



Distance learning in Ely... See /3 Winton Jail demolished... See /1B The sweetness of maple...See /4B



CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

COVID surge diminishes in North Country

State numbers for cases, hospitalizations rising

by DAVID COLBURN Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL-A March spike in COVID-19 cases in Ely is on the decline, but health officials continued to sound the alarm on Tuesday over increasing cases and hospitalizations statewide.

A key measure of COVID activity, the seven-day case

average, hit 39.8 on March 22, the highest in northern St. Louis County since Dec. 9. However, since then, the rate has dropped by more than half, and was sitting at 15.9 on March 31, the most recent county data available.

The Ely outbreak account-



ed for 70 percent of the cases in northern St. Louis County

in March, according to county communications manager Dana Kazel. However, the number of new cases in Ely dipped last week to 18, or about half the number of cases reported in the prior week. Minnesota Department of Health weekly reports show that

between Feb. 25 and April 1, 75 new cases were identified in the Ely zip code, with most of those appearing in the second half of March.

And while not minimizing the significance of a spike that sent Ely schools into distance learning mode, the overall inci-

See...COVID pg. 9



ENVIRONMENT

Twin Metals opponents lay out plan to halt mine

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

ELY- In a wide-ranging press conference last week, representatives of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters outlined their plans to block the proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine and achieve permanent protection from sulfide mining on 234,000 acres of the Rainy

River watershed located upstream of the BWCAW.

Using a strategy that combines political advocacy and

lobbying, build-





ing coalitions with the business

community and outdoor enthusiasts, and litigation where necessary, the campaign has laid the groundwork to advance their objectives under a new administration and Congress that appears friendlier to environmental protection and sustainable economics than was the case for the past four years.

"We've been excited by a lot of recent activity and news," said Alex Falconer, government relations director for the campaign during the press event.

While the path forward includes multiple steps, it appears that the campaign is advancing its cause. As the Timberjay recently reported, one of the campaign's key lawsuits challenging the Trump admin-

See...BWCA pg. 9

CITY OF ELY Visitor center could open this fall

Trailhead facility part of multi-phase west end development

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY - Travelers entering Ely on Highway 169 this fall could be able to stop into a brand new visitor center in the shadow of a freshly-painted An architect's rendition of the new Ely visitor center at the new trailhead facility located at the west entrance of the city. submitted

water tower emblazoned with the city's new logo.

tion bids for the centerpiece of a multi-million-dollar rede-

Council members Tuesday authorized soliciting construc-

See...ELY pg. 10





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FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Arrowhead Transit serves community during pandemic with safe rides, food delivery

REGIONAL -Arrowhead Transit was recognized in a video by the Minnesota Public TransitAssociation for their efforts with food delivery. The video can be seen by searching YouTube.

Arrowhead Transit provided 50 buses to transport 4,157 boxes, or 70,669 pounds, of produce to partner organizations in 2020. Arrowhead Transit helped distribute boxes of produce to residents throughout the following counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis. The distributions were hosted on a weekly basis by Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), which is a nonprofit organization that operates Arrowhead Transit.

Arrowhead Transit also donated the time of several staff members each week to hand out boxes of produce during parking lot distributions in both Hibbing and Virginia. In

Arrowhead Transit has been using its buses to transport food during the pandemic. submitted photo

Arrowhead Transit

took many steps to provide

total, as of July 2020, AEOA distributed approximately 9,000 boxes, equivalent to 153,000 pounds, of produce to those in need.

staff is pleased to help with

these efforts and thankful

for the additional work

being provided to them at

Arrowhead Transit

food and essentials for those in need and to increase cleaning and provide safe transit to their community by de-fogging buses, wiping down commonly touched surfaces, enforcing social distancing on buses and requiring masks on

buses. They also helped community members get to and from COVID testing sites and waived bus fares from March 23, 2020, to January 2, 2021, to limit contact between passengers and drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4-H CLUB

Vermilion 4-H and Embarrass Birchwood 4-H merge

REGIONAL- The Vermilion 4-H club and Embarrass Birchwood 4-H club are now merging into a new Four Corners 4-H club. The new club will meet at Embarrass Town Hall on the second Sunday of the month at 4 p.m.

4-H is a fun program open to students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. In 4-H, children learn by doing activities that allow youth to explore a variety of project topics. Topics may include art, science, healthy living, culture, animals, environment, robotics and more. The club aims to help children develop a variety of skills including leadership, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. It also helps kids make new friends.

learn, and have fun.

this time

To enroll, register at https://mn.4honline.com, select Four Corners 4-H club as your 4-H club and then select all project areas that your child is interested in.

For questions, contact Nicole Kudrle, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, North St. Louis County at 218-749-7120 or vande422@umn. edu.



submitted photo



Community notices

MDHA Sturgeon River Chapter to meet on Wednesday, April 14

REGIONAL- The MDHA Sturgeon River Chapter will meet on Wednesday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Pike-Britt Fire Hall located at 8229 Hwy. 68 in Britt. Members are encouraged to bring nominations for officers. Masks are to be worn and social distancing observed.

Teens invited to be 4-H **Pollinator Ambassadors**

REGIONAL- We're looking for teenagers to join our Pollinator Ambassador team. If you are passionate about bees, butterflies and the environment and want to learn more, then we need you. The 4-H Teen Pollinator Ambassador Program is designed to promote 4-H, pollinators, and pollinator habitats.

Youth selected to serve as ambassadors will develop their skills in leadership, public presentation, citizenship, community service, public relations, and team building and serve as spokespersons for the 4-H Pollinator Project.

A great ambassador has completed 8th grade or higher, is looking to make a difference in their community, is interested in bees, monarchs or other pollinator topics, likes to share and connect with other teens and is interested in learning about how to share and teach other pollinators.

If you're selected to join the Pollinator Ambassador team, we'll need to depend on each other. The educators coordinating the program will ensure you are safe and challenged to learn and grow as a leader. We will expect you to be dependable, engaged and to have fun.

Applications are open and due May 1. To apply, go to https://forms.gle/PnNg2rP9QDCsDZt27.

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For questions, contact Nicole Kudrle at vande422@umn.edu or 218-404-6596.



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ELECT



AMPB PBELL Mayor

What makes the City of Ely and the mayor a success? Its PEOPLE! Cast your Vote Tuesday, April 13

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Are your transitional lenses staying dark too long when coming indoors? If so, check out our new Hoya Sensity FAST* photochromatic lenses. This new generation of lens return to clear up to three times faster than previous transitional lenses.

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artist. Whether you are a seasoned artist or just starting out-you are an artist. Artists of all types and abilities are invited to attend the ...

Creative ONLINE Workshop Saturday, May 1 • 10 am to 12:30 pm.

*If you need help getting online access, please contact us.

This workshop is for anyone who is ready to bring their unique ideas to Cook's River Street. Artists and creatives are encouraged to look at our main street and offer ideas on how to increase visibility and signage, foster connection and cohesiveness, and fill up spaces with innovative design.

