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The TIMBERJAY



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COUNTY SCHOOLS

ISD 2142 moves ahead in construction dispute

School district seeks attorney as building issues mount

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Nearly two years ago, the mere threat of seeking legal counsel was enough to catch the attention of at

least two of three contractors embroiled in a long-standing, far-ranging dispute with ISD 2142 officials over construction problems at the North Woods and South Ridge schools. But initial

A May 2019 inspection showed the front entry sidewalk at North Woods School had settled and cracked. file photo/Timberjay file photo

contacts went nowhere, and issues from cracked sidewalks and pipes to sagging floors continue to plague the schools and sinking athletics fields and

See...2142 pg. 11



EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN TOWER

Snowmobile catches fire at gas pump

Cause of fire still unknown

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- A snowmobile caught fire while fueling up at Vermilion Fuel and Food, in Tower, last Thursday morning, sending a plume of thick black smoke soaring over Main Street. Loud pops, crackles, and booms could be heard blocks away.

"I heard a small pop," said cashier Colette Sistad, who was outside observing the flames from a safe distance. "I didn't think anything of it. But then a guy came running in telling me to call 911."

A snowmobile group from southeastern Minnesota had left Fortune Bay only a few minutes earlier and stopped in Tower to fill up their machines.

"I heard a poof and then I was on fire," said a very lucky snowmobile rider named Larry who didn't wish his last name to be used. Within seconds, the snowmobile and

See...FIRE pg. 11

A snowmobile went up in flames at the Tower Fuel and Food store last Thursday and was extinguished by the Tower Fire Department. The Breitung and Greenwood fire departments also assisted. J. Summit photos



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Township, city officials weigh future of Breitung Police Dept.

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

BREITUNG TWP— With the Breitung Police Department down to a handful of part-time officers, township and city of Tower officials met Wednesday afternoon to discuss the future of law enforcement in the two communities.

At issue was whether to rebuild the department in the wake of the recent resignations of Police Chief Dan Nylund and Lt. Jason Sanderson, or to disband it and rely on the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office for local law enforcement response.

Breitung is one of only two townships in St. Louis County that continues to operate its own police department. Balancing the cost to taxpayers against the expectation to maintain an effective law enforcement agency, has been a challenge that has pushed many small townships to turn to coverage through the county sheriff. And based on comments on Wednesday, it appears that Breitung supervisors are concerned, as well, about the potential legal liability the department places on the township's taxpayers. After considerable discussion on Wednesday,

See...POLICE pg. 9

BUSINESS LICENSING

Ely Drop and Shop secondhand store nears reopening

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

City council agrees to reinstate business license on a conditional basis

ELY – Following a nearly one-month closure, the Ely Drop and Shop secondhand retail shop is taking steps to have their business license reinstated and could soon reopen.

The downtown business at

204 E. Sheridan St. was shut down Feb. 11 by the Ely City Council, which pulled the operation's business license. The closure was triggered by criminal charges against one of the business's owners for allegedly

selling methamphetamines on the premises.

Council members voted 6-0 Tuesday night to conditionally reinstate the business license. One council member was absent from the meeting.

The resolution stipulates that all current owners must sign the license, and they are all subject to an acceptable background check. The current owners of the business are Kristen Krings, Casey Moravitz,

Rosario Thole and Tina Foster.

According to Ely City Attorney Kelly Klun, other conditions for the business reinstatement include:

See...ELY pg. 10



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Community notices



Greenwood residents line up to vote at a past Township Day election. file photo

Townships to hold annual meetings on Township Day, Tuesday, March 9

Annual meetings give residents direct control over local tax levy

REGIONAL - Minnesota's 1,781 townships will hold their annual meetings on Tuesday, March 9. Known as Township Day, these annual meetings are held every year on the second Tuesday in March. Residents of the townships will meet to voice their opinions about local issues and also to vote on their annual tax levy. Citizens also often discuss and vote on other local issues.

In addition, many townships will hold officer elections on Township Day.

"Township Day 2021 will still ensure a direct voice to residents of townships, with COVID precautions in place," said Minnesota Association of Townships General Counsel Steve Fenske. "Some townships will meet physically with masks and distancing, while other townships are embracing conference calls or virtual meetings. Some townships will officially start their meetings but then 'pause' business so that full participation can occur in fairer summer weather at outdoor meetings."

Some area townships, including Greenwood and Eagles Nest, are planning to open their meetings but then continue them to a later month, when it will be easier to host a large gathering. Other townships are hosting their regular meetings with pandemic safety measures in place and do plan to vote on their levies.

"If you live in a township, please participate in your township's annual meeting on Tuesday, March 9," continued Fenske. "You can find the location and time by checking the published notice in the local newspaper or by contacting the township clerk."

Townships were the original form of local government in Minnesota, established in the 1800s when Congress ordered a survey that divided the Minnesota territory into 36 square mile tracts of land. Today, the term "township" generally refers to public corporations governed by a local board of supervisors and created to provide services to residents.

"On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Townships, I encourage every township resident to participate in their annual meeting," said President Gary Burdorf.

County to hold online auction of waterfront properties from former shoreland lease program

REGIONAL- St. Louis County is holding an online auction for properties from its former shoreland lease program. The auction is open now on publicsurplus.com with bidding open until Thursday, March 11 at 11 a.m. It features 11 properties located on Elbow Lake, Bear Island Lake and Bear Island River. A catalog highlighting the properties can be found at stlouiscountymn.gov/shorelandsales.

Properties from the former shoreland lease program are unique from other tax-forfeited properties that the county auctions because they involve two prices. The first is the price of the land, which is the starting bid and can be bid up. Additionally, there is a fixed price for the cabins and other improvements owned by the former leaseholder. As a condition of the sale, the winning bidder must agree to pay the improvements price to the former leaseholder.

The St. Louis County Board discontinued the shoreland lease program in 2012. Leaseholders at the time were given the option to purchase the land they'd been leasing at market value, to relinquish the lease to the county for sale or to continue leasing for the lifetime of the leaseholder. St. Louis County had been offering the relinquished properties for sale through its regular auctions of tax-forfeited properties, but is now holding an auction specifically for these former shoreland lease program properties.

Within St. Louis County there are nearly 900,000 acres of tax-forfeited land, which the Land and Minerals Department is responsible for managing. Most of the land is maintained for resource management, however, the county is working to sell parcels that are not planned for management as a way to encourage development and increase the property tax base.

For more information about former shoreland lease lot sales or to subscribe to receive email notifications about updates and future sales, visit stlouiscountymn.gov/shorelandsales or call the Land and Minerals Department at 218-726-2606.

LOCAL FOOD SHELF

March is FoodShare Month

REGIONAL- Area residents have the chance to make a lasting impact in their community by making a contribution this month to their local food shelf. This year's annual March FoodShare Campaign runs through April 11. The annual statewide campaign is an opportunity to raise food and dollars for the local food shelf which then receives a proportional match from the Minnesota Food Fund.

Food shelves in Tower, Ely, and Cook serve an estimated 1,000 people in the area.

"This is a great way to increase a donation and make a difference to alleviate food insecurity in the area," said Ely Food Shelf Director Nancy Schwartz.

"Individuals, organizations, businesses, schools and corporations are encouraged to participate in the March campaign with a donation to their local food shelf," she said. "Also consider having fun through challenges and competitions to raise more. The Ely Area Food Shelf, along with our other local food shelves, is grateful for everyone's support."

This year over 280 partners are part of the March campaign.

"In the early years," said Tower Area Food Shelf Director Marge McPeak, "food shelves were able to receive nearly double the amount of dollars donated in their communities." Now, she said, with so many participating, each food shelf receives proportional matching funds, depending on the amount of dollars and pounds of food donated during the campaign period.

"Demand at our food shelf is up," said McPeak, "and we are expecting it to increase further."

McPeak said that donations received in March are an important part of food shelf fundraising. Typically, food shelves receive more generous donations around Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, only to find their supplies dwindling later in the winter.

The Cook Food Shelf is reporting slightly lower usage than past years, starting last summer, but donations have been keeping pace with previous years.

"There was a bit of a rebound in February when we reached 70 families," said Cook Food Shelf Director Cleo Cottrell, who said this is still below the 90-100 common in past winter months.

"I just hope those who need it are coming forward," Cottrell said.



"Donations, however," she said, "have remained strong."

"There are very generous people, and it's not limited to locals. We get donations from bigger cities and from out of state. We're OK financially," Cottrell said.

Orr does not have an "official" food shelf, but there is a Giving Cupboard at the Orr Center which was originally started as a collaborative effort among local churches and community groups but is now operated jointly by the Orr Center and the Orr Lions Community Foundation.

The Giving Cupboard is a self-service food shelf in the lobby of the Orr Center and available Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. when the center is open.

"People can come and help themselves," Orr Center Director Wendy Purdy said. Orr Center staff are also available to receive donations during those hours.

Purdy said she's also seen lower than normal usage of the Giving Cupboard. She said that could be due to the availability of alternatives such as Ruby's Pantry in Cook and pop-up distributions by AEOA. Some people are also likely reluctant to leave home due to COVID-19, she said.

"We just try to keep the shelves filled and not buy too far in advance, so our stuff doesn't get old," Purdy said.

Cash donations are the most efficient way to donate to local food shelves, which then can purchase food items from the food bank in Duluth, stretching dollars much farther than individuals can by purchasing food at a grocery store. In addition, this allows food shelves to buy items in bulk that are easier to store and shelve, as well as making sure they have the items in stock that their clients are most likely to use.

Minnesota Hunger Facts

*Impacted by COVID-19, data from 2020 is still being evaluated. The following information is compiled from the most complete data and projections collected and available at the time of publication. More info is available at www.mnfoodshare.org/resources

After years of steadily declining food insecurity rates, it was projected that food insecurity in Minnesota in 2020, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, could rise to 13 percent.

► Nine percent of Minnesotans had incomes below the poverty line in 2020. This included 11 percent of Minnesota's children.

► A record of over 3.8 million

visits were made to food shelves during 2020.

► More than 400,000 Minnesotans receive nutrition benefits via SNAP each month. 71 percent of those served by SNAP are children, seniors and people with disabilities.

► Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves and food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, making it critical to focus on creating a more just and equitable food system that meets the needs of all Minnesotans. Food security is "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life."

► Food insecurity means access to adequate food is inconsistent and limited by a lack of money and other resources throughout the year.

► Equitable access to food means all individuals have "a voice in and access to a nourishing food system," regardless of race, socioeconomic class, location, gender, and other social identities.

► "Food justice is the concept that communities have the right to grow, sell, and eat healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food whose production supports the well-being of the land, workers, and animals." Food justice is based on the idea that "access to nourishing food is a basic human right."



BE A HERO!

Beginning Monday, March 1
thru Sunday, April 11, 2021



Be a HERO and make a difference in the fight against hunger in the Ely area, March 1 through April 11. The Ely Area Food Shelf has set their local fundraising goal at \$75,000. The food shelf will receive a proportional match from the MN Food Fund for all monies and food raised by April 11. Here are some ways you can help during the annual Minnesota FoodShare Campaign to support the Ely Area Food Shelf:

- Tell your friends near and far to donate to the Ely Food Shelf in March.
- Plan a drive at your school, business or organization. Ideas like non-perishable food collection, a can-struction art challenge, a competitive coin drive, department or business challenge, bar challenge, deals, discounts, or round up purchasing can motivate and make for a fun, friendly competition and raise morale.
- Have our Food Shelf Director speak to your group about food insecurity.
- Host a social media challenge or donate individually to the Ely Area Food Shelf.



ely area food shelf

Donate at: Ely Area Food Shelf

www.elyareafoodshelf.org or PO Box 786, Ely, MN 55731

"Together we can make a difference in alleviating hunger in the Ely area!"

ELY SCHOOLS

Ely students celebrate together again

High schoolers hold a winter frolic after year of isolation

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—Memorial High School students here celebrated Winter Frolic last week, marking the first time in about a year that they were all together again in the same building.

A “winter homecoming” celebration was held last week as 6-12 students cautiously continue to re-occupy the building and return to some semblance of educational normalcy.

Students in the ISD 696 school district, like so many other districts around the state and country, have endured a litany of school shut-downs, distance learning protocols, cancellations of sporting events, plays, prom, and graduation, as the community has battled the COVID-19 pandemic.

The district also marked the seventh week in a row with no positive cases reported in the school community.

Students have been back in school for about a month. Elementary students are also in school, and are kept exclusively in the Washington building.

Megan Anderson, 6-12 principal, said she is “heartened to hear the kiddos in the hallways, locker doors slamming, and basketballs bouncing in the gym.” She gave the Memorial High School student council the go-ahead to plan a

celebration.

Because of safe learning protocols, only the top four grades were allowed at the pep rally last Thursday, and they were spaced out with mandatory mask wearing. The pep band was silenced, Anderson said, and there is no school dance this year.

Winter Frolic royalty Elsie Vollom, Julia Schwingamer, Hailey Schaller and Brynn Vollom, along with, Jake Anderson, Jackson Flom, Riley Bishop and A.J. Walker, presided over the pep rally. Schwingamer and Bishop were selected as the King and Queen.

Traditional feats of skill and strength were limited—no tug-of-war or three-legged relay races at this event. Big-ball soccer was allowed as students remained in their socially-distant cohorts.

The Ely Safe Learning Advisory Council (ESLAC) continues to meet weekly to discuss and recommend actions pertaining to ongoing coronavirus issues and the schools.

At the Feb. 25 ESLAC meeting, ISD 696 Superintendent Eric Erie informed the advisory council that the bi-weekly positive COVID-19 case rate for Northern St. Louis County doubled from 4.3 positive cases per 10,000 people to 9.9.

“We are still under the ‘ten’ threshold (bench-

mark to have in-person learning), and still lower than any other place in the county,” he said.

Central St. Louis County reported a case rate of 17.8. Duluth area reported a case rate of 13.2. All St. Louis County Schools reported a case rate of 14.4.

“All those areas went down and we were the only school to go up,” he said.

Total COVID-19 deaths in St. Louis County stood at 262 last week, unchanged from the previous week. According to Erie, Lake County reported two deaths last week and an increase in hospitalizations due to COVID-19.

The Ely ZIP code positive case rate increased from 1.61 to 3.22. The Ely school district active positive case count was reported at zero for the seventh consecutive week. The school’s cumulative case count stands at 14.

Coronavirus rapid saliva-testing procedures continue on the school campus, with the next test date scheduled for Wednesday, March 10.

“The state encourages families to have their students tested, but we don’t have that mission here right now,” Erie said.

Vaccinations for school staff continue.

“As many as 30 employees were vaccinated last Wednesday,” according to Erie, “and as many as 86 percent

The 2021 Ely Memorial School Winter Frolic King and Queen are Riley Bishop and Julia Schwingamer.
submitted photo



of school staff have been vaccinated” to date.

Anne Oelke, K-5 principal, reported that all school employees who want vaccinations will have received their first dose this week.

“We are just working on getting a couple more coaches taken care of,” she said.

In-person learning for both school buildings will continue for the foreseeable future.

“We continue to enforce all the safety and mitigation protocols in the Washington building,” Oelke said.

Anderson added that the Memorial building “is in the same boat” with the continuation of mask-wearing and social distancing rules.

Winter sports and activities will soon give way to spring sports, and students are thinking about prom and graduation celebrations to close out the school year.

Contrary....

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OPINION

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e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Government transparency

Greenwood Township shows why the Legislature should revisit township exemption

The ongoing lack of access to many records in Greenwood Township is a case study in why it's a bad idea to exempt any branch of government from the requirements of a law, particularly one that's designed to ensure openness and transparency. The town board's current open defiance of requests for public records by its own citizens as well as this newspaper, should prompt lawmakers in St. Paul to revisit the exemption in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) that applies to the state's townships.

No one in the Minnesota Legislature would likely deny that the public should have access to most government records. That's basic to a democratic form of government and it's a central tenet of the MGDPA. Yet it is a basic right that continues to be denied, at least in statute, to the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who reside in the nearly 1,800 rural townships within the state. Why shouldn't open government be available to the mostly rural residents in Minnesota who populate those 1,800 townships?

We recognize the concern that prompted members of the Legislature to exempt townships from the MGDPA. And it certainly wasn't because they believed that townships should have the right to keep their workings a secret.

