

# ALC-Mondovi welcomes new administrator, director of nursing

## *Filla, Lilyquist bring wealth of healthcare experience*

by Beth Kraft

Mondovi's American Lutheran Communities recently welcomed a new administrator, and the facility's new leadership is focused on ensuring the elder care option remains a valuable local resource.

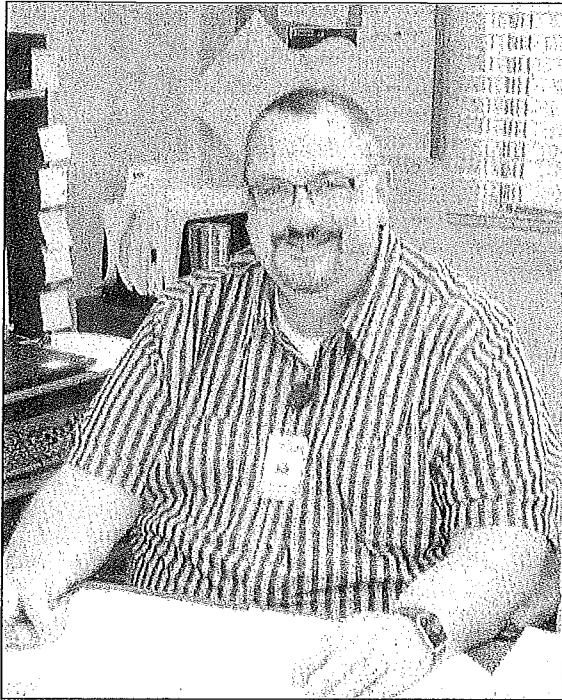
Pete Filla began as the facility's administrator on April 17. The position is his first as a nursing home administrator, but Filla brings over 18 years of experience to the job having served in a variety of roles at the Trempealeau County Health Care Center, located in Whitehall.

Filla replaces Ken King, who retired in April after 17 years at the helm of ALC-Mondovi.

Healthcare is a second career for Filla, who initially worked in the journalism field. When he had to learn to care for his ailing father years ago, Filla says he felt his priorities being pulled in a new direction.

"I just realized that it was a calling for me that I wanted to care for people," he said.

From there, Filla—an Independence native—obtained his CNA certification and began working every other weekend at the Trempealeau



Pete Filla began work as the new administrator of American Lutheran Communities-Mondovi on April 17. In his first weeks at the helm, Filla says he has begun a focus on promoting a "campus wide" approach at the facility, which offers a variety of elder care options in a small-town setting.

County Health Care Center. He soon rose up through the ranks to become the facility's activities director.

"From there I still wanted to make a difference. I'm very passionate about the people that we take

care of, and that led me to the next step of becoming a nursing home administrator," Filla shared.

ALC-Mondovi is the perfect fit for him because, Filla said, the facility offers a smaller, more personal atmosphere. Plus the facility's budget is handled externally by Grace Lutheran Communities, a non-profit which manages ALC.

"The fact that they took care of that was reassuring because then I could focus more on the day-to-day operations and look at how we can better market our facility," Filla explained.

He's had a lot to learn in his new role, but Filla was

quick to join forces with ALC Director of Nursing Jennifer Lilyquist to look at ways to ensure the facility is operating efficiently and remains in compliance.

"We've worked well as a team," Filla said. "We're working toward keeping this facility in Mondovi not only viable but prosperous, now and into the future."

Lilyquist started as DON at the Mondovi facility in January. The Stevens Point native holds over 30 years of experience in nursing, working in a variety of different capacities such as long-term and acute care, emergency room care, oncology, med-surg, and critical care.

"I bring a lot of experience with me to the table," said Lilyquist, em-

phasizing a focus on staff education and moving the facility forward to benefit Mondovi citizens.

### *ALC advantage fueled in turn by community support*

Filla and Lilyquist want Mondovi-area residents to see ALC for its "campus approach" that brings virtually all aspects of elder care under one roof.

Not only does ALC offer traditional skilled nursing care, but the facility also boasts an assisted living (CBRF) wing, offers physical therapy in-house, and provides access to the attached Mayo Clinic for routine doctor's appointments—an all-encompassing approach Filla says is a rare find in a small community like Mondovi.

"The advantage here is endless," he added.

The "campus approach" and resources at ALC also allow residents to remain in their hometown, even if and when their care needs become more demanding.

"The fact that we have all of this right here in Mondovi is wonderful," Filla said. "We just want the community to realize that we're an asset we hope they take advantage of."

It's no secret that traditional nursing homes have struggled in recent years, in part due to a rising trend in home-based elder care options.