> This activity is part of Artists on Main Street, a partnership between the City of Cook and Rethos, with support from the Bush Foundation.

Eligibility

- Have creative ideas
- Live within a 30-mile radius of Cook City Hall
- Attend the online creative workshop

Benefits:

- Free training on creativity
- · New connections to other artists and downtown Cook
- Eligible to apply for It sTARTS on River Street project support of up to \$1,000



Contact to Register: Crystal Phillips, Cook Public Library

Call: 218-666-2210 Email: crystal.phillips@alslib.info

TOWER AMBULANCE

Tower Ambulance Commission not yet ready to seek a raise in the per-capita subsidy

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Members of the Tower Ambulance Commission are still reluctant to agree to an increase of the per capita subsidy amount, currently set at \$15, for the ambulance replacement fund.

At the quarterly meeting on April 5, Ambulance Supervisor Dena Suihkonen told the group that the city's attempt to get CDBG funding to help pay for a second ambulance was unsuccessful, because while Tower and Breitung qualify for CDBG funding, the surrounding townships of Eagles Nest, Greenwood, and Vermilion Lake do not.

"We didn't qualify," said Suihkonen. "It would have been nice.'

The service recently purchased a new ambulance but needs to replace one more rig to have two reliable units to respond to emergencies.

Right now, the ambulance replacement fund sits at just under \$60,000, Suihkonen told the commission, but the service's two older rigs, both with over 100,000 miles, are experiencing problems, and haven't been used for calls unless absolutely necessary. The 2013 GMC Duramax 4500 has been on the road less than 400 miles so far this year, documents show, and the 2005 Ford E450 has not been out at all, due to intermittent electrical issues. The estimated cost for a new rig is \$220,000.

Year-to-date, the ambulance service has recorded revenue of \$121,526 (24 percent of annual budget), and expenses of \$128,328 (27 percent of annual budget).

The service put on 2,375 transfer miles so far this year and will contribute \$1.66 for each of those miles to the ambulance replacement fund (\$3,942). The per-capita subsidy payments to the fund add about \$40,000 per year, in addition to a contribution from Bois Forte, which currently is \$5,000 a year.

Suihkonen told the commission that it's difficult to estimate the lifespan of an ambulance because the wear-and-tear of running rigs on "crappy roads" means a rig may need to be replaced sooner than the estimated ten-year lifespan.

Suihkonen told the board that almost all the transfers done so far this year have involved picking up local residents at area hospitals to transport them home, and only one has been further away than Duluth.

"Last year a lot of miles were put on by the former director," she said, "miles to faraway places. We are doing about the same number of [transfer] runs

but covering a lot fewer to \$2 per mile. miles.'

Commission member Larry McCray, of Eagles Nest Township, asked for an estimate on transfer miles for this year. Suihkonen said it was difficult to know but agreed that 10,000 miles would be a reasonable guess.

"911 calls are our business," she said, noting they only take transfers if there is adequate staffing left at home to cover any 911 calls. Suihkonen said they have only done one longer-distance transfer for a COVID-19 patient who needed to be transported to Brainerd to receive a higher level of care.

McCray noted the service had run about 3,300 miles for 911 calls in the first quarter. He said if the service is running 20,000 miles a year in five years it would put 100,000 miles on a rig.

"\$40,000 a year [in ambulance subsidy payments] times five years is \$200,000 for the ambulance subsidy," he said.

"With that amount, I can't justify asking my people to increase our [subsidy] amount," McCray said. "We are already contributing the amount needed to replace that ambulance."

McCray said the commission should look at increasing the payments the city makes for transfer miles from \$1.66 per mile

Suihkonen reminded the commission that the ambulance service needs to be able to meet the needs of our area residents, whether than means responding to 20 calls a year or 500 calls a vear.

"We have to depend on each other," she said. She noted that area communities are setting their per capita subsidy rates higher than Tower's.

"Virginia's is twice as much and you're upset because I'm asking for an extra five dollars," she said, pointedly to McCray. "It is very little when you are talking about safety.'

Others on the commission seemed more amenable to a possible increase.

"Are we sitting here expecting the city of Tower to subsidize the ambulance for us?" asked Breitung representative Chuck Tekautz.

Vermilion Lake representative Phil Anderson noted the service did need more than one ambulance in service.

McCray stuck to his point that Tower was not paying their fair share.

The discussion then moved on to the issue of the two older ambulances, with McCray asking for a firm quote on what it would cost to bring either of them into reliable service.

"If it takes five thousand to fix one of them, and then it can last another three years, that's an invest-



Ambulance director Dena Suihkonen pictured with Tower's newest ambulance. file photo

ment that should be made," McCray said. "Doing nothing is the wrong thing. The commission

passed a motion to ask the Tower City Council to get estimates for repairs on both rigs.

The commission also noted they had not been provided quarterly financials. The city had been providing monthly bank statements but stopped providing them at the end of last year because the commission said they did not need such detailed information. A summary financial report was not available for the meeting but was emailed to commission members the day after.

"We just want to see the money in, and the money out," said Tekautz.

Suihkonen also told

the commission the city had paused work on the business plan that was currently underway and was now working on a rural ambulance assessment.

"This study will look at everything," Suihkonen said. It was noted that problems had been found with the data in the previous business plan.

The commission will hold a special meeting in the near future to finalize wording on the ambulance vehicle subsidy aid agreement because there were questions on the wording supplied by the Greenwood Township attorney that the township had requested be added to the agreement.

Distance learning extended at ISD 696 by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY SCHOOLS

Students could return to school on April 12

ELY - The Ely school district administrative team late last week extended distance learning for all students in grades 6-12 until Monday, April 12, due to the continued spiking of positive coronavirus cases.

Ely students in grades K-12 remain in distance learning until at least Monday, April 12.

Another case was reported last Wednesday, which increased the number of reported cases of

"With positive test status changing after ten days in isolation, some of the cases from March 15 -March 21 may no longer be considered 'active cases," Erie said. The cumulative positive test count is 44 for

said

With the move to distance learning, a pause in extracurricular activities is also being observed.

"These activities are expected to resume on April 12 as we realize their

tested positive for COVID-19 becomes 'exempt' from future quarantines for the next 90 days," she said.

Students should have all their learning materials at home already.

of returning to in-person learning as soon as we believe we can do so safely for all those involved," Erie said. "Your patience, understanding and precautions you are taking are greatly

we have every intention

"You may also email

We expected to have the Memorial students return on April 6, dependent on evidence that the spread of COVID-19 in our school community had subsided," said ISD 696 Superintendent Erik Erie. "This decision was made to help stem the spread of COVID-19 that is still with us."

COVID-19 to 28 in the Ely school community between March 15 and March 31. The school count increased again last Thursday with the report of another COVID-19 case.

A total of 29 cases, 23 in the Memorial building, and six in the Washington building, were reported from March 15 thru April 1.