When the MGDPA was first written, back in 1974, townships and their representatives argued that the law was too cumbersome for many townships to manage. At the time, many small townships could rightfully claim that responding to a voluminous records request could be a challenge. Many clerks operated out of their homes, and few likely had ready access to copy machines (which were very expensive back then).

These days, however, the vast majority of township clerks maintain most of their current records on computer, or certainly are capable of doing so. Which means they should no longer need to pull paper documents from a file, cart them to town to make copies, and bring them back again so someone can stop by their house and pick them up. Today, most township records are being produced electronically in the first place, which makes them easy to provide to anyone who requests them. And if someone requests

documents that aren't in electronic format, they can be easily scanned or photographed by a smart phone and emailed. All of this can now be handled remotely, meaning the local township curmudgeon doesn't need to stop by the clerk's house to pick up his or her records.

In the case of recent records requests to Greenwood, both from this newspaper and township residents, none could reasonably be described as overly burdensome. This newspaper's two most recent requests involved one item, which could have, and should have, been provided promptly and without conditions. Instead, the township provided bupkis.

And if Greenwood Township were truly worried that providing access to public records would be burdensome, they certainly would not have created their Byzantine seven-step process for accessing records, a process which leaves the final decision in the hands of the town board chair, who may or may not have any knowledge or interest in the value of government transparency. The only burden in that process is to residents of the township.

The town board, amazingly, even passed an ordinance that automatically denied one of the township's own emergency responders from accessing anything beyond the packet provided to the town board, a requirement of the Open Meeting Law. It's a good thing the Open Meeting Law applies to townships or Greenwood residents wouldn't have a clue what their township is doing.

While most townships make reasonable efforts to comply with their residents' requests for records, some township officials seem oblivious to the importance of transparency, and why it actually helps to increase faith in local officials, rather the other way around. After all, when a governing body keeps records and information under wraps, it's hardly surprising that it erodes trust. People rightfully wonder what the township has to hide.

Why are residents of townships the only ones in Minnesota who have to wonder? There's no longer any reason that residents of rural townships should be second-class citizens when it comes to public access to records. It's time to shed some sunlight on township governance.



Letters from Readers

Was someone trying to deceive Greenwood voters?

Campaign literature titled “Why Option B” was included in a mailing from Debby Spicer to Greenwood Township residents. It included a letter from an attorney with the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) to Greenwood Township explaining Option B. Option B allows townships to appoint a clerk rather than having it be an elected position. Following the attorney signature block another statement in bold says, “Please vote Yes for Option B.” It is clear that the sender of the mailing tried to imply that the MAT attorney endorsed Option B.

Finding this unusual, I emailed the attorney asking if he wrote the letter. He explained that he wrote the body of the letter but not the words “please vote Yes for Option B.”

I find this stunning. Was someone really trying to deceive voters?

**Sharon Legg
Greenwood Twp. and
Coon Rapids**

by the American dream. In desperate times, it's not hard to see how a glib, smooth, ambitious huckster could appeal to so many people. But Donald Trump??? There's nothing glib or smooth about him. His entire adult life has been about privilege, excess, corruption, and delusions of grandeur. The real Donald Trump has always been visible, for all to see: an ignorant self-promoting bully, a textbook narcissist with a third-grade vocabulary, a vicious, vile, vindictive fraud, a man described by ultra-conservative writer George Will as ‘all blemish’. And yet this terribly flawed man somehow managed to convince almost half the American electorate to vote for him— twice! How was that even possible? I'm obviously missing something here, something I guess I'll never understand. The craziness of the last four years, compounded by the absolute insanity of the past three months, strikes me as something straight out of the ‘Twilight Zone’.

Rod Serling must be rolling over in his grave.

**Lynn Scott
Soudan**

The enigma of Trumpism

Who can explain to me the phenomenon of Donald Trump, and the cowardice of the political party that has chosen to embrace him, come hell or high water, to the detriment of the party and the country. Not for the first time I'm struck by the bizarre nature of Trump's four years in power: the unprecedented combination of hubris, corruption, and mind-boggling incompetence.

With all the problems we face as a nation— with all the issues we are struggling to address— I can understand why so many people have been angry, feeling left behind

Please vote in the Greenwood election

Greenwood residents, please vote at the election and also at the annual meeting for the budget. Also, at the annual meeting, one can voice their concerns. These are the only way to change or keep the same way the supervisors conduct their business.

The supervisors have taken comments and letters of concern and put them toward the end of the meeting. After they have made their decisions on the agenda items. The clerk does not read the letters. I have asked each board member to state why they have voted for or against the agenda items. These were

not initiated. St. Louis County has a time set up at the beginning of the meeting, five-minute limit, for citizens to voice their concerns.

The budget for the last two years has been incomplete. Only in the last couple of months did I read that they gave the supervisors a raise. What else have they spent our money on? How many other items have they decreased or increased? We have no say, I believe, in this part of the budget. But we should have the right to know.

The town board also selects the newspaper. *Tower News* was the official newspaper, but lately there has been no coverage of the monthly meetings. The *Timberjay* has the widest distribution of the two, and covers our meetings so we can be informed. The town board also canceled their subscription to the *Timberjay*. What does this tell you?

We received the “Why Option B” letter, quoting from township attorney Fenske, which referred to the ballot question on whether to hire a clerk and treasurer, instead of electing for those positions. At the end of the letter is a sentence, please vote yes for Option B. Mr. Fenske did not write this, I called him. Who did? Who highlighted the letter in yellow? The letter was not signed. MAT does not take sides and it therefore just provides information. Do you want this board to hire a clerk? What are the qualifications for the treasurer and clerk?

I urge you to vote for JoAnne Bassing, town clerk; Barb Lofquist, supervisor; and Sue Drobac, supervisor.

**Marcie Moe
Greenwood Twp.**

Where the
North Country
Sounds Off!

Riding the bench is part of the game

If you're a University of Kansas alum, as I am, there are two givens about Jayhawk sports.

First, you will spend most of your adult life doing whatever you can to excuse or distance yourself from the university's hapless foot-



**DAVID
COLBURN**

ball team. It's absolutely untrue that the TV show “The Biggest Loser” was named after the Jayhawks' football team, but it's easy to see how folks could jump to that conclusion, particularly after this year's dismal 0-9 record. It's little wonder that the most popular football cheer at KU has long been “Wait until basketball season!” From football's first kickoff, most Jayhawks already have the

first basketball practice circled on their calendars.

Ah, basketball. Don't get us Jayhawks started, or we'll talk your ears off about Kansas men's basketball. Second-winningest program of all-time, trailing only Kentucky, and I'll be quick to be sure you know how we beat the Wildcats 150-95 in 1989, and that their current head coach got his start as an assistant at Kansas. Third on the list is North Carolina, and the vast majority of their wins came under a coach, Dean Smith, who played college

hoops at, yes, the University of Kansas.

And while he's the only Kansas hoops coach ever to have a losing record, Jayhawks never tire of crowing that our very first coach was none other than the inventor of the game himself, Dr. James Naismith.

The art of creating a winning team has changed dramatically since Naismith nailed up two peach baskets for the inaugural hoops game, but regardless of all the changes across the decades, one thing about the sport has

remained constant. It's always been about finding the right mix of players, the complementary pieces that make up a winning combination. Some players are ready to be starters the day they set foot on campus. Others are works in progress, recruited with the knowledge that it might be two or three seasons before they become a starter, perhaps even a star. Some of those pan out, others don't. It's never only about their individual talent, it's always

See **BENCH...**pg. 5

Letters from Readers

We can't let hate cloud our minds

Hate rages everywhere today. Hate for Democrats motivated a mob of thousands. Hate in our homes destroys all in them. Hate in our politics knocks down all of our strategies that make life work. For love to confront hate, love is destroyed because it is not violent. Hate destroys everything. And it is raging in our lives today. People give hate its power and let it rule all of life. Because we hate conflict, we do not share ourselves. We do not have peace in our community but a "hate-ruled culture" that appears, on the surface, to be peaceful. We can do business and maintain our status and have comfort in our homes

Nelson Mandela, imprisoned by a people who hated black people and who oppressed him to hold him in check, was asked, "How did you keep your hatred of the regime in check?" His response was more than a public relations gimmick. It came from the heart of his beliefs that moved him to lead one of the most powerful national changes in our lifetimes.

"Hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy. Leaders cannot afford to hate," Mandela replied.

His words speak to our community's state of mind. If Mandela could control his hate and open his heart to relate in a strategic way to make friends with those who opposed him, why not

us? If he could change the minds of South Africa's black people, we can do the same. We cannot afford to hate those who oppose us. It gets in the way of making peace. What we need is rest from our conflicts. How do we get there? We have conversations with our opponents, our enemies, with those publicly different from ourselves. We ask them to meet in a neutral place and have a conversation about the issues before our community. If they consent, there is a victory won because hating has been reduced. If they don't, we do not hate them, because hate gets in the way of strategy. And strategy without hate builds the quality of life for everyone. Remember Mandela's words: "Hating clouds the mind."

**Art Dale
Soudan**

Greenwood board should back worker safety

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) are federal agencies that establish and enforce necessary health and safety standards, some literally written in blood. These safety standards apply to all employers nationwide and make it possible for us to leave our job the same way we got there, intact, upright and under our own power.

OSHA and MSHA use

job-site training, inspections and investigations to improve working standards. Every employee has a legally protected right to report violations of these standards, thus improving workplace safety. MSHA/OSHA will investigate a confidential complaint and then work with the employer to remedy the violation.

Although the township has been involved in actual litigation, "a process to have a court of law settle an argument," spending thousands due to many planning and zoning issues, there has NEVER been litigation involving OSHA. There have been investigations conducted by OSHA that found the township in violation of many safety requirements, which the board has kept quiet.

Those OSHA findings improved workplace safety for the fire department employees. Ask yourself why a construction company manager who is the chair of the Greenwood board, continues to insist that the township needs to raise the levy to fight the frivolous lawsuits it's facing due to litigation that doesn't exist.

Why is the assistant fire chief, who happens to be a mining company boss, echoing the chair? They both know exactly how OSHA/MSHA operate, and compliance is part and parcel of their everyday jobs. Yet they wave the false flags of litigation. There are no OSHA lawsuits past or present—NONE—only pending OSHA investigations. It

is true that the township, as employer, is having to work with OSHA but the cost of doing so is primarily covered by the township insurance policy. Why is the township management not embracing improvements to employee safety? Is it that they can make more political hay waving the false flag of litigation rather than celebrating that they have found areas that improved employee safety?

They have already found that OSHA does not tolerate retaliation of whistle blowers but they seem to just roll the dice over and over again. You may have noticed how it's become common practice to belittle, harass or push out anyone that questions the actions of the board. Isn't the current board, in fact, the problem?

The residents of Greenwood are in need of major changes in the makeup of the board and actions like this illustrate another reason to vote out the incumbents.

Please vote NO on option B, more consolidation of Greenwood board power is the last thing we need.

**Rick Stoehr
Greenwood Twp.**

Setting the record straight in Greenwood

In last week's *Timberjay*, Mike Indihar trotted out a host of mis-truths and lies that are delusional and are deliberately

designed to have people believe his unsubstantiated hearsay. Let me address and add reference to some of the tales Indihar told.

Mike claims we lost our insurance due to frivolous lawsuits, but in at least one of the suits a Sixth District Court Judge found no such frivolity and actually ruled against the township. On 7/12/2016, Eric Hedtke, counsel for MATIT insurance, appeared before the Greenwood Board and addressed problems we had in our claims history. He said, "Greenwood claim history dated back over 10 years, contained 16-18 claims, far more than any other township. He provided the Township with a loss report which showed \$248,000 in losses with over \$100,000 being in Planning and Zoning issues. (source: *Timberjay* 7/13/2016, loss report Greenwood MATIT).

Secondly, Indihar's description of how the snowmobile club wanted the township to flip county land, then build a building or have the club build it, and lease the property to the club was also in error. Indihar even stated that this had been done in the city of Floodwood with their snowmobile club. (sources: *Timberjay* and *Tower News* 1/9/2018, audio tape Greenwood meeting 1/9/2018).

I consulted with the township attorney who recommended against the proposal, and St. Louis County Assessor, Dave Sipila, called me and advised that the plan violated Minn. Statute

282. I even contacted the Floodwood administrator, Jess Rich, who told me via email that there was no leasing arrangement at all. Their city simply sold a building and land to the club. (source: email Jess Rich 1/9/2018). Supervisor Ralston then brought forth a resolution to proceed as they had planned, but with the opinions and information I had received, I voted no. The resolution passed 4-1, but apparently somewhere along the line, it was found out it couldn't be legally done that way, and the club decided to buy the parcel directly from the county.

Indihar did make one true statement, that Greenwood Township taxes are the lowest per value on Lake Vermilion, but that is not due to his work or any of the candidates he supports. It is because of a group of people, including Sue Drobac, Barb Lofquist, and JoAnn Bassing, who exposed a grossly inflated reserve and bloated budget, that helped move our planning and zoning to the county. We need these women to bring openness and transparency to our town board which now acts in secret and withholds even the most basic information. We need them to advocate strongly to bring broadband to our township. Vote Drobac, Lofquist, and Bassing. And keep your right to vote - vote no on Option B.

**John Bassing
Greenwood Twp.**

BENCH...Continued from page 4

about the mix.

And with that, we jump from the basketball hardwoods to a different sort of hardwood, aspen, and the world of manufactured wood products.

I'll readily admit that I don't know what the mix of wood is that goes into structural oriented strand board, although aspen figures in there somewhere, but I do know that Cook has its own Naismith-like connection to the product – the mill in Cook, then owned by Potlatch, was one of the first three in the country to ever produce OSB, a product that's become as ubiquitous to the housing construction industry as synthetic composite leather is for making basketballs today.

Locals know far better than this Kansas transplant the history of the Cook facility from its days as a star player in the industry to one sadly relegated to the bench when Ainsworth shut down the facility in 2008. It had to be a devastating demotion to swallow.

But eight years later, it looked like Cook might get back into the game when the mill was purchased by Louisiana-Pacific, a name that sounds like one of those dark horse mid-major schools geared to make a deep run in March Madness.

It's a big team at LP Solutions, as the company is known. They currently have eight mills for siding, 12 for OSB, and five for other engineered wood products, scattered across North and South America. Every player has to contribute, and the right mix is critical to the company's success.

Like a four-star hoops recruit out of high school, the Cook facility had a lot of upsides as it joined the LP Solutions roster. At the time, company execs described for investors how the facility was well situated in an "aspen basket," how it had the advantage of existing rail service and a wood yard. It was big enough to accommodate not only a line that could produce up to 400 million square feet of the company's rapidly growing SmartSide trim and siding, they said, but also a second production line when demand warranted.

But the company picked up another "recruit" for its team at the same time, an OSB mill in Val-d'Or, Quebec. While not rivaling Cook in potential production capacity, Val-d'Or came with its own upsides – it could be converted to siding production in as little as half the time and for much less expense than it would take to fully develop the mill in Cook.

In the end, the

company went in a different direction by deciding to convert its Dawson Creek OSB mill, leaving Cook on the bench, waiting but hopeful. Cook was still in the mix, they said back then, once the Dawson Creek conversion was up and running.

But while Cook has been warming the bench, the game has been changing. LP Solutions CEO Brad Southern has determined that in order to put his best team on the floor, the company's product mix has had to change – less reliance on OSB, more emphasis on its rising star, SmartSide. To make the pivot expeditiously, LP Solutions acquired mills in Green Bay, Wis., and Granite City, Ill., last year, two new recruits that could contribute quickly. This year, in a recently announced decision, two active players will be getting new roles. A facility in Maine will be converted to produce SmartSide products, putting the company in a better position to compete

in the Northeast and East Coast areas. Following that conversion will be another in Sagola, Mich., the timing yet to be determined. Given the conditions of the game as it is today, these decisions look sound to savvy investors and one small town editor for the company's overall quest for growth and profitability.

Meanwhile, the Cook mill continues to languish on the bench. It certainly hasn't lost any of the upsides it brought to the table in 2016, but today it's in the "other players include" list of possible future developments for LP Solutions, along with other potential conversions and collaborations. Whether it's basketball or manufactured wood products, it's always about the mix.