While Filla said there's a strong commitment to keeping ALC viable in Mondovi for years to come, the facility will require the support of the community to endure.

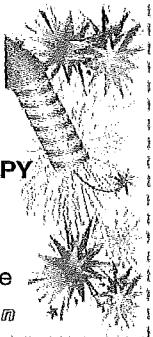
"We need the citizens See **New ALC staff/pg. 3**



Director of Nursing Jennifer Lilyquist conducted a staff seminar recently. Lilyquist said she enjoys employee education opportunities at ALC-Mondovi, where she has worked since January, to ensure residents are receiving a high level of care.

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This is the first year tax  
funds from TIF 1—the north-  
east portion of the industrial  
park and the Countryside  
addition east of Hwy. 37—  
would have dispersed to the  
city, school district, county  
and CVTC the same way  
other property tax funds are  
divided. Instead, those tax  
dollars will continue to assist  
TIF 2 until it is paid off.

Hanson said he's unsure  
exactly how much money  
would go from TIF 1 to other  
tax entities. However, he feels  
city taxpayers could have re-  
alized a tax cut if TIF 1 wasn't  
continued as a donor.

The decision to distress  
TIF 2 effectively extends the  
life of both TIF districts 10  
years, with principal debt  
projected to be repaid by  
2026. TIF 2 can then begin to  
repay the interest accrued to  
the city, a 2013 TIF 2 project  
plan amendment notes, fore-  
cast conservatively to take

of Mondovi as much as we  
hope they need us," he said.

Mondovi is large enough  
to keep ALC financially sta-  
ble, Filla said, but people  
have to choose it over the  
draw of bigger cities like  
Eau Claire.

"It really does take a  
commitment to keep a facil-  
ity in a community, especial-  
ly today in these financial-  
ly-trying times," Filla said.

Financial challenges are  
created in part by the current  
low Medicaid reimburse-  
ment rate. Facilities try to  
balance the population of  
private pay patients with

no new development.

The distressed distinc-  
tion also relieved pressure  
on the city's general fund,  
which was being tapped to  
make payments on the \$3  
million bond due to insuffi-  
cient funds from TIF 2.

According to the August  
2013 amendment to TIF  
2, the TIF owed the city's  
general fund over \$926,000  
as of Dec. 31, 2012. It had  
also racked up nearly \$3.5  
million in principal debt, re-  
duced to just over \$3 million  
after debt restructuring.

Yet Mondovi isn't alone  
in its TIF struggles.

"We're not the only  
community in Wisconsin or  
across the nation where TIFs  
have failed," Hanson said.

In 2010 the state began  
allowing communities to  
distress TIF districts that  
weren't making their payoff  
schedules, acknowledging a  
sluggish economy that was

At the time the city made  
the move to distress TIF 2, it  
was estimated that upwards  
of 50 TIFs across the state  
were distressed.

That number is more like  
100 now, Hanson said.

The lawsuit indicates  
the city is seeking to re-  
coup \$500,000 from NCD  
due to the alleged breach  
of contract, but Hanson  
credited the developer's  
partners for making a tar-  
geted effort to improve the  
Mondovi community.

"I applaud them for  
taking the risk," he said.  
"I have the utmost respect  
for them."

A new state requirement  
dictates that communities  
with TIF districts must con-  
duct a public, annual review  
of their TIF financial state-  
ments. A meeting of the Joint  
Review Board is scheduled  
for June 29 at City Hall be-  
ginning at 5 p.m.

## New ALC staff

cont'd. from front

those whose care is covered  
by Medicare and Medicaid,  
Filla said, but the reality is  
facilities like ALC lose over  
\$50 per day for each resident  
on Medicaid.

The skilled-nursing por-  
tion of ALC has experienced  
some "peaks and valleys"  
in its population, Filla said,  
and he's looking to stabilize  
and increase that census go-  
ing forward.

Filla is hoping that tout-  
ing the facility's "campus  
approach" will be a win-win  
both for ALC in terms of lon-  
gevity and for the communi-  
ty in providing high-quality

care that allows residents to  
remain close to home.

Lilyquist also credited  
staff for the positive envi-  
ronment they bring to resi-  
dents' homes within ALC.

"I see staff members who  
are very committed to the  
people they take care of,"  
Filla agreed, noting his ear-  
ly impressions of ALC staff  
indicates they are hardwork-  
ing, "compassionate" and  
"go above and beyond."

"I'm extremely honored  
to be here in Mondovi,"  
Filla said of his new role at  
ALC. "It's been a wonder-  
ful opportunity."