1704 E Camp St. | PO Box 89 | Ely, MN 55731 | askjean.net

the school year.

According to St. Louis County Public Health more than 76 percent of all COVID-19 positive cases reported in Northern St. Louis County are from the Ely area.

"They also report that Ely has also accounted for 15 percent of the cases for the entire county," Erie importance to our students and families as part of the school experience and the benefits they provide," Erie said.

Megan Anderson, Ely 6-12 principal, reminded parents to continue to share all COVID-19 test results with school nurse Mary Schwinghamer.

"Anyone who has

Holly at hsherman@ely. k12.mn.us and she will gather any needed materials for your child," she added. "I assure you these are not easy decisions, and I'm hopeful this will be our last transition."

"We realize the hardships on students, families and teachers that come with distance learning, so

appreciated in getting us all back together on the Ely Public Schools campus."

For questions or feedback.contactErieateerie@ ely.k12.mn.us or 218-750-4564.



"CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW ... ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;"

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

A bold infrastructure plan Can a do-nothing Washington get America moving once again?

A conservative reader recently sent us a transcript of a monologue by liberal comedian Bill Maher, who hosts Real Time on HBO, and much of it rang true, particularly as it pertains to America and China and the race to "win" the 21st century.

As Maher points out, it's a race between a serious country and a silly country. You can guess which is which.

"In two generations, China has built 500 entire cities from scratch, moved the majority of their huge population from poverty to the middle class, and mostly cornered the market in 5G and pharmaceuticals," said Maher. "Oh, and they bought Africa," he added, referencing China's Silk Road infrastructure initiative which is using global investment to snap up markets and resources around the world. "In China alone, they have 40,000 kilometers of high-speed rail. America has none," noted Maher. "We've been having Infrastructure Week every week since 2009 but we never do anything. Nothing ever moves in this impacted colon of a country. We see a problem and we ignore it, lie about it, fight about it, endlessly litigate it... and then write a bill where a half-assed solution doesn't kick in for 10 years. China sees a problem and they fix it. They build a dam. We debate what to rename it." As for silliness, Maher

highlighted the manufactured kerfuffle over a decision by Dr. Seuss Enterprises to cease publication of six relatively obscure book titles that had depictions of Asians and African Americans that hadn't aged well. Conservative media has played up the decision as their latest front in the culture wars, which seems to be where America fights its political battle these days. It's all distraction that hides the invest the funds to maintain it, much less update it for the 21st century.

My conservative friend may not like to hear it, but it's his party that has been the primary impediment to those investments. Since the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s, investing in the kind of public benefits that the rest of the developed world takes for granted has taken a back seat to tax cuts for the wealthy. That's left much of America with broken down, 1960s-vintage infrastructure and technology, while the rest of the developed world has continued to advance. After years of decay, many rural areas and the left-behind cities that dot our nation's heartland experience conditions that border on Third World by today's standards.

Americans across the spectrum recognize how far we have fallen as a country, which is why there is broad support for more infrastructure investment. Rural America, including northeastern Minnesota, will be among the big winners. This bill, if approved, will mean huge investments in improving and expanding the housing stock in our communities, fixing our busted roads and dilapidated Main Street business districts, and repairing aging water and sewer infrastructure, something communities across our region are struggling with every day. Biden's proposal includes \$100 billion to bring broadband to rural America, an investment that will have major, long-term economic benefits for our region.

Here's the other thing Biden's proposal will create: Jobs, and lots of them. For northeastern Minnesota, where too many residents have fallen for the GOP's silly and divisive culture wars schtick in recent years, this proposal, if signed into law, will create



Letters from Readers

I'm voting for Kess

OPINION

As a resident for 44 years, I join many of you who have observed city government in Ely. From those years as residents, we know all the ways that our local government functions and the importance of voting in all elections including the upcoming mayoral elections.

Each of the candidates for mayor should be given thoughtful consideration and appreciation for their desire to serve this area's residents and visitors. All of the current candidates have performed various roles in this community over the years, giving us an opportunity to know them. Our vote must be in support of the best prepared candidate to work as mayor with the city council and the city manager and in that role to provide political leadership and represent Ely.

I believe that in his years of experience as a city councilor, educator and resident of this community, Paul Kess stands out as the best suited candidate to engage in the problem solving, public engagement and leadership desired in a mayor for Ely. His years of experience in city government and long-standing working relationships with Ely businesses and residents, councilors, mayors, township boards, public agencies, county and state officials contribute to a mayor's perspective. His insight into the workings, challenges and potentials of the city will enable him to foster Ely's assets. Paul will understand and value local talents, resources, history and determined citizenry to encourage building an even stronger Ely. Talk to him and vote for him. He will listen and work to help you continue improving Ely's quality of life. Being Mayor of Ely is a big responsibility, as Ely is a small town of widespread interest. I support Paul Kess for Ely's next mayor.

Chauvin failed to see a fellow human

Derek Chauvin failed to view George Floyd as a fellow human being. The image of Chauvin's knee on Floyd's neck is chillingly similar to the image of a rancher with his knee on the neck of cattle as he brands them, which then brings up a horrifying image in my mind of slave owners doing the same. When George Floyd kept saying, "I can't breathe," anyone with any sense of humanity would be alarmed enough to stop. Only a monster would ignore these pleas for help and press down harder.

At this time, we pray for justice and change so that, in this nation, we never again witness such an atrocity at the hands of a law enforcement officer, one sworn to protect us. I think about a lecture I attended on racism a few years ago. The concept presented was on the de-humanization and demonization of those "not like me," which is often the basis for cruelty and indifference towards those "others".

The world witnessed George Floyd's death. Bystanders shouted out to Chauvin, reminding him that under his knee was a man.

A man struggling to breathe. A man fighting for his life.

And, regarding Australia's record-breaking flooding, following last year's catastrophic wildfires, this analysis: "There is a very strong link between global warming and that intensification in rainfall," said Andy Pitman, director of the ARC Center of Excellence for Climate Extremes at the University of New South Wales. "There's good scientific evidence to say extreme rain is becoming more extreme due to global warming." Australia's conservative government - heavily resistant to aggressive action on climate change that might threaten the country's fossil fuel industry has yet to make that link.

The Trump administration talked a lot about the need to update our country's highways, bridges and water pipes - but kept kicking the can down the (crumbling) road. I am thankful that President Biden has made infrastructure a top priority and has proposed a serious, ambitious plan.

What is increasingly obvious is that any new construction projects, whether public or private, must take into account the new normal of extreme weather events. Houses should no longer be built on flood plains nor ocean beachfronts. And, closer to home, any **Environmental Impact Statement** for a proposed mine should prove that the project can be done safely not just in average conditions but able to withstand our increasingly frequent "storms of the century." For the foreseeable future, given this new unstable climate reality, the cost of building a copper-nickel mine which would assure protection of the BWCAW watershed from toxic runoff, if even possible, would likely be prohibitive, canceling the company's profit motive.

fact that Washington doesn't seem able to do anything anymore.