With two conversions already in the works, it's unlikely we'll know anything more about the playing potential of the Cook mill for at least a couple of years. The mill still "has game," but will

it be right for the mix when another opportunity comes, or will the game have passed it by? Only

time will tell as Cook continues to wait uneasily on the bench, just aching for a chance to play.

the
TIMBERJAY



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ATTENTION Greenwood Voters,



Recently appointed interim clerk, Deb Spicer, sent a campaign letter to many of you and stated the clerk is an administrative position with tasks that are only ministerial in nature. She states, falsely, that by law the clerk does not vote on any township action. The clerk actually votes by law (Mn Statute 367.03) when he/she serves on the appointment committee that is tasked with selecting a replacement for a supervisor who has resigned from office as was the case in Greenwood Township not long ago.

Interim Clerk Spicer also includes a letter, from MAT counsel Steve Fenske, supporting Option B. Oddly, it is not the letter that appears on the township website but is a version that has been altered in a dirty tricks fashion. Spicer's actions manipulating a letter and advocating Option B clearly display the corrupt cronyism going on at the town hall where Spicer is but a pawn of the board. The irony of her claiming the apolitical nature of an appointed clerk, as she is, while waving the banner of Vote Yes Option B, is simply astonishing.

JoAnn Bassing

Paid by the candidate on her own behalf

Week of March 8

Monday
TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m. Canceled until further notice.

Embarrass Al-Anon Family Group- Hope Lutheran Church, 5088 Hwy. 21, 6 p.m.

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on March 8 at the Tower Civic Center. Agenda/call-in info on the city website.

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:00 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is March 16.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (business meeting) and third (drill) Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Annual Township Meetings, times vary.

Wednesday
Tower AA- Open Basics- 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. Questions, call 753-2332.

Thursday
AA Meeting- Lake Vermilion 12x12 (Open). 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, use the rear side door entrance.

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at vermilioncountry.org.

BUSINESS NEWS

Bragg wins Big Hitter Award
REGIONAL- Steve Bragg recently received the "Big Hitter Award" at the Calhoun Companies Awards breakfast celebration in Minneapolis on Feb. 16. This award was given to the five most productive of 22 Calhoun agents servicing a five-state area. Calhoun Companies has been selling businesses and commercial properties since 1908. Bragg operates the Arrowhead Office working with clients from Ashland, Wis., to Lake of the Woods, Minn.

GUNDERSEN TRUST
Board seeks to change investing options

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Tower's Gundersen Trust Board is moving forward with the steps needed to see if the board can change the trust's legal guidelines to insure it will provide income to the city in the years ahead. The trust board manages the fund, which totals over \$900,000.

At their meeting on Feb. 24, the board decided to hire an attorney with experience in trust law, as well as getting more detailed proposals from firms that would be able to offer investment options, if court approval is given. The board's financial committee will conduct interviews with two attorneys from Duluth law firms that specialize in trust law.

The trust is legally bound to invest only in specific types of government-insured investments, which currently are earning .05 to .01-percent interest, barely covering the legal costs of operating the trust.

The board is hoping to get

court approval to expand investment options, such as those under the Uniform Prudent Investor Act (UPIA), the similar Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), or a non-profit 501c3 status. Any of these options would allow the board to invest in relatively safe options that could provide annual returns of four or five percent above the rate of inflation.

When the trust was originally set up, board members noted, the investments allowed under the court order were paying out interest in that ballpark.

Right now, the trust fund is set up under MS118a, which is a state statute that governs the investment of city funds. There are some other investment options that would be available, such as investing in certain types of government bonds, which would return about .5-percent, higher than the treasuries the trust is currently invested in.

City attorney Mitch Brunfelt told the board he is not certain a court would approve a

switch. Brunfelt did clear up some lingering questions about the trust fund's obligation to make distributions. The trust has not made distributions in many years, and currently the city audit shows \$224,139 that is above the "adjusted principal base amount" (PBA) of the trust.

This amount, under the trust's legal obligations, is to be distributed proportionally, 75 percent to the city's general fund, 15 percent to recreational projects within the city's forest lands, and 10 percent for community education. The amount in the PBA needs to be invested under the MS118a guidelines.

Brunfelt said the board did not need to distribute these excess funds immediately, but should do so in a "careful, prudent manner." He suggested setting up a grant application process for recreational and educational grants.

In past years, the city has used Gundersen funds for its share of the costs for the bike trail to Hoodoo Point Camp-

ground and for improvements for the city's Wagoner Ski Trails. The city has also borrowed funds from the trust, which it repays with interest, saving the city interest costs while repaying the trust fund at rates significantly higher than it was earning through its normal investments.

The board discussed the possibility of retaining some of the trust fund to make available for such lending to the city in the future.

The board will meet again on March 25 and will need to decide about hiring an attorney, and then work with the attorney on the reasons to present to the court to change the trust's investment options. The board will also be getting more details on investment options from the State Board of Investment, area community foundations, and area banks that manage trust funds.

Northeast Range second quarter honor roll

A Honor Roll

- Grade 12: Anne Barich, Oskar Koivisto, Alexia Lightfeather, Gracie Sperling, Ethan Zaitz, James Zupancich
Grade 11: Audrey Anderson, Erin Backe, Markus Maki, Joscelyn LaSart, Rylan Poppenhagen, Hannah Reichensperger
Grade 10: Mariah DeJoode, Layne Kaufenberg

- Logan Meskill, Cassidy Turner, Jonathan Zaitz
Grade 9: Aubree Gerlovich, Hailey Lindquist, Mikko Maki, Ruby Milton
Grade 8: Adeline Klatt, Danica Sundblad
Grade 7: Hannah Aldrich, Avery Buschman, Nevaeh Evridge, Tuuli Koivisto, Mabry Prall

B Honor Roll

- Grade 12: Blade Carlson, Isaac Hendrickson, Luther Johnson, Ariel Kalinowski, Willa Koivisto, Bralyn Lislegard, Phoebe Morgan, Sadie Theel
Grade 11: Kenny Aase, Wyatt Gorsma, Amara Lampton, Thia Lossing, Ryan Milton, Jenna Smith, Calvin Winger

- Grade 10: Jacob Mackai, Jennie Nelson
Grade 9: Natalie Backe, Abby Koivisto, Zander Lislegard
Grade 8: Noah Backe, Joshua Burton, Alexis Childs, Kyle Kratz, Chelsey Nelmark, Greyson Reichensperger, Maizy Sundblad
Grade 7: Chloe Adkisson, Ryland Sandy

COLLEGE NEWS

Area students named to Mesabi Range Community and Technical College Dean's List

- High Honors, 3.75 - 4.0 GPA: Sterling Boyd, Embarrass, Christian Cersine, Babbitt, Dillon Gorsma, Soudan, Brianna Lehti, Soudan, Jackson Levens, Tower, Vanessa Little, Babbitt

Lara Poderzay, Soudan; Chevelle Schroeder, Embarrass; Magnus Trembath, Embarrass

Honors, 3.5 to 3.74 GPA: Emma Aluni, Embarrass; Brody Anderson, Soudan; Ryan Hujanen, Tower; Anthony Norcia, Tower

Sasha Strong on U of M Twin Cities Dean's List

MINNEAPOLIS - Sasha Strong, of Tower, has been named to the 2020 fall semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, the university announced today. Sasha is a sophomore at the Carlson School of Management. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

Mikayla Mellesmoen named to Minnesota State Mankato Dean's List

MANKATO- Mikayla Mellesmoen, of Embarrass, has been named to the Academic High Honor List (Dean's List) for the past fall semester at Minnesota State University, Mankato. To qualify for the High Honor List, a student must maintain a straight "A" 4.0 average, and be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours.



Township elections set for Tuesday, March 9

REGIONAL- The following area townships are holding their annual elections on Tuesday, March 9.

Breitung Township

Terry Anderson filed for the open three-year supervisor term, currently held by Chuck Tekautz.

Incumbent treasurer Jorgine Gornick filed for the two-year treasurer term.

Greenwood Township

Supervisor 3 seat: Barb Lofquist and incumbent Larry Tahija. Lofquist ran for supervisor in 2020 against Mike Ralston and lost

by a slim margin of 12 votes.

Supervisor 5 seat: Sue Drobac and incumbent Byron Beihoffer. Drobac was elected clerk in 2020, outpolling Debby Spicer, 186-102, and garnering the largest number of votes of any candidate on the ballot.

Clerk (remainder of term that expires in March 2022): JoAnn Bassing and Debby Spicer. Spicer is currently serving as the interim clerk, after the resignation of Sue Drobac.

Treasurer: Belinda Fazio. Fazio is currently serving as the interim treasurer, after the resignation of Pam Rodgers.

Township residents will also

have the chance to vote for a second time on Option B, which gives the town board the authority to appoint a clerk and treasurer. In 2020, voters rejected Option B by a margin of 194 to 97.

Vermilion Lake Township

Supervisor (three-year term): Frank Zobitz, currently serving as an appointed supervisor (filling seat of Bruce Sweiringa).

Supervisor (one-year term): Sarah Schmidt, incumbent but opted to file for one-year seat

Treasurer: Steve Lotz, incumbent.



Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

Table with 4 rows: Northwoods Transfer Station, County 77 Canister Site, Embarrass Canister Site, Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Includes addresses and hours.

Table with 4 rows: Cook Transfer Station, Soudan Canister Site, Aurora Transfer Station, Regional Landfill. Includes addresses and hours.

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department 1-800-450-9278 Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle



PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN (Never known to fail)

Oh, most beautiful Flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, Splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me where you are, my Mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3 times). Holy Mary, I place this prayer in your hands (3 times). Say this prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish it and it will be granted to you.

Grateful thanks, GMS

BREITUNG RESIDENTS

CHARLES TEKAUTZ Is Seeking Re-election for SUPERVISOR by

Write-in Vote in the March 9 election



Paid by the candidate on his own behalf

OUR COMMUNITY



The 15th running of the Minnesota Snow Run, to benefit the Pink Ribbon Riders, was held last Saturday at Grand Ely Lodge. The day was full of fun for both men and women as they raised money to help breast cancer patients. With the coronavirus pandemic in mind, the event this year was a one-day celebration with a morning gathering, snowmobile decorating contest, evening banquet and more. photo by K. Vandervort

Washington Elementary students compete in Reading Olympics



Washington School first-grader Courtney Forsberg won a top reader award for the "I Love to Read" activity last month. submitted photo

ELY - Washington Elementary School here wrapped up February's Reading Olympics last week for "I Love to Read" month.

Individual awards for the top reader from each class include, Kindergarten -Emily Dunn and Cora Lovich; First grade - Courtney Forsberg and Olivia

Johnson; Second grade - Sawyer Anderson and Elya Perkins; Third grade -Rebecca Sponholz, Lucy Luthens, and Hayden Weidemann; Fourth grade - Maddie Johnson, Siiri Nelson, Amelia Strom, and Liam Spate-Kumava; and Fifth grade - Wyatt Devine and Lucy Dunn. Ms. Preblich's fourth grade class won overall.

Gardner grant aids library stained glass project

ELY - The Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust recently awarded \$619 in grant funding to Claire Taylor and other local stained glass artists for a special cutting tool to complete new windows for the Ely Public Library.

This grant will purchase a three-ring saw used to cut the glass to be used for six windows to be completed by this summer, and for six additional stained glass windows to be completed by the end of the year.

"This three-ring saw is a crucial piece of equipment that allows

glass to be cut from three different directions and allows the design of the window to include many of the curved line designs the Ely community has enjoyed in the finished library windows so far," said Keiko Williams, trust executive director.

"The purpose of the Trust's Community Giving Grant is to recognize and reward an individual, group or project that provides a measurable impact for the community of Ely," she said. "The board discussed this project and felt that there was a lot of interest in and demonstrate high motivation in the fine arts. The youth grants of up to \$750 can be used for workshops, classes, lessons or mentorships."

with great collaboration between artists, businesses and organizations."

"There are current and new stained artists who will be involved in creating and learning in this project, as well as, the benefit for the community as we all enjoy the final pieces that will be installed at our Ely Public Library," Williams said.

The grant works in conjunction with a grant the library received through Legacy funding that will pay for most of the glass, heating for the workspace, and miscellaneous expenses.

Arts funding offered by Gardner Humanities Trust

ELY - Applications are due next month for the first grant cycle of the year for the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust arts funding program.

Grant applications are due by noon on Friday, March 19.

Artists and groups can apply for grants in the following five categories:

► Individual Artist Grants encourage developing and established artists with funding of up to \$1,000 to take advantage of an impending, concrete opportunity.

► Organization Project Grants support activities in the fine arts and for the Ely Public Library. Grant support is intended to make it possible for organizations to present or produce a fine arts activity.

► Youth Grants are awarded to Ely school students in grades 6-12 who have

an interest in and demonstrate high motivation in the fine arts. The youth grants of up to \$750 can be used for workshops, classes, lessons or mentorships.

► Scholarships are available for graduates of Ely Memorial High School who are in their third or fourth year of college studies or in graduate school. Trust scholarships are awarded to students majoring in one of the disciplines of fine arts or library science.

► Operational Funding Grants fund high-quality, established Ely area organizations that produce, or present fine arts activities or provide services to artists.

Grant forms and eligibility requirements are available at www.gardnertrust.org.

Completed applications can be mailed to the Trust office at P.O. Box 720, Ely, MN 55731 or dropped off at the Ely City Hall, Clerk's Office, at 209 E. Chapman St.

Local students honored at Bethel

ST. PAUL - Ely area students, Abigail Schwamm and Rebecca Zwolinski, were named to the Bethel University Dean's List for academic excellence for the fall 2020 semester.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



moon marks with shadows a fresh month bringing new light moving with the winds

Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays - 8 a.m. to noon Closed on Sundays Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday Noon-6 pm Tuesday Noon-6 pm Wednesday Noon-6 pm Thursday Noon-6 pm Friday Noon-5 pm Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous OPEN AA - 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely. ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA - Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 231 E. Camp St., Ely. BABBITT AA - 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend. BABBITT AL-ANON Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian. CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely. ELY FOOD SHELF - Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St. ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, 218-827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.

Ely Area Senior Citizens group conducts shoe drive fundraiser

ELY - Ely Area Senior Citizens Inc. is conducting a shoe drive fundraiser this month to raise funds for social activities for area senior citizens and the entire community.

Ely Area Senior Citizens will earn funds based on the total weight of the pairs of gently worn, used and new shoes collected, as Funds2Orgs will issue a check for the collected shoes.

Those dollars will benefit our community by helping keep the Ely Senior Center open and

available for everyone to enjoy. Anyone can help by donating gently worn, used and new shoes at any Zup's grocery store, Ely Northland Market, Ely Family Dental (in the Frandsen Building), or the Ely Senior Center.

All donated shoes will then be redistributed throughout the Funds2Orgs network of micro-enterprise (small business) partners. Funds2Orgs works with micro-entrepreneurs in helping them create, maintain and grow small businesses in developing

countries where economic opportunity and jobs are limited.

Proceeds from the sales of the shoes collected in shoe drive fundraisers are used to feed, clothe and house their families. One budding entrepreneur in Haiti even earned enough to send her son to law school.

"We are excited about our shoe drive," said Ely Area Senior Citizens organization president Theresa Jamnick. "We know that most people have extra shoes in their closets they

would like to donate to us. By doing so, we raise money for the Ely Senior Center, and we have the chance to help families in developing nations who need economic opportunities. It's a win-win for everyone."

By donating gently worn, used and new shoes to the Ely Area Senior Citizens the shoes will be given a second chance

and make a difference in people's lives around the world.

The purpose of the Ely Area Senior Citizens Inc. is to promote and advance the interests and welfare of all senior citizens in the Ely area and to contribute to the recreational, social, and civic welfare of the community.

WINTER WATER WOES

All is well with Winton's water

WINTON - Good news arrived in Winton last Saturday morning. "Winton water is safe to drink from the tap," said Mayor Kathy Brandau.

"All water samples collected for testing total coliform bacteria were negative," she told residents in a Facebook post. "The city will no longer need to distribute water at the Winton Community Center."

Sustained below-zero temperatures last month and low snow cover contributed to frozen water lines and water main breaks. It was so cold that

even the Winton water tower froze up. The entire city of Winton was without water for an extended period of time due to recurring water main breaks. The village's main street was dug up multiple times by Low Impact Excavators.

