover some travel costs and other items, like insurance. GAPP also requires our students to visit places and learn about things that connect with our program's topic, which is to explore the patterns of settlement in each area."

For example, Rocky students learned about Rottenburg's history as a Roman settlement, the lifestyle of monks in a nearby abbey and prehistoric settlements on Lake Constance, where Germany, Switzerland and Austria meet.

"The cross-cultural experiences our students have help open their minds to new perspectives, different ways of living and how to find common ground in spite of these differences. I think that, at a high school level, is extremely important to have," Eli said. "These opportunities prepare them to be world citizens when they become adults."

Hansen describes his GAPP experience as "eye opening."

"My biggest takeaway is just how different people live compared to us. I had never been outside of the country before, so seeing a different type of culture and area was big for me," he said.

Neu said her U.S. trip marks the longest she's been away from home. But because of her GAPP experience, she isn't homesick.

"I think I've learned to be more open and just not be scared to ask questions when I don't understand things or topics being discussed, and I think we can learn a lot," Neu said. "Meeting new people is always a nice experience, and you learn more about yourself as well."

The German group's topic was "meeting America in the past and present." Aligning with this subject, the group began their trip in Washington D.C. Following the steps of former president Abraham Lincoln, the group also made stops in Springfield and New Salem, Illinois.

"Students had to prepare for that by doing research work on their own and presenting it to the group," Rude said. "We also did a tour of the Amish in Kalona, Iowa. So they had to prepare about immigration, like what kind of people came here and for what reason."

Neu particularly enjoyed meeting Amish, saying, "That was super interesting, because it's just a whole new culture and we got to ask them a lot of questions about how they live. We also visited Bishop Hill and learned more about American history. We have to learn about that in school, so it was cool to see some of those things in museums."

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