Which is, perhaps, why President Biden's proposal last week to spend \$2 trillion on the most dramatic upgrade in America's infrastructure in generations was so breathtaking. It was the first serious proposal to move this country forward in decades.

There was a time when America believed in itself and when both Democrats and Republicans were willing to invest in its future. In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, we built the interstate highway system, we built schools to educate the baby boom, we invested in airports, seaports, and cleaning up our environment. Today, as much of that infrastructure is crumbling, we won't even more good-paying jobs than anything this region has seen in a century.

President Trump, with a Republican-led Congress, had years to deliver the infrastructure plan he promised during his 2016 campaign. All he left behind was a half-built wall, that Mexico didn't pay for. "Sleepy Joe" is ready to deliver the goods and create the jobs in our region that Trump only talked about.

Biden has the support of Democrats, and the American people. The only question is whether Mitch McConnell, Pete Stauber, and their Party of No will finally allow America's impacted colon to start moving again.

VOTE in the Wednesday, April 13 Primary!

Bill Tefft Ely

A human being **Ellie Larmouth** Tower

Climate change makes mining more hazardous, too

Two items in the New York Times about recent weather disasters caught my attention. The first explained why February's severe arctic blast shut down the electrical grid in Texas, resulting in huge commercial and human losses: "The continent-spanning storms showed that American infrastructure wasn't ready for climate change. Extreme weather is placing growing stress on a system that was built decades ago under the expectation that the environment around it would remain stable."

Elton Brown Morse Twp.

Where the North Country Sounds Off

This must be pandemic fatigue

I'm once again facing a blank page. This has been a period when nothing seems to glisten. Nothing calls out to me. There are interesting stories on the radio but they don't capture my imagination. Nothing seems to hold my attention for very long.

The list of things to do continues to

lengthen. Lately, few things are is receding ahead of schedule. getting checked off. I start proj-



ects but have trouble finishing them. There are people I should call but wonder what there will be to talk about. Duffy is barking more. He wants me to remember that he's ready to play whenever I am. But all I want to do is sit in a chair and stare out the window. Things are

changing. The snow

The days are getting longer and

warmer. On Easter Sunday, I let the fire go out in the wood stove for the first time in many months. I'm pressed to keep thinking of the future. It's unfolding right before my eyes. Change never stops just because I do.

I have survived the pandemic, so far anyway. I've received the vaccine. I should be happy. The experts say I will be able to visit with my family again. I've missed them so much. But when? It's year two and we may be on the brink of a fourth wave. I hesitate to share these feelings. We all must carry them, at least sometimes.

Especially "the missing" part.

I've never admitted to being bored. But lately, I've wondered if that isn't part of this malaise. Nothing looks new to me. Every task has been done a hundred times. Where are the challenges I relished? There are lots of things that need to be done. Spring cleaning. Raking the yard. Pulling dead debris away from perennial flower beds. Reorganizing the sheds and that haphazard mess I left when winter suddenly set in. But where's the motivation?

In the darkest days of winter, my soul seemed closer to the surface. I could find a book on the shelf that spoke to me. "Open. Fill your mind with the spirit of perseverance, and an ability to find wonder in even the smallest thing." When our world is frozen solid, that's about all there is. But now it's spring. Even its name is supposed to energize us. "Wake up. Step out of hibernation. Do something, anything." It's time now to take action. But I can't.

Inotice how I jump from task to task. When I circle back fifteen

See FATIGUE....pg. 5

Why reforming the filibuster matters

As Washington turns its attention to infrastructure and other matters of policy, the Senate filibuster isn't commanding quite the same headlines as it did a few weeks back. But that's only because the issue is percolating behind the

scenes. At some point, it will return to the limelight.

And when it does, you should understand what's at stake. Because as obscure as it seems, it actually goes to the heart of how we operate as a democracy.

The key point to remember is that as the country's population has shifted, a growing number of senators have come to represent a shrinking portion of Americans. In the House, this doesn't matter as much, since districts are apportioned by population. But in the Senate, current rules



exceptions. This means that 41 senators can block most legislation,

so in theory, the senators coming from the 21 smallest states-who together represent less than 12 percent of the U.S. population—can keep the nation's agenda from moving forward.

It's hard to believe the country's founders would think this makes sense. And it's certainly a far cry from government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

In particular, it means that legislative initiatives that appear to have great popular support-including infrastructure spending, certain gun control measures, a higher minimum wage, even a legitimate path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants-will face tough sledding in the Senate. This is because it is remarkably easy for the leader of the Senate minority, Republican Mitch McConnell, to muster the 41 votes he needs simply to block legislation from moving forward. It's a silent and powerful parliamentary move: Without Americans as a whole or senators' constituents being any the wiser, bills die without coming up for a vote and there are no fingerprints on the murder weapon.

Now, the Senate wasn't designed to be like the House, and there's a lot to be said for maintaining rules that slow legislation down and ensure that the majority can't simply get what it wants without negotiating. But the key word is

"negotiating"—when the filibuster is used simply to ensure that a president and elected majority can't get a bill considered, it's become something else. So while there appears to be little appetite in the Senate for ending the filibuster outright, there's strong incentive to explore alternatives.

These would be in keeping with a long history of filibuster reforms in the Senate. Budget reconciliation starting in the 1970s allowed many bills related to taxing and spending to move forward with a simple majority; in 1975, the Senate changed the number of votes needed to move a bill forward from 67 to 60; and more recently, the Senate carved out exemptions on confirmation votes. In other words, there is precedent for change.

The options include expanding the breadth of bills that are exempt from the 60-vote requirement to move forward. Or the Senate could require more members (right now it's just one) to force a so-called "cloture" vote, which brings the filibuster into play. Or it could reduce the 60-vote requirement, either for all bills or for particular kinds. Or, as some senators seem to favor, it could revive the requirement that senators intent on blocking legislation actually must get up and talk about it-which would have some drawbacks but at least would make it clear who's standing in the way.

The Senate's rules are a big reason we have a Congress that struggles to get things done-and a big reason our democracy seems to be hamstrung. I believe wholeheartedly in representative democracy, and in not trying to shortcut it or to restrict it: Proposals in front of Congress should be able to get a full debate and an up-or-down vote in

which Americans' elected representatives make clear where they stand. That's how we hold them accountable and how legislative bodies go about the hard work of finding broadly acceptable solutions to difficult challenges. The filibuster allows a small group of them to sidestep all that.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government;Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Authoritarianism or democracy?

Authoritarian government replacing a democratic government in the United States of America? How is that even possible? Not institutions, not history, but people determine what government they have.

In authoritarian regimes, real government power is held by an individual or a small group of leaders. The leaders often come from one small group or from a small group of aristocratic families. Authoritarian governments may hold elections, but citizens do not have any voice in how they are ruled. Citizens must obey, and not participate in, government decisions. Authoritarian systems do not allow freedoms of speech, press, and religion, and they do not follow majority rule nor protect minority rights. Worth noting, weapons such as guns in any form are generally not lawful and must be surrendered.