"I would like to thank our residents for their understanding and patience over the past two weeks," Brandau said. "We have an outstanding, passionate community, especially helping those in need. I am proud to be a resident of Winton and your mayor."



SAINT LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

<p>Northwoods Transfer Station 9384 Hwy 21 N. Ely/Babbitt Winter Hours Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am-3pm Tue: 9:30am-3pm Wed: 11am-5pm</p>	<p>Aurora Transfer Station 5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora Hours Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am-4pm Tue, Wed: 10am-4pm Sat: 8am-noon</p>
<p>Embarrass Canister Site 7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass Hours Sat: 12:30-4:30pm Thu: 10am-5pm</p>	<p>Soudan Canister Site 5160 Hwy 169, Soudan Hours Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun: 8am-5pm</p>
<p>Household Hazardous Waste Facility 5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Tues and Sat: 8am-1pm</p>	<p>Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm Sat: 8am-3:30pm</p>

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department
1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

COOK HOSPITAL

Vaccination clinic draws people from all over

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- A mix of care, confidence, and relief filled the air late Friday morning at Cook Community Center, as staff members of Cook Hospital expertly and empathetically walked people through the process of getting their first coronavirus vaccine dose.

It was midway through the final day of a three-day, 300-dose community vaccination clinic administered by the hospital, and while outside of the clinic one might expect Chief Operating Officer Julie Lesemann to be focused on those duties, she was in full registered nurse mode as she prepared to inject Daniel Polman, of Aurora, with the vaccine.

"Hopefully it's worth it," Polman said. "I've been searching here and there and this one popped up. Now, of course, they're all showing up, the ones I previously saw. But we had this, so we just got it over with. It was a nice drive today anyway."

Polman moved on to the area where vaccine recipients were asked to wait to see if they had any adverse reactions to

the injections. As he had for the first two days, volunteer-retired physician-Cook Mayor Harold Johnston sat nearby, ready to step in if a medical need arose.

"We have people who have actually cried when they got here, they're so excited to get the vaccine," Lesemann said. "They're from all over the area. This is open to everybody."

Polman wasn't anywhere close to being in the running if there had been a prize for "patient coming the farthest distance to be vaccinated." Director of Nursing Nichole Chiabotti described where some of the patients were coming from.

"The majority are from this region, but it's kind of all over the map," she said. "We've had a couple here from Wisconsin, we've had several couples from Duluth, some couples from the cities, and we had a guy from Bemidji."

They also had someone from McKinley, Kathy Plesha. Like Polman, she had registered elsewhere for an opportunity to get vaccinated.

"I got a call to go to either Rochester or Minneapolis or the DECC in Duluth, and I'm like, 'I'm

not running all over,'" Plesha said. "But I've been trying. It's not the first time."

Then she got the call from Cook.

"I feel lucky," she said. "My husband just finished his second one yesterday."

"People are so excited about this," said Plesha's nurse, Annie Dougherty. "It's been amazing. It's a great thing for the community. Doing something positive feels great."

Chiabotti echoed those sentiments.

"Everybody's been so happy to be here," she said. "It's been a lot of work, but everyone is really happy to be a part of it. It's nice to see everybody so thankful to get the vaccine and it's just fun, it's a different kind of nursing that we don't usually get to do in a hospital or ER setting."

Chiabotti said that they're ready to do another community vaccination clinic, but as of Friday she didn't know when that would be. It all depends on when the state tells them they're getting another allocation of the vaccine, she said.



Above: Kathy Plesha, of McKinley, receives her first dose of coronavirus vaccine from nurse Annie Dougherty on Friday at the Cook Community Center.

Right: Daniel Polman, of Aurora, remains still as nurse Julie Lesemann injects his first dose of coronavirus vaccine on Friday.

Both Plesha and Polman registered at multiple sites to increase their chances of getting vaccinated. photos by D. Colburn



COOK CITY COUNCIL

City gives Paul Bunyan green light to proceed with new broadband project

COOK- When Bemidji-based Paul Bunyan Communications received word in February that they were getting a \$311,254 state Border-to-Border Broadband Development grant to help fund new broadband service in Cook, the award came with a catch. The company had to remove several locations from its original proposal that were in areas covered by federal funding.

At the time of the award, IT and Development Manager Steve Howard said the project couldn't move forward until Cook officials reviewed the deletions and reaffirmed the city's \$8,000 commitment to the scaled-back proposal.

According to comments from City Administrator Theresa Martinson at last Thursday's regular city council meeting, the city is

ready to go full steam ahead with the project.

"The original intent of the council was to support the project, and we've communicated that with Paul Bunyan," Martinson said. "We are anticipating before the next council meeting to have a meeting with them and have more information to share. It's a wonderful opportunity."

John Jamnick of JPJ Engineering was present to ask the council to pass a resolution in support of a facility plan for the wastewater treatment facility to be included in a CDBG grant proposal. Submitting the plan by March 5 would allow the project to compete for an award in the fall funding cycle, he said.

Jamnick also proposed that the council approve closing the

contract on the bridge crossing the Little Fork River on North Front Street.

"We got this letter that the county wants to close the project out with the state funding and they recommended the City of Cook accept the project as complete," Jamnick said.

At issue have been problems that have come up with the bridge's deck and who should pay for maintenance and repairs. Jamnick said the county has indicated it would work with the city to do initial cleaning and sealing this summer and every five years thereafter. He believed the arrangement to be fair and recommended the council approve closing the contract, which they did.

PARK PROJECT

CN Railway makes large park donation

COOK- Friends of the Parks President Tammy Palmer made it official this week with the formal announcement of a \$20,000 grant from Canadian National Railway for development of Cook's new Veterans Riverfront Park, located off North River Street along the banks of the Little Fork River.

The grant came from the CN Stronger Communities Fund, dedicated to help make communities better places to live and work.

In expressing her gratitude to CN Railway, Palmer also acknowledged a number of local

CN employees who have been volunteering their time and talents for the project.

"This, too, is another way CN is giving back to communities," Palmer's announcement said. "Employees take great pride in their community and its development."

The park, which will honor all veterans, is tentatively scheduled for completion early this summer. Donations are welcome and may be sent to Friends of the Parks, PO Box 1141, Cook, MN 55723.

NORTHWOODS FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

Harmonica class is coming up

COOK- Learn to play harmonica online with musician Tom Kesanen in free Zoom classes on Tuesday, March 16 and Tuesday, March 23 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Participants must have a C Major, 10-hole harmonica. Northwoods Friends of the Arts is

sponsoring the class and will supply all other class materials you will need. Donations to NWFA are welcomed.

Students must register by calling Shawna at 218-780-6510.

This is NWFA's second series of harmonica classes.

NWFA Gallery is open on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 210 S River Street (in the Dream Weaver Salon complex). For further information see the NWFA website at nwfamn.org.

ACADEMIC HONORS

Mesabi Range names area honors students

COOK- Mesabi Range Community and Technical College has named four area students to academic honors lists for the fall 2020 semester.

Designated for high honors with a grade point average from 3.75

to 4.0 are James Towner and Kayla Towner, both of Gheen, and Brandie Walker, of Cook.

Mandie Williams, of Cook, was named to the honors list for students with a GPA from 3.5 to 3.74.

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Double identification bands can be seen on this bald eagle taking flight from a perch above some road kill along Highway 115 east of Cook on Sunday. photo by D. Colburn

Advertisement for Area Solid Waste Facility site hours, listing various locations like Ash River Trail, Orr, Cook Transfer Station, Kabetogama Lake, Portage, Sturgeon, County 77, Regional Landfill, and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities with their respective hours.



CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

New COVID vaccine already being distributed in state

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Gov. Tim Walz unveiled a more descriptive staged timeline for coronavirus vaccinations last week that would have vaccines available to anyone who wants one by summer, but a “game changing” announcement from the Food and Drug Administration on Saturday could accelerate that timeline.

The FDA issued an “emergency use authorization” for a third coronavirus vaccine, developed by Johnson & Johnson. Unlike its Pfizer and Moderna predecessors, the J&J vaccine requires only one dose, not two. An initial shipment to Minnesota of 45,200 doses is already being administered throughout the state, according to state Infectious Disease Director Kris Ehresmann.

“More doses of a safe and effective vaccine in the state means that more people can get protected more quickly,” Ehresmann said during a Tuesday press call. “We view



Gene Hicks, of Ely, received his second COVID-19 vaccine dose at a recent clinic at Vermilion Community College. photo by K. Vandervort

Johnson & Johnson’s vaccine as a game changer that will help us quickly provide immunity to even more Minnesotans. This vaccine is safe and virtually 100 percent effective at preventing hospitalization and death among people 18 and older and requires only one dose. It can be stored at normal refrigerator temperatures, making it much more practical for use in the field.”

The news got even better on Tuesday when President Joe Biden announced that pharmaceutical giant Merck will help make the J&J vaccine.

“Two of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world who are usually competitors are working together on the vaccine,” Biden said. “This is the type of collaboration between companies we saw in

World War II.”

Ehresmann said that the health department is awaiting word from the federal government about when Minnesota will receive its next J&J vaccine shipment, but expressed confidence that a regular distribution amount will be established within a week or two.

“We are optimistic about the longer term outlook for

this vaccine’s availability,” Ehresmann said. “We will be using the vaccine for multiple populations in Minnesota. In fact, all the populations who are currently eligible for vaccine will have access to this vaccine in the next few days.”

While three vaccine options are now available to Minnesotans, Ehresmann said people should refrain from choosing one over another.

“We encourage people to take the vaccine that they’re offered,” she said. “All of these vaccines are effective and have made it through the FDA review and they have all been recommended. Our goal is to get as many people protected with COVID-19 vaccination across our community so we can get to that 80-percent coverage rate that we’ve been working towards.”

Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm addressed the timeline Walz released for progressively including more groups of people

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POLICE...Continued from page 1

the Breitung board voted unanimously to explore its options with the sheriff’s office, rather than seek to hire a new chief on an interim basis. Under state law, the department can’t operate without a chief, which means the department may well be effectively suspended as of March 6. Nylund’s last day as chief is March 5.

Under state law, county sheriffs are obligated to keep the peace in all portions of their county so sheriff’s deputies will respond to emergency calls in Tower and Soudan, at least until city and township officials decide how they wish to proceed. That could include relying solely on the county sheriff, as is the case in the vast majority of townships in the county, as well as in some small cities.

Providing local law enforcement comes with a large price tag. In the case of the city of Tower, 30 percent of the \$394,000 in taxes the city will levy this year on its property owners will go to pay for its police contract with Breitung Township, which currently charges the city approximately \$115,000 a year for the service. In

2021, however, the city is contractually obligated to purchase a new police car, which is set to add another \$40,000 or more to the city’s expenditures this year. That would push the city’s law enforcement costs this year to just over 40 percent of its local levy.

Police coverage isn’t cheap for Breitung property owners either, who pay approximately \$133,000 of the \$267,000 total department budget through their local levy. Tower’s contract makes up much of the difference, with the final funding gap filled by about \$18,000 in annual state police aid.

Such costs and the high impact to taxpayers have prompted some small cities to do away with police coverage, saving taxpayers money and allowing cities to direct resources to other priorities.

In Orr, population 280, living without a local police department has been the reality for as long as most people can remember, and with good reason. “We couldn’t do it,” said Orr Clerk-Treasurer Sherri Carter. “You’d have to get rid of other things or you’d be taxing people out of town.”

The high cost of local police prompted Cook to disband their local department about 15 years ago and, according to city officials, there’s been little to no public clamoring to go back to the days of a local police force.

“I have heard no discussion from the citizens about it,” said long-time Cook City Council member Elizabeth Storm.

Cook Mayor Harold Johnston, in a statement on the issue, noted that city hall staff have “worked diligently to take on the tasks of blight/nuisance and dog issues previously performed by the police department.” Johnston noted that even when Cook maintained its own department, its local police worked closely with the sheriff’s office when it came to more serious crimes. “We continue to do so now in any capacity required. We have always been grateful for being able to collaborate with them.”

The data suggests that such an approach is working in Cook. “There’s not a significant call volume in the city of Cook,” said St. Louis County Sheriff Ross Litman.

Keeping the peace

Both city and town-

ship officials said they recognized the value of local law enforcement, even as they acknowledged some of the hurdles and risks associated with maintaining a local cop shop.

“I think people feel safer with seeing patrols,” said Breitung board chair Tim Tomsich at a meeting last week. Board member Greg Dostert said he worried that the area would become targeted for crime if it lost its local police protection. But both supervisors opted to explore a wide range of options with St. Louis County before deciding whether they’d seek to rebuild the department. It’s also likely to be a discussion item at the township’s annual meeting, set for March 9, which may well influence the town board’s decision.

The township had explored hiring Ely Police Sergeant George Burger as a part-time interim chief but opted against that on Wednesday. According to Tomsich, the township would need a chief law enforcement officer on board if it wanted to keep the department intact as officials sort out their options. The decision not to hire an interim chief means the department

won’t be active once Nylund’s resignation takes effect.

Both Tower and Breitung have already been increasingly relying on the county sheriff’s office to respond to emergencies. That’s been true for some time, as the department has not maintained 24-hour coverage. At times when no Breitung officers are on duty or on call, 911 calls go to the sheriff’s office for response. “Breitung has always done a good job of giving us their schedule,” said Litman. “When they’re not on duty or on call, we handle it.” The Breitung board, with approval from the city of Tower, had already eliminated on-call hours for February through April to cut costs, all but guaranteeing that the sheriff’s office would be handling more of the calls in the two communities.

Residents may also play a role in controlling crime in their neighborhoods. Residents in both Cook and Orr rely on themselves, to some extent, to help keep the peace and head off potential crime. When residents in Orr faced a rash of burglaries in 2019, city officials helped organize a neigh-

borhood watch. The eventual apprehension of the main suspected perpetrator of the crime spree and the presence of neighborhood watch signs on streets throughout the city have markedly reduced violations in the community, according to Carter.

Self-reliance works in Cook as well, according to Johnston. “Fortunately, we live in a close-knit community where people have respect for each other and truly look out for their neighbor,” he said.

Litman said he understands that decisions about police coverage are up to local officials and his office adjusts as law enforcement agencies disappear in smaller communities. Several St. Louis County townships used to maintain local police departments, but Breitung and Duluth townships are the only two in the county still remaining. If those disappear, the statutory duties of the sheriff’s office remain the same. Every year, said Litman, he assesses the needs of his office and makes the case to the county board for the staffing he believes he’ll need to carry out the mission and keep the peace.

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CLERK

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021

I SUPPORT:

- ★ Reasonable access to public data.
- ★ Continuing to work on Broadband access in Greenwood Township
- ★ Open and transparent government
- ★ Voting NO on Option B

Paid for by the candidate on her own behalf.

COVID...Continued from page 9

for vaccine eligibility.

“Generally, the direction of the timeline that the governor laid out is a good planning tool,” Malcolm said. “But we have every hope that we may be able to accelerate those timelines by some degree, depending on how quickly the vaccine supply ramps up. We still believe we’re on track to finish the current priority populations to get to that 70-percent coverage rate of the 65 and over population, certainly by the end of March.”

The next group of people eligible to receive the vaccine after meeting that target will be people with specific high-risk health conditions, including sickle cell disease, Down syndrome, those in active cancer treatment, organ transplant



recipients who are immunocompromised, and oxygen-dependent individuals who have chronic lung and heart conditions. Also included in this eligibility expansion will be essential workers in food processing plants.

Malcolm emphasized that this specific group of conditions does not include all high-risk factors, such as obesity, that will be eligible in the following round. She also said that doctors have been given information

about a number of rare health conditions of low incidence that they can consider giving special authorization to.

Trending up

The most recent zip code level cumulative case numbers were not provided with the MDH Weekly Update information last Thursday, but numbers reported on the St. Louis County COVID Dashboard show a reversal in the downward trend of key COVID indicators.

The seven-day average number of cases used to determine community spread jumped from 7.3 on Feb. 19 to 10.5 on Feb. 24, driven primarily by case increases in the southern part of the county. The seven-day average in northern St. Louis County also rose slightly, but then

dropped to 3.5 on Feb. 24, the lowest of any region in the county.

However, the northern part of the county was the only region that showed a week-to-week increase in the bi-weekly cases rate used by schools to determine their learning models, going from 4.3 to 9.9.

Any increases are viewed with caution by county and state health officials, as overall vaccination levels remain low and more highly contagious coronavirus variants are known to be circulating in the state. The Centers for Disease Control issued a warning in February that the variant first identified in the United Kingdom was on track to be the predominant strain in the U.S by the end of March, raising the specter of yet another large spike in cases, hos-

pitalizations, and deaths. Federal officials have been expressing concern for days that the decline in case numbers has leveled off across the country and remains steady at around 70,000 new cases and 2,000 deaths per day, which could represent either that the UK variant is taking hold or that COVID safety restriction have been lifted or ignored too soon, or both.

Appointments available

Those 65 and over now have additional options for vaccination appointments at several area community health clinics.

As part of the Essentia Health system, Essentia Ely Clinic will provide vaccinations to any Minnesota resident age 65 and older who lives anywhere in the

Essentia Health service area. A person does not have to be an Essentia patient to be vaccinated.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling 833-494-0836, or through a MyChart account at EssentiaHealth.org. There is also a MyChart app for smart devices.

Scenic Rivers Health Services is providing vaccinations for those 65 and over at their Tower and Cook clinics, as well as their other four clinics. A person does not have to be a Scenic Rivers patient to be vaccinated.

Friday appointments at the Tower clinic can be scheduled by calling 218-753-2405. Various days are available for appointments at the Cook clinic by calling 218-361-3297.

ELY...Continued from page 1

Specific procedures the business will utilize to ensure no similar events occur.

Submission of an updated owner and employee list, and licensee shall, within five days of a change of status, notify city officials as to the current employees and owners. No employee or owner shall be of questionable moral character.

Submittal to ongoing and random administrative inspections.

No similar occurrences of past illegal activities are allowed on the premises.

Klun told council members that her office and Ely Police Department

Chief Chad Houde are reviewing the owners’ agreement to the conditions of the business license and said the Drop and Shop “could be open again by the end of this week or very soon.”

Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski indicated that an unrelated issue with the building, a frozen and broken water pipe and flooded basement two weeks ago, could delay the building’s health inspection approval and reopening date.

Kristen Krings, president of the Drop and Shop store, addressed the council Tuesday night and assured council members that steps were taken “to

rebuild the store’s reputation” and she asked “for a second chance.”

Amanda Stevens was one of several co-owners of the retail thrift store, and felony charges filed against her for the possession and sale of methamphetamines at the business prompted the revocation of its license.

“Stevens has been terminated from the business,” Krings said. “We repurchased her shares (of ownership stock), and at Chief Houde’s request, we also served her a ‘no trespassing’ order and she is no longer allowed on the premises.”

Krings said the door locks on the business have

been changed. As part of the business license compliance agreement, Krings indicated that surveillance cameras and a recording system were installed in the store. A board of directors for the businesses has been established. An employee handbook is in development.

“We will be taking moral character into more consideration in the hiring process going forward to prevent an incident like this from happening again,” Krings said.

Mayor Chuck Novak indicated that he and the council were “more than willing” to see the Drop and Shop reopened. He reprimanded the owners of the businesses for waiting until late Tuesday, the day of the council meeting, to submit their agreement and to expect immediate action.

“We need to get this (information) in early, not at the last minute, so we have enough time to study it,” Novak said. “For anything we receive late Tuesday, it is very difficult for us to take a vote on without being able to vet the information. Councils make mistakes when they weigh in on last-minute requests.”

Novak added, “The community wants the Drop and Shop to reopen. I don’t think any of us want to see this happen again, nor do we want to see Drop and Shop permanently closed. It is a benefit to the city to have that business open.”

However, not all community members agree. Novak referred to a voice mail he received and shared

with council members.

“This is a concern for some of our folks,” he said.

Chief Houde said he was “comfortable with the agreement” as negotiated with the owners.

Klun said the resolution calls for city staff to work through the agreement and to make sure the conditions are met. She said the council’s adoption of the resolution is their last step to reopen the business.

“The next step is for the Police Chief to sit down with the owners and to finalize a couple of items which should happen quite quickly,” she said.

Utility rate hike

Council members will hold a public hearing at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16 concerning a recommendation from the Ely Utility Commission’s Budget and Rates Committee for a substantial rate hike to city residents.

The recommendation calls for a seven-percent increase in electric rates and to hold steady on water and sewer rates for the coming year.

Langowski said the rate hike for Ely customers mirrors the rate hike for electricity recently initiated by Minnesota Power.

Council member Al Forsman was quick to play politics and attributed the Ely electric rate hike to the new administration of Democratic President Joe Biden. He didn’t go as far as the Governor of Texas in blaming frozen wind generators nor a proposed “Green New Deal,” but the sentiment appeared eerily similar.

“On a personal note, I feel strongly that we are going to see energy rates

increase dramatically over the next few years in large part to the focus of our current administration. We can count on seeing this and don’t be surprised if it continues to happen. Your votes count,” Forsman said.

Other business

In other business, the council:

Listened to a presentation on the Northeast Minnesota Mine Tour Project and considered approving a donation, and writing a letter of support.

Approved a recommendation from the Heritage Preservation Commission to submit grant applications to the Donald G. Gardner Trust and Arrowhead Arts Council for the Carl Gawboy Mural Recreation Project.

Accepted a bid by Pathfinder Trail Building for the \$352,930 for bike trail construction at Hidden Valley Recreation Area.

Accepted a recommendation from the Budget Committee to purchase an upgraded remote HVAC control system for the SATO building for \$9,703.

Agreed to spend \$2,676 from the drug and alcohol forfeiture fund for an identification badge maker for city employees.

Approved the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations as recommended by the Cemetery Committee.

Accepted department head performance review templates and will agree to conduct the reviews at the March 30 study session.



65 and Older?

Moderna Vaccine Now Available at All Scenic Rivers Medical Clinics!

Scenic Rivers Health Services is now scheduling appointments for patients 65 and over to receive Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations at all their clinics, including Tower and Cook.

Supplies are limited and call volumes are high, so we appreciate your patience when calling in. You do not need to be a patient at Scenic Rivers to receive the vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccination Scheduling:

Friday appointments available in Tower:
Call 218-753-2405

Various days available for appointments in Cook:
Call 218-361-3297

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their occupants.

Now that the district has its response to the coronavirus pandemic well in hand, Superintendent Reggie Engebritson told school board members at a Feb. 9 working session that it's time once again to get serious about holding the contractors accountable.

"Right before COVID, the plan was to try to send out letters to the contractors, letting them know we were putting them on notice," Engebritson said, "and then COVID hit and that didn't happen."

Engebritson said that she had received a referral to an attorney in the Twin Cities who specializes in construction-related cases.

"We know it's going to cost a little bit of money because it's an attorney out of the Cities," Engebritson said, "but we feel like we really need somebody specialized to help us look into this."

Engebritson said that preliminary contact had been made with the attorney, who said he needed to review his client list against the list of various contractors involved in the school construction for any possible conflicts of interest before agreeing to come on board.

Initial problems

Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI), Kraus-Anderson, and Architectural Resources Inc. were the primary designers and contractors involved in



Cracked and settling concrete is shown at North Woods School.

Timberjay file photo

efficiency LED lighting were among the changes JCI approved that likely reduced the operating efficiency of the buildings from what was planned.

JCI resisted efforts by the *Timberjay* to obtain a copy of its subcontract with ARI, resulting in a long legal battle that resulted in a change in state law clearly establishing that subcontracts are indeed public documents available for inspection.

Issues appear

One of the first problems that became evident was the poor and deteriorating conditions of the athletic fields at both South Ridge and North Woods, a problem JCI admitted it had some responsibility for in 2013.

Uneven turf with poor drainage and sinking football sidelines remain more than seven years later, as described by multiple board members and school officials at the Feb. 9 meeting.

Five years later, in 2018, a laundry list of structural issues at both schools was documented in a report to the board by then building and grounds supervisor Tony Buccanero.

Floors in the music room and elementary bathroom at South Ridge

were sinking, and doorways were sinking and pulling away from walls, Buccanero said. At North Woods, the floors in the field house were "sinking away from the building, possibly resting on plumbing," and a parking lot drainpipe was cracked, creating a safety issue.

"We already paid 70-some million dollars, and we shouldn't have this happening," Buccanero declared.

But as an inspection conducted in May 2019 by Forensic Experts, LLC revealed, there was far more to be added to the list of flaws possibly due to substandard construction. The report for North Woods that was provided to the board at the Feb. 9 meeting included the following:

►The front entry concrete sidewalk had settled and cracked.

►A library window head leaks during rainstorms.

►Built-in cabinets below the windows had shifted and detached from the wall.

►The boy's bathroom toilets are delivering dangerously hot water for the first two hours every day.

►Room 116 concrete slab on grade displays differential settlement at the construction joint.

►The mechanical room exterior fascia screws that attach the exterior metal panels to

the structure back out annually resulting in water ingress during rain.

►The floor drain J pipe in the kitchen appears to be cracked and allows sewer gas to enter into the kitchen.

►The concession building concrete slab on grade had settled over five inches.

►The football field surface is inadequately sloped and ineffective. It appears to be built on an unstable and saturated clay. There are numerous sunken spots that continue to settle even though the holes are filled in seasonally. There is standing water along both sides of the field.

►The softball field's grass outfield displays the same condition as the adjacent football field.

►The baseball field's grass outfield appears to have inadequate slope to drain snow melt and rain fall.

►All exterior exit door concrete stoops continue to heave in the winter, binding the bottom of the doors and resulting in a partial opening of the doors.

Yet after reviewing the reports for North Woods and South Ridge in this most recent meeting, Engebritson was quick to point out additional issues with wastewater and the school water towers. While district officials and board members alike have identified a large

number of deficiencies over the years, it was clear from the discussion and materials presented that a comprehensive, all-inclusive descriptive list of the problems as they are today doesn't exist.

Business manager Kim Johnson also pointed out at the meeting that turnover at the district has also been a hurdle in addressing these concerns. The district has had three different facilities managers over the past four years, she said.

Seeking resolution

At the root of these issues is who will foot the bill for repairing the problems at both schools. Engebritson said that the contractors and subcontractors should bear a large share of the responsibility, and she hopes that hiring an attorney who is a specialist in building construction issues will give the district a leg up in resolving these issues.

"We talked to Kraus Anderson and there's the fingerprinting thing, and then some of the contractors are no longer in business, so again, it's gotten complicated," Engebritson said. "They were agreeable in the beginning, but nobody's taking responsibility." Engebritson will report on the status of retaining an attorney at an upcoming board meeting.

FIRE...Continued from page 1

the gasoline dispensing pump were engulfed in flames. The flames shot around and above Larry, who quickly realized that his pants and jacket were on fire. Still wearing his helmet and gloves, he was luckily protected from the flames. He patted the fire out with his gloves as his friends were hollering at him to get away from the flames.

Another snowmobiler in his party quickly ran to hit the emergency gas shutoff, and another ran inside to have the cashier call 911.

The dispenser that was on fire is separate from the pump itself, which is in the underground tank. Once the emergency shut off is hit, the pump is shut off and no more gas flows into the dispenser. Also, shear valves at the bottom of the pump help cut off the flow of gas in emergency situations. The gas station also cut off electricity to all of its pumps.

Cash, lottery tickets, tobacco products stolen at Fuel and Food

TOWER- With clean-up from last week's fire at the fuel pump still underway, Vermilion Fuel & Food staff are now working to clean up a burglary that was discovered at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, March 3.

Cashier Tammy Ore unlocked the front door but quickly left the store after she saw the mess, calling 911 and owner Terry Wagoner. St. Louis County Sheriffs responded to the scene about 15 minutes later, she said.

Cash from the safe, lottery tickets, tobacco products, and a laptop that is used to tally cash register information were all stolen. The cash registers themselves were not stolen. The thieves broke in through the back door and left the same way.

Store manager Julie Johnson said the lottery tickets are numbered, and the store had reported its tickets sales the night before, so the stolen tickets can be tracked, if someone tries to redeem them.

This is the second break-in at the store in six months.

"I'm an avid rider," said Larry, who said he used to put about 5,000 miles a year on his sled, though his riding time

has been less since his wife died a few years ago. The two often vacationed in the area, both in the winter to ride the

trails, and in the summer camping at Hoodoo Point Campground.

While his 2015 Arctic Cat Sno Pro 7000 was reduced to a steaming pile of charred metal, he otherwise escaped harm, outside of needing new gloves, jacket, and pants. His pants, he said, were a brand-new pair, and he joked that perhaps his Arctic Cat snowmobile was upset he was wearing pants from Polaris. The pants had melted patches on one leg. The outer layer of his jacket was completely burned off on one side, but the fire had not gone through the insulation layer.

Terry Wagoner, owner of Fuel and Food, said they are not sure if it was the snowmobile or the dispenser that ignited, what might have started the fire, and perhaps not sure they will never know what

the cause was. Wagoner reopened his other pumps that afternoon after a safety inspection.

"It's just fortunate that nobody was hurt," said Wagoner.

Larry was thankful he wasn't hurt and was ready to head back out on the trails. His group had brought an extra sled, and they planned to head toward Crane Lake that afternoon.

Fire departments from Tower, Breitung, and Greenwood responded to the scene, along with Tower Ambulance and Breitung Police. The Tower department was first on scene and knocked down the flames. Breitung arrived moments later and applied foam to prevent any rekindle. The cause of the fire is under investigation and still has not been determined.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies' struggles continue

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods girls donned their home blues for a Saturday tilt against perennial powerhouse Mt. Iron-Buhl, and they were singing the blues after the Rangers ran roughshod over them in a 104-30 blowout.

Left: Hannah Cheney, of North Woods, fights for control of the ball. photo by D. Colburn

While the Grizzlies were coming off a 77-52 win against Northeast Range, the Rangers were smarting from a 69-57 loss to Class AA Roseau and eager to get back on a winning track.

At the outset, the Grizzlies looked like they might make a game out of it. Hannah Kinsey hit the game's first basket for a 2-0 lead, and after two MIB buckets a three-pointer by Helen Koch gave North Woods a 5-4 lead. Five minutes into the game, the Grizzlies looked sharp and locked in as a free throw from Madison Spears knotted

the score at 6-6.

And then the wheels fell off the bus.

Seven quick MIB points caused North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney to take a time out, and then the Rangers reeled off seven more unanswered points. The 14-0 jump start was just what the Rangers' scoring engine needed to roar into life, and by half-time the Grizzlies were well in the rear view mirror, trailing 58-19. MIB

See **GIRLS...**pg. 2B



Left: The Grizzlies' T.J. Chiabotti goes in for a jump shot in heavy traffic during their recent contest with Chisholm.

Below: Darius Goggleye, of North Woods tries to maintain control of the ball under double pressure from Chisholm defenders.

photos by D. Colburn

BOYS BASKETBALL

NW sputters in 1-3 stretch

Three losses in a week slow once high-flying Grizzlies

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- With the North Woods boys basketball team faltering in three of four games in the past week, this stretch might well be referred to postseason as the "period of great realignment."

Entering last Thursday's home tilt against Chisholm, the Grizzlies were flying high atop Section 7A. Four games later, North Woods had only a win against lowly Lakeside

Christian and losses to three of the other section big dogs, and had slipped to 9-4 and third in the section.

Tuesday night's matchup at Nashwauk-Keewatin was a delayed faceoff between teams that were supposed to square off in last year's sectional final for a berth in the state tournament. That game and the tournament never happened, both canceled due to COVID-19 precautions.

North Woods came out hot

See **GRIZZLIES...**pg. 2B



Wolves pound Cook County

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

ELY—Ely showed little remorse for Cook County here on Tuesday, winning 76-22 on their home hardwood. Up 39-13 at the half, the Wolves continued to push the gas pedal until the buzzer sounded.

"After being up 39-13, we continued to play well defensively in the

Left: Ely's Harry Simons goes in for a layup against Cook County.

photo by J. Greeney

second half against a young opponent," said Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Sophomore guard Joey Bianco had a nice evening with 24 points and five assists. Emmett Faltesek scored 16 and Harry Simons had 10. Senior Will Davies added six rebounds and nine assists.

The blowout win against Cook County was much needed after a barnburner last Friday night at home against South Ridge.