Democracies in general respect basic individual liberties such as freedom of speech and religion. No government allows absolute freedom, but democracies do not censor newspapers and public expression of opinions. People accept decisions made by the majority of voters in a free election. The elections must be fair and inclusive of all citizens. Democracies are not controlled by a small group or an individual but are governed by the "rule of law" in which everyone, even the leaders, are subject to the law. The candidates elected must actually take office and are not selected by other than the voters. Political leaders cannot control the results.

Letters from Readers

Remember when America was great? Particularly in the several decades after World War II, democracy was thriving, great laws like Social Security, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Economic Opportunity Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act were passed with bipartisan support. We put an American on the moon. We worked together and made the hard decisions. Everything was possible. Many of our citizens never experienced that time nor know what was accomplished by a bipartisan Congress, President, and Court that wished for the government to work for the people. Today, we see vote

after vote on straight party lines day after day. Many in Congress actually want the government to fail for their political gain. GOP Sen. Mike Lee of Utah recently stated, clearly not in defense of democracy: "Democracy isn't the objective; liberty, peace, and prosperity are. We want the human condition to flourish. Rank democracy can thwart that."

We experienced an attempted coup d'état by then-President Trump and his supporters. Coup d'état is the sudden, often violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements. Fortunately, the former President failed primarily because most of the police and the military were faithful to their oaths to protect the United States government. Also fortunately, the Republicans did not control both houses of Congress. It was clear that most of

the Republican Party was willing to ignore the will of the people as expressed in the 2020 presidential election and to support the Big Lie put forth by then-President Trump and his supporters. We witnessed a portion of the mob gathered at the Capitol carrying out insurrectionist violence attempting to disrupt and throw out the results of the election.

We live in a time when many people have reduced the definition of democracy to essentially two elements: I can say whatever I want, even if false or damaging, without accountability (because of the First Amendment) and I can intimidate and bully others to do as I wish, by acquiring weapons and resorting to violence (because of the Second Amendment). Ask

yourself, in the last year have you heard mention of any other part of the constitution besides references to the first and second amendments?

History and statistics show that losing a democracy is easy and likely. Do you see a nation of people committed and capable of making our democracy work? Or do you see people focused on "winning" every debate and seeking to maximize "what's in this for me" and forcing their values and opinions without regard to truth, without regard to who may be excluded or injured, and without regard to the damage it causes our democracy? What do you see in our future? **Keith Steva**

Cook

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FATIGUE...Continued from page 4

minutes or an hour later, I into this moment of truth, find a jar or a drawer still left ready for a brave confes- before. I stand still, patient- so much "bad news" and open. I'll discover a small sion. I am not "doing fine" pile of dust and wood chips in the corner of the room with the broom and dustpan propped nearby against the wall. As I quickly finish sweeping, I try to recall what distracted me from completing this attempt to tidy things up. I've started to wonder about myself. Even writing has become difficult! I had an article all ready to submit to the paper, but when it was time to press the Send key, I couldn't. I reread it one more time and asked myself, "Who even cares about this?" My answer was "No one." I had to return to the computer and begin again. But not one topic seemed worth the effort. That was the problem. Nothing seemed to matter. When facing "writer's block", we're told to just sit back down and write! So that is what I did. I stumbled

ly waiting, listening, Yes, it

that's left its scent the night small feat, coping with such limited resources I've given it my best. So why is it hitting me so hard now? Is there some hidden purpose in this inertia? Am I to stop my "doing, doing" and instead rest, reflect, and celebrate that I am still alive? I can't deny the things that I'm grateful for. So, is this the message? Today is another day! Duffy has once again gotten me out the door. He's racing around me in circles, ecstatic. The sun feels good on my face. Not a quarter mile down the road, I hear myself singing. "Oh, what a beautiful morning!" Could I be getting my groove back? Maybe! I know the drill. Be patient. Stay vigilant. And keep the faith. We gotta believe. There are brighter days ahead.

After twelve long months of concerted effort to remain hopeful, positive, upbeat, engaged, creative, able to see the beauty, and be satisfied with the love of my devoted critter companions - pep-talking my way through every frustration and disappointment and determined to express gratitude in spite of feeling overwhelmed by grief - it's time to shout. "Everything is not ok." Suddenly, heroic perseverance is not working.

It's 8:00 a.m. Just when I worry that I've said too much, Duffy comes to my rescue. Like clockwork, his little system sends him rushing to the door, scratching for my attention. I grab his leash and collar, slip on my jacket, and we step outside. He sniffs his way down the driveway, curious with every wild creature is spring! The woodpeckers are drumming on hollow trees, announcing they are available. It's mating season. The cranes and geese on the beaver pond are back from their winter migration. It's time to build nests. The pussy willows catch morning rays of sunlight and so do tiny flies, buzzing with the earth's warming. Eventually, we return to the house. Duffy is relieved and satisfied. I'm reminded that a whole world is happening right outside my door, whenever I am ready to step out and take it in.

We've been confined for a very long time, isolated from the usual sources of love and inspiration. I've been relying on my own devices to enrich my soul, bolster my confidence, and trust in myself, humanity, and the universe. It is no

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Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.

How to spot a fake check scam

REGIONAL- You have received a check in the mail that you weren't expecting. Is it real or is it a scam? In a fake check scam, scammers send you a counterfeit check and ask for you to return it or a portion of it right away.

To avoid falling for this scam, here are some red flags that you can look for. If you spot any of these signs, don't deposit the check.

► A prospective buyer sends you a check for more than the asking price "by mistake" and ask you to refund the balance.

► You receive your first check from a work from home job and your "employer" asks you to send money for supplies.

➤You get a "job" as a personal shopper and are sent a check to set up a gift or credit card and the

"employer" asks for the card numbers or PIN.

➤You receive a check for sweepstakes winnings that can only be claimed by sending some money back to cover taxes and fees.

Don't ever give out PIN numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, or your Social Security number, and do not cash any suspicious checks. Never use money

from a check to send gift cards, money orders or wire money to anyone you just met. Toss offers that ask you to pay for a prize. Don't accept a check for more than the selling price. And you can always bring the check in to your local bank or credit union, and they can help determine if a check is real.

Week of April 12

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.

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 April 20.

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

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.



Mathias Boshey wins T-S Elementary spelling bee

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Pictured: Front (from left): Luca Sunsdahl, Thomas Aldrich, and Bentley Crego. Back: Nai-lee Moyer, Brayden Warren, Kellin Pratt, and Mathias Boshey. photos by S. Ukkola

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA Staff Writer

TOWER-Fifth-grader Mathias Boshey took top honors at the Tower-Soudan Elementary School spelling bee, held on March 31.