See **ELY BOYS...**pg. 2B

GIRLS BASKETBALL



Ely's Sarah Visser drives around a defender. photo by J. Greeney

Wolves showing promise

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

ELY- Ely bounced back from Monday night's loss against Chisholm to beat Cook County at home, 52-45. Solid defense and hitting key shots down the stretch were crucial in the biggest win of the season for the Timberwolves.

"Everyone did what they do well, contributing to us getting a big win on our home floor," said Head Coach Max Gantt.

Grace Latourell led the Wolves with 22 points while Sarah Visser added 15. Both hit clutch free throws down the stretch. Ely also limited their turnovers

See **ELY GIRLS...**pg. 2B

Raiders rout NER

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

BABBITT— Greenway never let the Nighthawks forget who was in charge during their matchup here last Friday. The Raiders dominated the hardwood as they routed Northeast Range 72-17, one of the Nighthawks' most lop-sided losses in an already tough season.

The Nighthawks didn't help themselves, committing 11 fouls in the game. The Raiders took advantage, going six-for-six from the charity stripe.

Natalie Nelmark led scoring for the Nighthawks with six points, followed by Jenna Smith, with four. Morgan Bush connected on a three-pointer and Alli Bee and Maizy Sunblad each had two points to round out scoring for the Nighthawks. The Raiders had three players in double digits on the night.

HOCKEY

T-Wolves fall 6-3 to Moose Lake Area

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely High School hockey team scored three goals in a 6-3 loss to Moose Lake last Friday. The young Timberwolves are still looking for their first win of the season.

The Timberwolves scored all their goals in the final period,

after falling behind 1-0 in the first, 3-0 in the second, and 5-0 early in the last period.

The Timberwolves' Wes Sandy scored an even strength goal at 5:43 in the final frame with assists by Kole Macho and Logan Loe. Macho put the puck between the pipes at the 7:11 mark with assists by Kadein Zupancich and Jakson Hegman.

The Rebels came back with a goal at 13:27 to make the score 6-2. Ely's Drew Marolt hit a one-timer at 16:30 to close out the night for the Timberwolves.

Ely was 0-2 on power play chances. The Rebels had one power play scoring chance. The Timberwolves took 21 shots on goal, and Moose Lake took 42 shots against Ely goalie Chase

Sandberg. The Timberwolves were called for one penalty. Moose Lake was called for two fouls.

The Timberwolves lost 11-0 to North Shore on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Ely was scheduled to visit International Falls on Thursday, March 4, and Bagley on Saturday, March 6. Following a visit to

Eveleth-Gilbert on March 8, the Ely varsity closes out the season at home on Thursday, March 11 against Duluth Marshall. They will host the Eveleth-Gilbert Junior Varsity team on March 12. Section 7A playoffs start the week of March 15.

GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

opened the second half with a blistering 23-0 run before Aleesia Geshick hit North Woods' first bucket of the half. The pace for the Rangers slowed due to liberal substitutions and a running clock, but MIB put four players in high double-figure scoring as they completed the 104-30 rout.

"Our gas tanks ran out of gas, our lungs ran out of air, we just kind of

pooped out really, really fast," Cheney said. "That was probably the fastest pace and most intense game that we've come up against so far this year. And we knew it was going to be that way."

The Grizzlies played without injured guard and floor leader Madi Dantes, which clearly posed a problem against MIB's swarming pressure

defense, but her presence may have done little to alter the outcome. Cheney said she was pleased with how Helen Koch stepped up.

"Madi and Helen are great together," Cheney said. "They complement each other in the skills and gifts that they bring to the team, so we really miss Madi."

Kinsey and Spears

each score nine points for the Grizzlies.

Monday brought an opportunity to bounce back against a more evenly-matched opponent in Floodwood, but once again the Grizzlies foundered after a solid start, trailing 33-20 at the half and losing 56-36.

Cheney said she thought the Grizzlies were going to have a "great

game" after seeing how the team responded in the opening minutes.

"Then after those first four or five minutes we just flattened out and our energy tanked," Cheney said.

North Woods had an edge in height, but found it difficult to take advantage of it, Cheney said.

"We just really struggled with our inside game,"

she said.

One player did stand out down low for the Grizzlies. Spears, the only one in double figures, scored 19 of the team's 36 points.

North Woods will try to get back on a winning track in a Monday, March 8 road contest against Cherry.

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

from three-point land in this one, with an opening trey from Jared Chiabotti and two triples by Brenden Chiabotti fueling a 15-12 Grizzlies' lead going into a time out. When the Grizzlies came back on the floor they torched the Spartans from beyond the arc. Five threes in six possessions on deep solo salvos from T.J. Chiabotti, Alex Hartway, and Davis Kleppe and two from Jared Chiabotti staked the Grizzlies to a surprising 14-point lead, 30-16, with just over eight minutes left in the half. No Grizzly would hit another triple for the next 14 minutes.

Extending their defense well into three-point land, the Spartans needed only four minutes to put together an emphatic 15-0 answer, taking their first lead, 31-30, at the 3:50 mark. But two buckets by T.J. Chiabotti and two by Sean Morrison gave North Woods a 38-33 edge at the half.

The beginning of the end for the Grizzlies came with the score knotted

at 51 each with just over 10 minutes to play. Over the next five minutes the Spartans connected on four treys while the Grizzlies fired blanks on all five triples they attempted, and NK forged a 67-56 lead. The Grizzlies got back to within five, but no closer, and when a half-hearted T.J. Chiabotti three-pointer sailed wide of the mark at the buzzer, North Woods walked off the court on the short end of an 83-73 score.

T.J. Chiabotti led North Woods with 25 points, followed by Jared Chiabotti with 13 and Brendan Chiabotti with 12.

Deer River

Deer River now sits in the top spot in the section, riding a 10-game win streak that includes an 81-70 win over the Grizzlies last Friday.

North Woods grabbed a quick 5-0 lead on a trey by T.J. Chiabotti and a bucket by Jared Chiabotti, but five of Deer River's first six baskets were triples as they bounced back for a 17-10 lead. North Woods trailed

by 12 before a basket by Morrison and an NBA-range three-pointer by Brenden Chiabotti cut the deficit to 37-30 at the half.

A Hartway trey and a Darius Goggeye bucket to open the second half cut the lead to just two, but that was as close as the Grizzlies would get, falling behind by as many as 17 and losing by 11.

"Poor shooting caught up with us again," North Woods Head Coach Will Kleppe said. "We brought a much better level of energy but just couldn't get the shots to fall."

When all was said and done in this rough-and-tumble affair, free throws were the difference. Deer River held a scant two-point edge from the field but went 18-of-27 from the charity stripe on 22 North Woods fouls. The Grizzlies got to the line only 16 times and shot just 56 percent in knocking down nine.

Goggeye was the leading scorer in a losing cause, collecting 15 points, and T.J. Chiabotti tallied 14.

"Deer River is a quality team and well coached," Kleppe said. "With their size and speed they are going to be a favorite going into the tournament."

Chisholm

It was Chisholm that knocked the Grizzlies down a notch last Thursday in a see saw come-from-behind thriller, 64-63.

North Woods went from being down nine, 27-18, midway through the first half to being up 10 in the second, 47-37.

But Chisholm fought back, and with 14 seconds left T.J. Chiabotti stepped to the line for a one-and one to protect a razor-thin 63-62 Grizzlies lead. His first attempt clanked hard off the back of the rim and ricocheted into the hands of a Bluestreaks rebounder. Racing down the court, Bryce Warner hit the go-ahead shot with six seconds to go, and a desperation running one-hander by Chiabotti glanced off the rim to seal a heartbreaking 64-63 defeat.

"We had chances in the second half to put it away, but breakdowns on both sides of the ball were our downfall," Kleppe said. "When every team gives you their best game you can't have that. We were very flat and got outthusted."

Chisholm had the hot hands in this one, outshooting the Grizzlies 53 percent to 36 percent. Forced to shoot from outside much of the night, North Woods put up 30 three-point shots but made only seven.

Goggeye led North Woods scorers on his birthday with 18 points. T.J. Chiabotti scored 13, Jared Chiabotti knocked down 11, and Brenden Chiabotti had 10.

Monday's 87-39 road win against Lakeview Christian Academy was the sole bright spot in the four-game stretch. With a decided edge in height and talent, the Grizzlies took command early by pushing the ball inside and led 54-19 at the half.

Most of T.J. Chiabotti's 26 points came from inside

the paint – he hit six free throws and no treys. Goggeye was hot on his heels, hitting 11-of-19 from the field and scoring 25 points. Morrison added 10.

The Grizzlies hit 55 percent of their shots, scoring 70 points inside the lane, and they went 11-of-14 at the free throw line.

"We were able to start fast, go up 8-0, and then opened the game up," Kleppe said. "It was a good outing against a young team."

The 9-4 Grizzlies have four regular season games left to maintain or improve upon their third-place position in the section, but they'll also be focused on helping a teammate achieve a personal milestone. After collecting six points in Tuesday's game, Darius Goggeye is just 27 shy of reaching 1,000 career points. He'll have his next opportunity to eclipse that mark when North Woods hits the road to play Ely on Friday.

The Timberwolves host North Woods on Friday, at 7:15 pm. They travel to Nashwauk-Keewatin on Saturday, with a 2 p.m. start.

ELY BOYS...Continued from page 1B

The Wolves showcased their shooting talent early in the game putting them at a comfortable lead of 28-14. However, The Panthers did not back down.

With 20 seconds left in regulation, Ely was

up three points, but not for long, as South Ridge came down the court and hit a three to tie it back up. The Timberwolves had a chance to end it in regulation, but the Panthers' 6'7" post player blocked a shot at the rim.

"We played well in overtime and hit enough free throws to win the game. I thought our guys defended well throughout the night against a team that was bigger than us at every position," said McDonald.

Senior guard Emmett Falteseck carried the team on the night with 27 points. He was 4-6 from the two-point range and 6-10 on threes. Will Davies added 12 points and Joey Bianco had 11 points and nine assists.

ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

in the second-half, which made the difference. "We are really improving this season. We played nine girls, so this is a true team win," said Gantt.

The story wasn't quite as glamorous on Monday night, as the Bluestreaks handed Ely a 56-42 loss in Chisholm.

"We didn't shoot the ball very well. Chisholm made shots and we didn't. Simple as that," said Gantt. "We had open looks, but just couldn't convert."

Rachel Coughlin had a great game for the Timberwolves with 18 rebounds, five steals and five points. Sarah Visser also had a stellar evening with 11 points, eight rebounds, four steals, four assists, and four blocks.

"That's a team we could see in the playoffs. Hopefully, if we see them again, we can shoot it a little better. As for now, we know we can compete with

them," said Gantt.

Ely's schedule hasn't been easy, as last Friday they played Cherry, the 12th ranked team in the state and the odds-on favorite for the Section 7A crown. While the Wolves fell 76-49, Gantt said he was pleased with what he saw.

"Our best basketball of the year was the first half. We were only down 42-30. We did a nice job of attacking the basketball, attacking their pressure, and creating offense for one another," said Gantt.

Grace LaTourell scored 18 points, including four treys. Sarah Visser notched a double-double, with ten points, 12 rebounds, three steals, and three blocks. Madeline Kallberg also contributed with eight points and six boards. The Timberwolves also added a note-worthy nine blocks as a team.

"We left knowing we can compete with the

best teams when we play well. It was a confidence boost and shows how good we can be in the future if we keep progressing and working hard," said Gantt.

The Wolves played their best half of basketball against Cherry just one day after beating the Mariners, 61-14, in Silver Bay.

Sarah Visser had a double-double with 12 points, ten rebounds, and nine steals— just missing a triple-double. Madeline Kallberg, also on fire, had 17 points and ten boards for her own double-double. Grace LaTourell put up 21 points, including

15 from beyond the arc, to lead her team in scoring.

"We started a little slow but our defense got us going with some easy shots. After we caught a rhythm and started knocking down shots, we pulled away handily. Hopefully, we can continue to knock down shots as we keep moving forward," said Gantt.

The Wolves will host Northeast Range next Monday, March 8, at 7:15 pm.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cook mill bypassed again for siding expansion

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK - During a strong new housing and remodeling market and steadily increasing demand for its SmartSide trim and siding, Nashville-based LP Solutions recently announced that they will begin converting two of their oriented strand board mills to make the product, bypassing for now the Cook mill they acquired in 2016 for possible future development. "To supply the growing demand for LP SmartSide Trim and Siding, LP announced a multi-year siding production capacity expansion plan to convert our Houlton, Maine, mill to manufacture SmartSide, likely followed by the conversion of our Sagola, Mich., OSB mill," said LP Senior Manager of Corporate Communications Breeanna Straessle.

Starting with the Houlton site will help the company to better penetrate East Coast markets, Straessle said.

"Construction is expected to start this summer," she continued, "with SmartSide production likely beginning in early 2022. Although the precise timing for LPSagola's conversion has yet to be determined, if demand for SmartSide continues to grow at historic rates, we will need to initiate work on the conversion soon after siding production begins at Houlton."

That timeline likely pushes a decision on the Cook facility out until at least 2023, and when those discussions happen Cook won't be the only option in the mix.

"There remains a long runway for further siding growth, with several potential expansions of existing facilities and other conversion opportunities," Straessle said.

Those comments were amplified in a February investors meeting where one investor's question about the Cook and Val-d'Or mills was answered by CEO Brad Southern.

"We do own a nice plant site in Cook, as you know, and we own a facility in Val-d'Or, Québec," Southern said. "We also have an OSB mill in Maniwaki, Québec, that uses aspen and then we have Peace Valley. We also have expansion opportunities within our current mill network. Finally, there are other people that own OSB mills in aspen wood baskets that we have periodic conversations with. All of those will be on the table as we think beyond the Sagola conversion. It's gotten to a point now with our growth where every couple of years we're going to be needing to do one of these. So, it's a very active conversation and all options will remain available to us."

Hopes were high in 2016 that LP Solutions would soon reopen the mill in Cook that was shuttered by Ainsworth in 2008. But rather than build out the Cook mill or convert another newly acquired idle OSB mill in Val-d'Or, Quebec, the company decided to convert its Dawson

Creek, BC, mill to siding to more quickly capitalize on the growing market for SmartSide products.

Last year LP Solutions added capacity by acquiring production facilities in Green Bay, Wis., and Granite City, Ill.

Under Southern's leadership, converting lower-return OSB sites to higher-return siding sites has literally paid dividends, as he reported in February that LP Solutions had eclipsed its three-year financial goals a year ahead of schedule. Projected demand reinforced the need to bring additional siding production capacity on quickly.

"As you all know, the housing and repair and remodel markets that LP serves continue to show remarkable resiliency despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and demand for our products has remained very strong," Southern told investors. Quarter four was another record for SmartSide as sales increased by 30 percent. OSB prices remained exceptionally high throughout the quarter. It was a very strong ending to a uniquely challenging year that leaves LP well positioned for continued growth."

One potential drawback for the Cook mill is the time it would take to build out the facility and get it into production, estimated by company officials in 2017 to be about two years. As the announced plans for the Maine facility suggest, a conversion of an operational facility can take half as much time and have lower overall costs.

However, one aspect of the Cook facility that could play into its long-term prospects is its size. While a press would have to be designed and built for optimal production, one production line at Cook could produce 400 million square feet of siding, past estimates indicate. That would be about 77 percent of the announced combined gain in production from the Houlton and Sagola conversions. Officials have said in the past that the Cook site could accommodate a second production line. Key to any future decisions about production capacity will be for SmartSide to gain an increasing share of the trim and siding market, continued strong demand in the new housing and remodeling markets, and the performance of the OSB and engineered wood products segments of LP's business.

Cook's hopes will likely rest on Southern being able to repeat annually the optimistic picture he painted for investors in February.

"Each of these initiatives will accelerate LP's ongoing transformation, grow our portfolio of SmartSide and Structural Solutions, and improve our operational agility as we meet increasing customer demand," Southern said. "This acceleration of our growth and value creation strategy will build on LP's growing momentum as we transform into a building solutions leader."

Obituaries and Death Notices



Robert C. Simpson

Robert C. Simpson, 88, of Cook, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021. A memorial visitation will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 7 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. The family requests that those attending wear masks and be mindful of social distancing.

Robert was born to Robert R. and Lura (Houston) Simpson on Nov. 4, 1932, in Graceville. He grew up in Bear River and attended school at Grand Rapids Ag School. In his high school years, he was a member of the Glee Club and played basketball. Robert married Hope Keister on Aug. 25, 1956, in Hibbing. He entered the U.S. Army in 1953 and served honorably for two years.