Students from grades four through six qualified for this year's competition, including Thomas Aldrich (grade 6), Luca Sunsdahl (4), Nai-lee Moyer (4), Bentley Crego (5), Brayden Warren (6), Mathias Boshey (5), and Kellin Pratt (6).

Luca and Nai-lee were the first to be eliminated during round one. Luca was misled by the word "squeeze," because it sounds like it should have a "w" in it, while Nai-lee missed "sneakers."

The second round led to the elimination of Bravden who added an extra "d" to the word "radish." In round three, Thomas missed the word "griddle."

Bentley, Mathias, and Kellin held on tight through rounds four and five. Crego successfully spelled "discomfort" and "citizen." Mathias correctly spelled "aromas" and "monopoly." Kel-lin spelled both "swindle" and the tricky word "scaffolding" correctly.

In the final round Bentley misspelled "comrades," when he forgot the "e". Kellin missed on "plodding," as in "the children went plodding down the path" when he spelled it with two "t"s instead of "d"s. Mathias successfully spelled "achieve."

Boshey achieved the win with his final correct spelling of the word "sensible" to become Tower-Soudan Elementary's top speller. Mathias comes from a family of good spellers; his father Mark won the T-S Spelling Bee when he was in school. Due to the pandemic, there are no district or regional spelling bee this year.s







Bee winner Mathias (above) and finalists Bentley (above left), and Kellin (left).

COMMUNITY NEWS

St. James Movie Night on April 18

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower will host a free movie night on Sunday, April 18 at 6 p.m. The movie this month is "Beautifully Broken: Three Families. Two Worlds. One Incredible True Story." Beautifully Broken is the true story of three families, from different countries, each struggling to find hope and safety amid the devastation of war. A refugee's escape, a prisoner's promise, and a daughter's painful secret converge in this inspiring real-life story

of hope. As three fathers fight to save their families, their lives become intertwined in an unlikely journey across the globe, where they learn the healing power of forgiveness and reconciliation. The movie is rated PG-13.

Info session for parents of upcoming Kindergarten and preschool students set for April 21

TOWER- Parents of children who will be four years old or entering Kindergarten are invited to a

ATTENTION **TOWER & BREITUNG** RESIDENTS

A committee has been formed with members from each community to research options for a long-term solution to police coverage in our areas. Our short-term solution will be to continue to work with the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department for patrol coverage. Questions or comments are invited and may be directed to the **City of Tower or Breitung Township** Clerk's Offices.

special information session on Wednesday, April 21 at the Tower-Soudan Elementary School. Parents of children who will be four years old and eligible for pre-Kindergarten should come at 4 p.m., and parents of children who will be five years old and eligible for Kindergarten at 4:30 p.m. Both programs are in the school gym. Children are also encouraged to attend to tour the school and meet their teachers.

Coaches needed for T-Ball and **Coach Pitch Little** League

SOUDAN- Adult volunteer coaches are needed to lead this year's T-Ball and Coach Pitch Little League teams for local youth ages five to eight.

Longtime coach Nate Dostert, who has been working with these teams since he was a teenager, will be coaching the older Little League teams this year.

"We need some coaches to step up," he

said, "and also need an adult willing to help organize the program." Dostert said he will work with any volunteers who step forward and guide them through the season.

The teams practice in Soudan, but play games throughout the area as part of the East Range Little League Association. Each team plays between eight and ten games during the season, which starts mid-May and runs through the end of June.

responsibil-Coach ities include bringing equipment to the games, running practices (mostly just for the coach-pitch level), canceling games and notifying families in case of inclement weather (thunderstorms), filling out rosters on game day, and coaching during the games.

"Practices are mostly just held in May prior to the games starting," said Dostert. "And for the T-Ball team, no real practices are needed."

"I am looking for a parent of a player or any other willing adult to step up," said Dostert.

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from games and practices. Joan Dostert, Nate's mother, will be organizing the concession stand and will also be recruiting volunteers to help run the stand on game days.

Anyone interested in learning more about this fun and memorable volunteer opportunity should call Nate Dostert at 218-780-2242.

Parade float registrations required by May 8 to see if there is enough interest to hold a parade

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board is hoping that there will be a parade on the Fourth of July this year. With the COVID-19 restrictions being loosened, and more citizens getting vaccinated, things are getting closer to "back to normal."

But for the parade to happen, the TSLVEB needs to get the public in-

volved now!

The board needs to hear from all businesses, families, organizations, and individuals who plan on having an entry in the parade. The level of interest shown by all of you will be the deciding factor on whether or not a parade will happen.

Sadly, due to many issues caused by the pandemic, the high school marching bands have not had the opportunity to practice. It is most likely that these bands will not be marching in the parade this year.

Everyone who wants to participate in the parade this year should contact Julie Johnson at tseventsboard@gmail. com, or by phone/text at 218-750-7242 by May 8. This is the deadline the board has set to allow time to get all the aspects of the parade in place for Sunday, July 4.

Fireworks are being planned for Saturday, July 3.

Read us online at www.timberjay.com

ELY Absentee

GONE TOO SOON Ely musician, Earl Bulinski, passes away

Founding member of The Electras

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY – The local music scene is mourning the loss of Earl Bulinski this week. Word of his death, at age 72, swept over this community last weekend.

Earl and his wife, Sharon, spent their winters in their home away from home on South Padre Island, Texas, and returned to their Pattison Street home in Ely every summer.

Inrecentyears, Bulinski played with Jef Cerniak and Andy Messerschmidt in the Tru Blu North Trio, and were regulars at various live music venues around the city as well as the Boundary Waters Blues Festival in Winton.

The Electras were formed when brothers Bill (lead guitar, vocals) and Earl Bulinski (rhythm guitar) came together as a duo in 1962, soon after moving to Ely and enrolling at Ely Memorial High School.

The Electras, described as an American garage rock band, recorded



Earl Bulinski, center, played with the Tru Blu North Trio, including Jef Cerniak, left, and Andy Messerschmidt, on drums, at various Ely venues, including the Boundary Waters Blues Festival in Winton. Bulinski died last weekend at age 72. photo by K. Vandervort

between 1965 and 1967 during their musical career, including their most-known tune, "Dirty Old Man." Past members included Earl and Bill Bulinski, Gary Omerza, Fred Godec, Len Erickson, Kaye Spalj, Jerry Fink, Tim Elfving and Harvey Korkki. Additionally, the

band hired Chuck Novak (Ely's current mayor) as their manager, and in the fall of 1965, Novak put the Electras in contact with songwriter and record producer Warren Kendrick of Dove Recording Studio to pen and record the group's debut single. The

band's first release, "Bout My Love," was issued in late 1965.

The Electras were best known as a "cover band," playing songs recorded by acts including The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Animals, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and The Young Rascals.