Robert was a hard-working man and wore many hats over the years to provide a living for his family. He worked in the logging business, was a carpenter, and managed the City of Cook Liquor Store for 15 years. He was a talented mechanic and carpenter, building many

houses over the years for himself and his family.

Robert and Hope traveled most of the United States, Alaska, Mexico and Canada. He was a member of the Masons, the American Legion, the Voyageurs ATV Club and a founding member of the Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club. Robert enjoyed hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, building, and especially snowmobiling. The annual "Littlefork Splash" was anticipated every year. His pride and joy was a 50 ft. houseboat that he built along with family members, especially grandson Zachary. His favorite times were spent with family and friends. He was a straightforward person with a steel-grip handshake, yet was gentle and tender when holding his grandchildren.

Robert is survived by his loving wife, Hope Simpson; children, Loann Trygg, Brad (Connie) Simpson, Lynn (Steve) Polich and Troy (Dawn) Simpson; grandchildren, Scott (Michelle) Trygg, Tracy (Greg) LaPatka, Josh Polich, Zachary (Paige) Polich, Bo (Carissa) Simpson, Brenna (John) Simpson and Brynn Simpson; great-grandchildren, Jasmine Trygg, Logan Luecken, Lexiss Trygg, Jalen Miskowitz and Teagan Simpson; brothers, Donald (Becky) Simpson and Evan (Carol) Simpson; sisters, Tarsia Nichols, Karen (Al) Bober, Linda (Mike) Miakke and Marsha Brown; and numerous

nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert (1991) and Lura (1994); son, Doyle Graham (1969); granddaughter, Brooke Ann Simpson (2001); sisters, Arlys Jensen and Lura Marie Metsa; and brothers-in-law, John Metsa and Joseph Brown.

Tracy R. Podpeskar

Tracy Rae Podpeskar, 43, a lifelong resident of Virginia, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, Dec. 4, 2020. A public visitation will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 6 at Bauman-Cron Funeral Home in Virginia. Tracy's family will hold a private family funeral service. Bill Bauman will officiate the funeral service at Bauman-Cron Funeral Home and interment will be in Calvary Cemetery in Virginia.

In lieu of flowers, please direct memorial contributions to the Tracy Podpeskar Memorial Fund at Frandsen Bank, 501 Chestnut St., Virginia, MN 55792.

Tracy is survived by her mother, Mary ("Papa Richie") Podpeskar of Virginia; daughters, Jordan Skalko and Hayden Skalko, both of Virginia; brother, Jay Podpeskar of Britt; uncle and aunt, James and Polly Podpeskar of Lake Vermilion - Tower; the father of her children, Justin Skalko of Minneapolis; extended family and many dear friends.

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8 out of 10 students choose NOT to use marijuana

What would you do if offered marijuana?



Data based on the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey of the following participating schools within Northern St. Louis County: Chisholm, Ely, Hibbing, Virginia, Mt. Iron-Buhl, St. Louis County, and Mesabi East. These data include Grades 8, 9, & 11.



These ads are placed by EPARC, Ely Prevention, Awareness, Recovery Coalition and made possible through funding provided by St. Louis County

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WILDLIFE AND PESTICIDES

Study finds “neonics” in deer across the state

Every region of the state, including the North Country, showing presence of neonicotinoids in deer spleens

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Preliminary results of a new study by the Department of Natural Resources, find that deer across Minnesota, including in St. Louis County, are showing the presence of neonicotinoid pesticides in their systems.

Neonicotinoids, often referred to as “neonics,” are

the most widely used class of insecticides worldwide and are found in more than 500 commercial and domestic products in the U.S. They are present in a wide array of products used for insect control in homes, gardens, yards, and crops, as well as on pets.

The study sampled 800 deer spleens, provided by hunters from around the state, looking for the presence of

neonics. The pesticides were found in 61 percent of the samples tested, and some deer permit areas in northern St. Louis County had an even higher detection rate. Deer permit area 176, for example, located south of Hwy. 1 and west of Hwy. 135, had six of seven sample spleens tested come back positive for neonics. While hunters in most other permit areas in St. Louis County sent few

Right: A new study suggests whitetail deer, even here in the North Country, are showing the presence of a common type of pesticide in their systems.

samples (most had just one or two samples submitted) positive tests were found in every one, except permit area

See **STUDY...pg. 5B**



WHITETAILS

WSI readings could end up the lowest in 25 years

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—March has come in like a lamb, and that’s more good news for the region’s deer herd, which is experiencing one of its easiest winters in years. While the mid-February cold snap was the longest in half a century, cold temperatures alone don’t provide much of a challenge for whitetail deer, according to DNR biologists. That’s why the Winter Severity Index, or WSI, could well finish up at the lowest level in nearly a quarter century.

As of March 1, the WSI readings across northern St. Louis County are running in the mid-30s and, based on the current extended forecast, there’s little reason to expect the winter’s final index reading to go much higher. The index adds a point for each day with at least 15 inches of snow on the ground and each day with a below-zero temperature reading. This winter’s remarkable snow drought has left most parts of the region with zero snow points on the index so far, and there’s little sign in the forecast that a major snowfall is in the cards through at least mid-March. Temperatures are forecast to remain mild as well which should preclude any additional points based on below-zero temperatures. Without deep snow, deer can move about easily, either to target quality winter browse or elude predators.

In the past 25 years, only the winter of 1997-98— which finished the season with a WSI reading of just 24 points— ended up with a final reading below 40.

Snow depths across northern St. Louis County ranged from eight-14 inches as of Monday, with at least three days of above-freezing daytime temperatures since. Highs are expected to reach the mid-forties on Sunday, with continued mild weather expected for Monday into Tuesday.

The late winter can often pose challenges for deer, as crusted snow can allow predators to travel atop the snowpack, while deer typically break through, yet the limited snow cover this year is reducing the impact of crusted conditions. And limited snow cover melts more quickly as bare ground is exposed sooner under trees and on open south-facing slopes. Once bare ground is exposed, the intensifying sun quickly eats away at remaining snow cover.

If mild conditions continue

See **WSI...pg. 5B**

CONNECTIONS

A discovery of hemlock

Knowledge, mimicry, and the cycles of life and death

by PETER M. LESCHAK
Contributing Writer

Two decades ago I decided to identify every wild-flower that grows on our forty acres of northern Minnesota woods. It seemed unmindful, even disrespectful, to be ignorant of the names of all those fleeting beauties.

At first it was a bonanza. I spent hours bumping from one plant to the next as blossoms unfurled in spring. My ignorance was stimulating, everything was novel. Not until you

actually search do you realize what you haven’t been noticing, and also how few toys you need to have fun. I now recognize a hundred flowers, all found within a quarter-mile of the cabin at some point in the snow-free season. But as years passed, it became rare to discover a new species.

So one July morning I was thrilled to meet a stranger. The flower was growing in our roadside ditch, and I glimpsed it from the window of the truck -- actually drove by before braking: wait a second, that wasn’t cow parsnip. I backed up and recognized the need to fetch my field guides.

A few minutes later I knelt beside a three-foot tall plant, ticking off the relevant features. Since it resembled a member of a family I knew (parsnip), it was relatively easy to find a match, though the flowers, leaves, and stem placed it with the parsleys. I homed in on an ID: water hemlock. A Minnesota guide called it “Our most poisonous plant....Children have died from eating a small piece of Water Hemlock root....Cattle can eat

the leaves and stems, apparently without harm, but they have been killed by pulling up the plants and eating the roots.” Another guide also noted its toxicity, and the fact its tubers have been mistaken for parsnips or other edibles “with fatal results....The plant is [related] to Poison Hemlock, the plant used to poison Socrates.”

Final analysis required exposure of those notorious roots. I dug at the base of the stem and drew the tubers from the soil. They looked like a

clutch of miniature dahlia bulbs; they may’ve even looked tasty if I hadn’t read the guidebooks. But what to do with them? I couldn’t abandon a toxin on the ground to perhaps be

ingested by a deer or a dog. I considered re-burying them, but an animal might be attracted to disturbed soil and do their own digging.

So, I cut the tubers from the stem and brought them home, thinking to drop them in the garbage or chuck them in the wood stove. But I was suddenly reluctant to discard the root, entranced by an image of Socrates quaffing the hemlock brew, executed for questioning the assumptions of his society. I felt morbidly vigorous in possessing a poison I’d exhumed from the ground, like a shaman or wizard. A few days before, I’d seen two amanita muscaria mushrooms sprouting beside the path to the lake. They are also lovely and toxic, and with a couple of jars I could start a collection, have potent specimens lined up on a high shelf like a sorcerer’s laboratory at

Clockwise from top left: The flower of the deadly poisonous water hemlock; a whitetail doe, a scarab beetle, and the leaves of the water hemlock.

Hogwarts. Though, it should be said, I have no victims in mind.

The urge to preserve the root was spurred by the joy of discovery and learning, and yes, by the real power of knowledge. It’s a reason people collect specimens of almost everything. A little curiosity, a little digging, and a field guide – the latter being handy for avoiding the perils of trial and error in this case – had given me the capability to kill surreptitiously. (Leaving aside the potential difficulties of actual administration of an effective dose, and the prospect of a long prison term.)

Appropriately, I happened to be reading biologist Bernd Heinrich’s engaging book *Life Everlasting: The Animal Way of Death*. Heinrich is a legendary observer, and E.O. Wilson, no slouch regarding research, has called him “one of the finest naturalists of our time.” A subject of Heinrich’s work has been dung beetles, of the scarab family. There are many hundreds of species that harvest excrement from such as cows (here in Minnesota) and elephants, and roll it into balls, inside of which they encase their larva. They bury it, the dung providing shelter and nourishment for the larva, which pupates inside. Eventually a beetle rises from the ground, or “from the grave” as it were. The University of Minnesota Extension Service notes dung beetle behavior can significantly contribute to soil fertility and the mitigation of livestock pests.

This beguiling process was noticed by our ancient ancestors, perhaps offering hints about the nature of life



and death. Most notable, at least in the context of the dung beetle, were the Egyptians, to whom, Heinrich notes, “...the dung scarab beetle represented Khepri, the sacred scarab that rolled Ra, the sun god, up into the sky in the morning.” The ability of insects to metamorphose – a seeming resurrection – provided observers more than metaphor. It’s probably no accident that Egyptian mummies resemble the pupa of a scarab beetle, and that corpses so-wrapped were provided with food “in a dark, concealed chamber with a long tunnel (such as that dug by scarab beetles)...” – Heinrich. During the embalming process – end of the “larval” stage? – the Egyptians usually excised the corpse’s heart and replaced it with a carved scarab. A Minnesota junebug, member of the scarab family, affords you an image.

It’s no revelation that we learn from watching the natural world, and while no mummies have emerged, vibrant, from their “pupas,” I admire the keen observation that inspired the ancients to mimic the life cycle of dung beetles. After all, if it worked for the bugs....

Via such mimicry I once fooled a whitetail doe. In a patch of scrub oak growing on

See **HEMLOCK...pg. 5B**

Outdoors in brief

Deadline to remove fish houses fast approaching

Anglers reminded to clean up their trash

REGIONAL — The Department of Natural Resources is reminding anglers that the deadline to remove permanent fish houses from Minnesota lakes is coming up. Although the coldest spell of winter occurred just a couple weeks ago, fish house removal deadlines are set in state statute and are not dependent upon seasonal conditions.

In the northern one-third of the state, the deadline is the end of the day Monday, March 15. The removal deadline for fish houses on border waters between Minnesota and Canada is March 31.

“Anglers need to plan ahead and make sure they’re able to meet the deadline,” said DNR Conservation Officer Leah Kampa. “And don’t just remove your fish house—make sure you clean up everything around it and leave only an impression in the ice or snow. It’s been heartening this winter to see people’s willingness

to clean up the litter other people leave, but it’s unfortunate some people don’t take the time to clean up after themselves.”

Anyone who’s caught leaving litter — including any part of a fish house — on the lake may be cited for littering.

If shelters aren’t removed by the deadline, owners will be prosecuted and structures may be confiscated and removed or destroyed by a conservation officer. If conditions or other circumstances are making it difficult for people to meet the deadline, they should contact their local conservation officer to explain the situation.

The removal deadline does not mean anglers no longer can use fish houses on the ice. After the deadline, fish houses may still be on the ice, but they must be occupied if they’re out between midnight and one hour before sunrise. Shelters may not be left or stored at public accesses.

Fishing reports

Ely area

Eelpout fishing was excellent for many anglers this last weekend, with the peak of the spawn happening right now. Anglers have been finding them in 15-40 feet of water, right on top of sunken islands. Heavy pout pounders, loaded up with minnow pieces and pounded on the bottom, have been very effective.

growing as warmer temps come to the area. Anglers have been having very mixed results yet. The majority of anglers are still finding crappies largely scattered, still over 20-30 feet of water and largely inactive. Wax worms and small crappie minnows tipped on small jigs have been most effective on these neutral to negative fish.

Courtesy Arrowhead Outdoors, Ely

Interest in crappies is

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
39 16				41 25				46 29				45 25				44 26			
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.
02/22	32	18	0.06 2.6"	02/22	31	19	0.06 1.0"	02/22	31	7	0.08 1.3"	02/22	45	25	0.01 tr	02/22	31	15	0.02 0.2"
02/23	43	26	0.00	02/23	42	25	0.00	02/23	44	24	0.00	02/23	37	30	0.00	02/23	44	25	0.00
02/24	42	25	0.00	02/24	40	24	0.00	02/24	40	24	0.00	02/24	30	18	0.00	02/24	40	21	0.00
02/25	32	20	0.02 0.9"	02/25	31	19	0.01 0.4"	02/25	30	17	0.03 0.7"	02/25	36	16	0.02 0.2"	02/25	32	17	0.04 0.8"
02/26	35	18	0.00	02/26	35	17	0.00	02/26	36	17	0.01 0.2"	02/26	39	28	0.00	02/26	35	17	0.00
02/27	40	28	0.00	02/27	41	25	0.00	02/27	40	16	0.00	02/27	30	19	0.00	02/27	40	24	0.00
02/28	40	23	0.00	02/28	39	20	0.00	02/28	38	18	0.00	02/28	19	7	0.00	02/28	37	18	0.00
Total 0.49				YTD Total 0.73 37.8"				YTD Total 0.72 51.1"				YTD Total 0.43 NA				YTD Total 0.34 38.9"			

HEMLOCK...Continued from page 4B

bare rock, where I’d been treading almost silently, the deer materialized from cover and froze. We were near Devil’s Cascade in the Boundary Waters Wilderness. She was fifteen yards away and stared at me, ears twitching. I was also still, staring back, when a light breeze brushed an oak leaf against my cheek. It sparked an idea. I slowly turned my head, snatched a leaf with my teeth, pulled it loose, and made a show of chewing. The doe stepped closer, and I repeated the move, acting like a harmless herbivore. She continued to approach — curious? puzzled? hungry? — until we were only twenty feet apart. I was hunting bear and happened to have a rifle in my hands. As an experiment I raised the weapon to my shoulder and aimed. The doe

didn’t budge. Only when I spoke — “I’m teasing you!” — did she bolt. So, if you’re stalking prey and have lost the advantage of stealth, imitate herbivores.

Following these threads of our relationships serves as reminder that we can’t live without destroying other life. It’s how the biosphere functions; we can’t change it. But we can acknowledge and respect those lives, can learn who and what they are, can take only what we need, can express our gratitude with admiration and enumeration. My list of wildflower species (many of them edible) is a testament. There is joy in that.

Perhaps this lesson could’ve been a fit topic for Socrates. The philosopher and teacher left no writings, but his legacy was transmitted

by others. Diogenes Laertius wrote of him: “Often when looking at a mass of things for sale, he would say to himself, ‘How many things I have no need of!... having the fewest wants, I am nearest to the gods.’”

Well, that’s no stimulus for the Gross Domestic Product. Small wonder they gave him the hemlock. But I’m sympathetic to his message. For much of my fun, all that’s required is time, attention, and guidebooks. And sometimes a little mimicry.