In 2010, the Electras were inducted into the Mid-America Music Hall of Fame, which saw original group members reconvene in Elv for a reunion concert at Dee's Bar.

voting for the Ely mayoral primary election continues through Monday. Election Day is Tuesday

Don't forget to vote in Elv

from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Early voters will need to complete an absentee ballot application, available in the Ely City Clerk's office or the foyer in the entrance of City Hall.

at the Ely Senior Center

The City Clerk's office is open Monday -Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Saturday, April 10, 10 a.m.-3p.m., and Monday, April 12 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for early primary election voting.

The two top voter-getters next week will advance to the general election in August.

For the general election, absentee/early voting opens on Friday, June 25.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



patrolling the yard for eats

gobble then take flight

Ibraries

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

	naiy
Monday	Noon-6 pm
Tuesday	Noon-6 pm
Wednesday	Noon-6 pm
Thursday	Noon-6 pm
Friday	Noon-5 pm
Phone: 827-334	45

LAW ENFORCEMEN T Ely Police Department Activity Report March 15-31, 2021 Support groups **Arrests/Citations**

owner agreed to pay the vet bills. was feeling down. Officers deter- parking citation. The vehicle was AA - Alcoholics

Anonymous

ELY-A recent survey hosted by the Ely Chamber of Commerce to gauge НОР opinions on shopping local resulted in response from 249 people and 68 "We are extremely grateful to all those who participated in the

Local campaign."

A second piece of the campaign included the development of a logo and slogan. The Chamber offered \$200 in Chamber Bucks for the development of a Shop Local logo and slogan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ely Chamber launches 'shop local' campaign

Alison Zaverl, of Ely, submitted the winning logo and slogan. Zaverl, a 2015 graduate union in Duluth. Though she has no graphic design

experience, she said she enjoyed creating the Shop Local-Ely (pronounced

bors," she said.

Chamber members gathered this week for a

Shop Locally) logo. As the granddaughter of a local business owner, Alison knows how important shopping locally can

be. "Money spent locally can make a big difference. I encourage you to go out and support your neigh-

virtual annual meeting to

learn more about the Shop Local survey feedback.

The Shop Local campaign will officially launch on Saturday, May 22 in conjunction with the Citywide Rummage, Business Crazy Day, and Used Equipment and Watercraft Sale.

"Watch for Alison's logo and slogan on upcoming Shop Local-Ely announcements and materials," Sebesta said.



businesses owners.

survey," said Eva Sebesta,

Executive Director of the

Chamber. "The feedback

is deeply appreciated and

will aid business owners

as we develop our Shop

► Traffic Stop- Individual arrested for 3rd Degree DWI and Speeding.

Property Damage-Individual arrested for 2nd Degree DWI, 2nd Degree Test Refusal, and Failure to report a crash.

► Disturbance- Individual arrested for Violation of a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order.

►Intoxicated Person-Individual arrested for a Warrant.

► Disturbance- Two individuals issued citations for Disorderly Conduct.

► Attempt to Pick-up-Officers arrested an individual on an outstanding warrant.

Complaints

≻Check Welfare- Officers were contacted about an individual that was screaming. Officers contacted the individual who was enjoying the night.

► Disturbance- Officers were contacted about an individual that was in a local business yelling. Officers located the individual at another business and was told they could not be yelling in the business.

► Damage to Property-Officers were contacted about a vehicle that hit a light pole. There was minor damage and the case number was provided to the individual.

► Animal Disturbance-Officers were contacted about a dog that bit another dog. One

► Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual get back into their residence.

► Mental Health- Officers were contacted by an individual having a mental health issue. Officers determined the individual was not a harm to themselves or others

► Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual get back into their residence.

► Public Assist- Officers were contacted about possible explosives that were found while cleaning. Officers contacted the Minnesota Duty Officer to properly dispose of the explosives.

► Disturbance- Officers assisted the Ely Hospital with an out of control patient.

► Damage to Property-Officers were contacted about vandalism to a building. This case is under investigation.

Property Damage- Officers were contacted about a vehicle that had minor damage to the rear bumper. Officers provided the individual with a case number.

➤Check Welfare- Officers were contacted to check on an individual that was not answering the phone. Officers located the individual safe.

► Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a possible domestic assault. Officers determined that it was an argument.

► Suicide Threats- Officers were contacted about an individual that was intoxicated and

mined that the individual was not a harm to themselves and put a safety plan in place.

► Structure Fire- Officers were contacted about a possible fire. Officers located the smoke and determined it was coming out of a chimney.

►Loud Music- Officers were contacted about an individual that was playing music too loud. The individual agreed to turn the music down.

► Check Welfare- Officers were contacted to check on an intoxicated individual. Officers determined that the spouse was able to care for the individual.

► Disturbance- Officers were contacted about an unwanted individual. The individual left prior to the officer arrival.

► Threats- Officers were contacted about an upset employee that was terminated. Officers mediated the situation.

► Unwanted Person- Officers were contacted about an individual that was unwanted. Officers gave the individual a ride to a hotel for the night.

► Unwanted Person- Officers asked an individual sleeping on a couch to leave an apartment complex.

► Loud Music- Officers were contacted about an individual that was playing music too loud. The individual agreed to turn the music down.

▶ Parking Problem- Vehicle was parked in violation of Calendar Parking and given a

also towed for numerous outstanding parking citations.

► Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a couple that was having an argument. Officers mediated the situation.

► Suspicious Activity-Officers were contacted about an individual trying to open a door. Officers were unable to locate the individual.

► Harassment- Officers were contacted about an individual being harassed. This case is under investigation.

► Animal Disturbance-Officers were contacted by an individual that had their dog bit by another dog. This case is under investigation.

► Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual get back into their residence.

► Assist Other Agency-Officers were requested by a neighboring agency to assist with an unwanted person.

► Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual get back into their residence.

► Assist Other Agency-Officers assisted a neighboring agency with an intoxicated individual.

► Public Assist- Officers assisted an individual get back into their residence.

► Mental Health- Officers were contacted by an individual having a mental health issue. Officers determined the individual was not a harm to themselves or others.

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. **CAREGIVER SUPPORT** GROUPS: Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital Conference Room B

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COOK HOSPITAL

Hospital steers steady course through COVID storm Ups and downs of turbulent year are detailed in annual report

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- In a year turned topsy-turvy by the coronavirus pandemic, hospitals faced new and difficult challenges, that for some threatened their very existence.

But when all was said and done with 2020, Cook Hospital weathered the storm intact.

It's an accomplishment rightly measured against a report from Becker's Hospital Review in March that 2020 was "a record year for rural hospital closures." Twenty rural hospitals closed last year, one more than the 19 that closed in 2019. The downward impact on patient numbers and services provided exerted by the pandemic was a major contributor to last year's failures.

Cook Hospital certainly felt the pinch, as detailed in its 2020 annual report. The hospital's operating revenue in 2020, \$13,939,696, declined by

nearly \$193,000 compared to 2019.