Peter M. Leschak is the author of Hellroaring, Trial by Wildfire, Ghosts of the Fireground, and The Snow Lotus, among others. He lives in Side Lake, and is a regular contributor to the Timberjay.

STUDY...Continued from page 4B

130, where a single sample came back negative.

The DNR launched its research project in late 2019, following a study conducted on captive deer in South Dakota that raised concerns about potential adverse effects of neonicotinoid exposure, including reduced fawn survival. Further analysis is required to determine if the levels of exposure seen are high enough to adversely affect deer health. Additional study results related to exposure levels will be available this spring.

“We wanted to know if wild deer in natural settings are being exposed to neonics and if certain habitat types had a higher risk,” said Michelle Carstensen, DNR’s wildlife health program supervisor. “Minnesota is a great place to ask this question, as deer are dispersed across the forest, farmland, prairies, and urban landscapes.”

While these preliminary data focused on deer, Minnesota Department of Health believes there is likely little-to-no human health risk for consuming venison from

deer that may have been exposed to neonicotinoids. These early findings suggest concentrations found in the deer spleen samples were far below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s allowable levels for consumption of other foods, like fruit or beef, that may have neonic residue.

The Minnesota DNR is planning additional sampling this fall and is exploring future research options on neonicotinoids in wildlife.

WSI...Continued from page 4B

in the remaining weeks of winter, it bodes well for strong fawn production, and that could be the start of a recovery of the deer herd, which has been diminished by a string of moderate-to-severe winters. “A couple consecutive years of strong fawn production is the prescription

for population recovery, barring a severe winter in the mix,” said Tom Rusch, DNR wildlife manager for the Tower work area. “Snow depth and duration of winter is the most critical factor in deer survival in northeastern Minnesota.”

Even so, Rusch notes that one

mild winter likely won’t be enough to allow deer populations to recover to levels of several years ago. “Back-to-back deep snow winters pushed us into this population decline and it will take more than one mild winter for the herd to get out,” he said.

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What type of insurance coverage must a volunteer driver have?

A volunteer driver is required to provide enough insurance to allow them to drive legally in the state of Minnesota.

What type of vehicle can be used?

The vehicle must be safe, dependable and clean. Volunteer drivers use all different types of vehicles from small subcompacts to large SUVs.



How can I become a volunteer driver?

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Published in the Timberjay,
Feb. 26, March 5, 12 & 19, 2021



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Opening on ad-hoc Blight Ordinance Review Committee. Looking for citizen volunteer to help develop a city blight plan and budget. Apply online at cityoftower.com/positions-available or at clerk.treasurer@cityoftower.com.

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 26, March 5, 12, 2021

EMPLOYMENT

Pike River Hatchery – Hatchery Laborers

The Tower Fisheries Office of the MN Department of Natural Resources is seeking to fill night watch laborer positions at the walleye hatchery. These temporary positions are 40 hrs per week, include weekends and last up to 8 weeks. Experience in hatchery operations, fisheries, or outdoor work; minor repair of plumbing and mechanical systems; previous night watch work; record-keeping skills; attention to detail; and ability to communicate to the public are all desirable.

Must be able to follow instructions, withstand adverse environmental conditions, and lift up to 50 lbs. Apply online using keyword 44083 at <https://mn.gov/mmb/careers/> by March 12.

For more information, contact Edie Evarts, Area Fisheries Supervisor, 612-669-0723 or edie.evarts@state.mn.us. 3/5

SEEKING PART-TIME MANAGER ELY-WINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Ely-Winton Historical Society, located in the Fine Arts wing of Vermilion Community College, is seeking a manager for the day-to-day operation of the Ely-Winton Historical Society office and museum. Duties include responding to oral and written communications received, overseeing the Society's artifacts, displays, videos, books, and festivals, coordinating research with the public, grant writing, and communicating with both Vermilion Community College and the Ely Chamber of Commerce. Computer literacy a must.

Compensation: Rate of pay will start at \$12.00 per hour. Average hours: 20 hours per week. There will be a three-month probationary period after which the rate of pay will be determined.

Anticipated date of hiring is April 1, 2021

For more information or to submit a resume, contact Margaret Sweet, Ely-Winton Historical Society, c/o 1900 East Camp Street, Ely, MN 55731, 218-365-3226 or 218-827-2386, or email ewhsmuseum@gmail.com

Resumes will be accepted if emailed or post-marked by March 15, 2021.

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Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 22, Feb. 5, 19 & March 5, 2021

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Apply by 03/11/2021

Solid Waste Worker II - Cook

Apply by 03/15/2021

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or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 3/5

FUNERAL SERVICES

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"Friends Helping Friends"

Bearville Township Annual Town Meeting Tuesday, March 9, 2021

The Annual Town Meeting for Bearville Township will be held on Tuesday, March 09, 2021, beginning at 6:30 pm at the Bearville Town Fire Hall, to set the levies, and to conduct any and all other business proper to be conducted when the Annual Meeting is convened. Snowplowing of West Sturgeon Forest Road (Dave and Dan Watson). Consider authorization to donate money to Northeast Itasca Rescue (First Responders). Authorize the Town Board to contract with Itasca County for Bearville Town Road maintenance.

COVID-19 social distancing and face mask restrictions will be in place. Residents of Bearville Township that are eligible to vote in Bearville Township may vote at the Annual Meeting. All meetings are open to the public. The meeting will be available for teleconferencing. If you would like access please contact the Clerk at the number or e-mail below.

In case of inclement weather, the Annual Town Meeting will be held one week later on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at the time and place stated.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk
(218) 376-4495 bearvl@frontiernet.net

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 19, 26, and March 5, 2021

SUMMER CARETAKER VERMILION

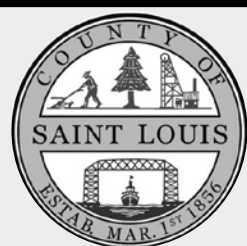
Vintage Vermilion Cabins and Retreat is seeking a couple for our caretaker position. The retreat is an attractive, completely updated 5-cabin rental, housekeeping resort on Black Bay on Lake Vermilion.

Duties include yard work, boat tending and routine maintenance on buildings/property and equipment on-site, cabin prep for guests (cleaning, changing linens, laundry) and serve as resort host(s) (which includes welcoming visitors, explaining amenities, answering questions and providing assistance as necessary).

Should possess basic carpentry and mechanical skills, be self-starters, presentable appearance with an outgoing personality that enjoys and promotes effective interaction with guests. Moderate physical activity required. Should have own truck.

Seasonal position (May 1 through mid-October). Some paid time off will be provided. Personal and job references will be required. Competitive salary, bonuses. Presence required at resort 24/7. On site residence provided for caretakers in luxury 35' Keystone Mountaineer, 3 slides, 2 TVs, brand new 12" King mattress, a.c., set up on private lakeside site.

For further information on the resort, please see our website at www.vintagevermilion.com. Please send a cover letter/resume to akoski@stadigjohnson.com. t/n



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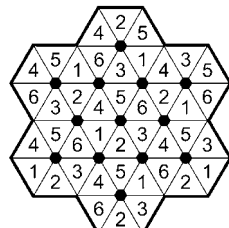
Apply by: 03/23/2021
www.governmentjobs.com/careers/stlouismn
or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 3/12

Answers

D	I	S	C	S	J	A	B	B	A	C	O	S	M	O	A	H	A	
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L	A	G	A	E	T	N	A	A	I	R	E	D	V	E	R	S	A	
D	R	E	S	T	A	S	H	T	S	A	R	S	E	S	S	E	N	

SNOWFLAKES solution



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Peruke
- 4 Touse
- 8 Labyrinth
- 12 Altar constellation
- 13 Isaac's eldest
- 14 Modern taxi alternative
- 15 World of organized crime
- 17 Dross
- 18 Earth (Pref.)
- 19 Poetic feet
- 21 Ohio city
- 24 Actress Long
- 25 Mentalist Geller
- 26 Candied veggie
- 28 Knight wear
- 32 Stagger
- 34 Gaiety
- 36 Flintstones' pet
- 37 Seoul setting
- 39 Fawn's mom
- 41 Dol. fractions
- 42 Bearded beast
- 44 Salsa scoopers
- 46 "La Mer" composer
- 50 4, on a phone
- 51 Pre-diploma hurdle
- 52 Ruffian
- 56 Church area
- 57 Rochester's

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51					52		53			54	55
56					57				58		
59					60					61	

- love
- 8 Hot dog condiment
- 31 Colonial seamstress
- 58 Citrus drink
- 9 With skill
- 33 Lentils, for example
- 59 Privation
- 10 Gusto
- 35 Dijon denial
- 60 Source
- 11 Work units
- 38 Reply (Abbr.)
- 61 At once
- 16 "Gosh!"
- 38 Reply (Abbr.)
- 20 "Homeland" org.
- 40 Aerie newborn
- 21 Ankara resident
- 43 Leading man?
- 45 Greek X
- 22 Crunchy cookie
- 46 Transaction
- 47 Big fair, for short
- 23 Klutz
- 48 Striped fish
- 27 Wet dirt
- 49 Vacillate
- 29 State made of two peninsulas
- 53 Spanish gold
- 30 Aware of
- 54 Hubbub
- 55 Just out

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humanresources@cookhospital.org

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

		8		1				3
	5			7			2	
6			9			1		
		9		2			8	
4			5					7
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		5	8			6		2
1	3			2	4			
	8			3				7

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely

MS SUPPORT GROUP- meets the second Friday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Babbitt Municipal Building, senior room. Open to all. For information contact Mary at 218-827-8327.

ORR AA meets Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at Holy Cross Catholic Church, Orr.

ELY CO-DEPENDENTS MEETING- Fridays at noon-St. Anthony's Church Classroom 3-Use west side entrance. For more information go to coda.org on the web.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS- Meetings every Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia.

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the upstairs of Woodland Presbyterian Church.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP- Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon Family Group is a community-based mutual support program for the friends and families of alcoholics. It is confidential and open to anyone affected by someone else's drinking. Hope Lutheran Church in Embarrass hosts an Al-Anon group on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. 218-984-2037.

VIRGINIA AA WOMEN'S MEETING- Ladies by the Lake. Tuesdays at 12 noon. Peace United Methodist Church, 303 S 9th Ave, please use side door and parking.

AA OPEN MEETING- Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Woodland Presbyterian Church, Acacia Blvd. and Central Drive in Babbitt.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA MEETING- Every Monday at noon at Ledgerock Community Church, 1515 E Camp St., Ely

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH DRUGS, give yourself a break. There is a way out with the help of other recovering addicts in Narcotics Anonymous. We have been there. For meeting or other information call 218-728-3199. (Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit organization.)

HIV/AIDS? For confidential compassionate local support call the Rural AIDS Action Network, toll-free 1-888-647-RAAN(7226).

King Crossword

Answers
Solution time: 25 mins.
WIG MUS S MAZE
ARA ESAU UBER
GANGLAND SLAG
GEO DACTYLS
TOLEDO NIA
URI YAM ARMOR
REEL FUN DINO
KOREA DOE CTS
GNU NACHOS
DEBUSSY GHI
EXAM HOOLIGAN
APSE EYRE ADE
LOSS ROOT NOW

SCRAMBLERS
solution
1. Adept 2. Groan;
3. Casket; 4. Bounce
Today's Word
DOCTOR

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SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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9	4	8	2	1	5	7	6	3
3	5	1	4	6	7	8	2	9
6	2	7	9	8	3	1	5	4
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8	1	2	3	7	6	9	4	5
7	9	5	8	4	1	6	3	2
1	6	3	7	5	2	4	9	8
2	8	4	6	3	9	5	7	1

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Super Crossword

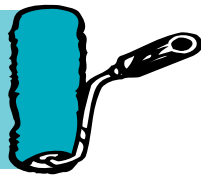
STICKY SITUATIONS

- ACROSS**
- 1 Plates, e.g.
 - 6 "Star Wars" villain — the Hutt
 - 11 Longtime fashion mag
 - 16 "Got it!"
 - 19 Muslim god
 - 20 Has left the office, say
 - 21 Bilbao locale
 - 22 "Whether — nobler ..."
 - 23 Sudden-death extra in a golf tournament
 - 25 Supermodel Klum
 - 26 Hi-fi platters
 - 27 Cook gently
 - 28 Behave obsequiously
 - 31 Secretive U.S. org.
 - 32 Redding of song
 - 36 Opp. of horizontal
 - 37 Film preview
 - 38 Sort who's at hand whenever needed
 - 42 Part of a hunting outfit
 - 43 Lucy of "Kung Fu Panda"
 - 44 French painter Rosa
 - 45 Narcissists
 - 48 Bone: Prefix
 - 50 Insult, informally
 - 51 YWCA part
 - 54 Yule, briefly
 - 57 Small Vlasic offering
 - 63 Domestic
 - 67 Explorer Ericson
 - 68 Glossy surface
 - 69 "As above," in a footnote
 - 70 Morning joe, maybe
 - 75 Tear to bits
 - 76 Gambols
 - 78 Inventory
 - 79 Board, as a ship
 - 81 One who's distraught with feelings
 - 86 1/16 ounce
 - 87 Perfectly
 - 88 "— aboard!"
 - 90 Baker's unit
 - 94 Pec-building exercises
 - 98 Tiling tools, to Brits
 - 101 King, in Caen
 - 102 Old Peruvian
 - 103 Connections making people feel close
 - 108 Big name in hygiene products
 - 111 "QED" part
 - 112 Beneficiary
 - 113 Certain PC readout
 - 114 Purplish fruit spread
 - 117 Male ducks
 - 120 — Lingus
 - 121 Rivulet
 - 122 What the last word of 23-, 28-, 38-, 57-, 70-, 81-, 103- or 114-Across is a synonym of
 - 126 Hang behind
 - 127 Giant in life insurance
 - 128 Televised
 - 129 "... and vice —"
 - 130 Hip-hop "Dr."
 - 131 Hide, as loot
 - 132 Old Russian dynasts
 - 133 German city
 - 7 Volcano stuff
 - 8 Startling cry
 - 9 Light source in a socket
 - 10 Had dinner at a friend's house, e.g.
 - 11 Note equivalent to 66-Down
 - 12 Not necessarily against
 - 13 Spoke
 - 14 In the — of (during)
 - 15 In readiness
 - 16 Map-filled references
 - 17 Most with it
 - 18 Alleges
 - 24 Ice-cream alternative, for short
 - 29 "Scream" director Craven
 - 30 Sitarist Shankar
 - 33 Weight unit
 - 34 With a sharp picture, briefly
 - 35 Shrek creator William
 - 38 "Gigli" co-star, familiarly
 - 39 Certain nuclear weapon, for short
 - 40 "Be silent!"
 - 41 Adolescent
 - 46 Country's econ. measure
 - 47 Suffix of medical conditions
 - 49 Free (from)
 - 51 Plump bird
 - 52 "— From Muskogee" (1969 hit)
 - 53 Annoys
 - 55 Circle part
 - 56 Ionian, e.g.
 - 58 Upper crust
 - 59 Purity of a color
 - 60 Razor-sharp
 - 61 Advanced
 - 62 Lead-in to skeleton
 - 63 Give a job to
 - 64 Former Laker Lamar
 - 65 Office letter
 - 66 Note equivalent to 11-Down
 - 71 Do a tax task
 - 72 J.D. Salinger title girl
 - 73 "— be my pleasure"
 - 74 Baby of a boomer
 - 77 In — (as first found)
 - 80 Big name in beer brewing
 - 82 "Alley —!"
 - 83 Condé —
 - 84 Mall lure
 - 85 Spill clumsily
 - 89 Guitar's kin
 - 91 Con artists
 - 92 Abridge
 - 93 Took cover
 - 94 Patchy horse
 - 95 Vague
 - 96 Plague
 - 97 Fit as a fiddle
 - 98 Sound of falling hail
 - 99 F-J link
 - 100 One of two in "crocodile"
 - 104 Wading birds
 - 105 R&B singer — Badu
 - 106 — Mahal
 - 107 Accuses
 - 109 PLO head Mahmoud
 - 110 Brimless cap
 - 115 "The Godfather" score composer Nino
 - 116 Some med. scans
 - 118 All-night bash
 - 119 Comic Laurel
 - 123 Econ subunit
 - 124 Bonn article
 - 125 TSA requests

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TAPED

Creak

ARGON

Crate

ASTECK

Rebound

BUNCOE

TODAY'S WORD