"The overall contributor to the loss compared to 2019 was COVID," said hospital CEO Teresa Debevec. "We put many services on hold when it first started. Our outpatient surgeries, colonoscopy and endoscopy, had to be put on hold, rehab services took only those patients who couldn't do a home exercise program, and many other services in our outpatient area (were curtailed)."

As services decreased, expenses also dropped. Operational expenses of \$15,112,688 were \$65,346 lower last year than in 2019, making the net loss from hospital operations \$1,172,992. That amount was \$127,610 more than in 2019.

However, the hospital also received significant non-operating revenue from the hospital levy, grants and donations, including additional COVID relief funds last year, and as in past years those funds kept the hospital operating in the black. Non-operating revenue for 2020 was \$1,932,642, an increase of \$1153,209 from 2019. Including this revenue in the overall budget picture, Cook Hospital finished the year on the positive side of the ledger by \$25,599, a far slimmer margin than the nearly \$760,000 of net income generated in 2019.

Debevec noted that the financial results are pending preliminary, completion of an audit this month. Tracking allocation of COVID funding has been challenging, she said.

"The COVID funds have been quite the experience," she said. "They go back and forth on when we have to claim that money and how. It won't affect the income from operations. The grant funds are added in the non-operating revenue."

Two local groups dedicated to supporting the hospital financially made significant gifts in 2020. The W.C. Heiam Medical Foundation donated \$37,858, and also gave each employee a \$50 gift card to be used at local businesses in appreciation for their hard work during the pandemic. The Cook Area Healthcare Auxiliary donated \$70,000 generated from the operation of its thrift shop. While services were

reduced for a good portion of the year, there was still plenty of activity at the hospital, including:

▶2,207 emergency room visits

▶6,387 radiology procedures ►4,416 rehab treat-

ments

►127,515 laboratory procedures ► 316 outpatient ser-

vices

► 224 adult day care services ▶9,926 resident days

▶\$127,102 of charity care provided.

While the year was filled with the ongoing challenges of adapting to the pandemic, the hospital was able to resume

most of the services it had suspended by September, and to restart adult day services by the end of the year. The hospital discontinued sleep studies and ENT services but entered into a contract with Fairview Range to provide ultrasound services. A new 3D mammography unit was also purchased.

The hospital also remained engaged with the greater healthcare community, donating \$9,362 for first responder training and equipment to units within the hospital district.

The Minnesota Department of Health awarded two specialized designations to the hospital in 2020, one as an acute stroke ready hospital and the other as a Level 4 trauma center. In recognition of their service to diabetics and their families, the hospital received a Dream Catcher Award presented by the Cook Lions Club and the Diabetes Founda-

Throughout the year,

Cook Hospital & Care Center employed 129 full, part-time and casual staff to deliver its services, collectively representing a commitment of over \$7.9 million to payroll and benefits, with a large portion of that reinvested in the local economy.

"The dedication, support, and commitment our employees and medical staff have continued to provide is outstanding," Debevec said. "Our staff has been committed to keeping up with the ever-changing regulations and ensuring the safety of our residents and patients during these difficult times. There are not enough words to express the sincere appreciation I have for our team." The complete annual report can be viewed online at https://www.cookhospital.org/about/annual-report.

tion.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL Unsung school heroes spark memories and praise

FIELD TWP- They were like heroes to me and many other kids - largerthan-life people who were kind, friendly, but authoritative when needed. I can remember most of them like it was yesterday, but bus drivers have been a big part of my life long after my days as a student.



JOHN VUKMANICH

ter, dressed in a one-piece Wahl's "Blizzard Pruf" snowsuit, Sorel boots, and homemade yarn mitts and facemask. It was cold out, but a person doesn't get cold in a one-piece snowsuit! At the bus stop was a mix of ages from young to old (at least in student terms - they all seem young these days). There was me, my sister Laura, Jason, Tricia, Leah, Daryll, Paul, Gary, and maybe a few other kids over the years. I don't remember any adult supervision, unless we were being eyed from afar.

It was not always roses waiting for the bus. The older kids could be mean. Sometimes, they were just plain old bullies, taking advantage of the younger kids' inability to stick up for themselves. I remember one of the boys being mean to my sister, so I punched him in the nose. That ended it and I never got in trouble for it. Bus-stop justice. I wasn't a fighter at all, but I guess I was sticking up for my sister.

Back to the bus drivers. I had about five or six over the years but remember some more than others. There was Jim, Ed, Bill, Gordy, and Angelo. Gordy was a mountain of a man, huge and jovial with a big brass belt buckle and mechanic's jumpsuit. He was always smiling! Mostly, I remember Ed Mayasich. Ed drove Bus #2, a Carpenter-brand bus. It was orange, not yellow, and had a rear-engine diesel. The inside of the bus always seemed to smell like diesel fuel and exhaust. As a youngster, I suffered from motion sickness, and after puking a couple times on the bus, I had to sit in the "trouble-maker" seat, right in front. For some reason, the ability to see the road and the trees helped alleviate my motion sickness. And, I had a bird's-eye view of the whole operation, just like being a co-pilot in the cockpit of a plane. I could see the CB radio, the gauges, the heater controls, the little bus fans, and the windshield wipers. The

old orange bus was also a manual transmission with a long steel stick shift on the floor next to the driver. The leather boot that went around the base of the shifter was rotted away, so I could see the road underneath the bus. On a cold winter day, you could also feel some cool air coming through it.

Bus #2 had a tendency to break down once in a while, too. I remember once stopping at Andeline's Store, now the location of the Britt Lounge, because the bus was not running properly. Ed told all of us who lived within walking distance to walk home. No cell phones, no parent notice, only Ed. "Walk home, kids." So, we did. My sister Laura, my friend Jason, Mike, Robert, Kenny, Danae, Kevin, and Kara all walked the half-mile back to Donnywood down the ditch of Highway 53. Heck, we used to ride our bikes down it every weekend to go get a candy bar, so it was no big deal. Nobody seemed to worry

about any liability back then. We had to learn to be responsible for ourselves, and our parents expected us to "figure it out." I guess I never understood how great of a gift it was then. Kid's perspective.

Ed didn't take any flak from kids. He was kind and fair, but firm. He would pull that bus over if kids were not sitting. I remember him even stopping the bus and walking to the back to handle an issue. I do not remember anyone ever disrespecting him and I also do not remember anyone being placed in the front for discipline. Just me for puking. Ed pulled the bus over one time at Laurentian Divide and said that he wasn't moving until the bus was spotless. We cleaned it, and fast. Try that nowadays! I can remember Angelo Sachetti driving Bus #6 when there was a route change. It was a newer front-engine bus, and it was a Blue Bird. It felt like a Cadillac compared to the old orange monster.

My friend Shannon and I would sit together and argue about snowmobiles and which brand was better, Arctic Cat or Polaris. Shannon always preferred Polaris and I drove a Cat. I guess my friend Shannon was right, because now I drive a Polaris!

Our bus drivers are the first school-adult that most of our kids see in the morning and the last ones they see in the afternoon. They are an integral part of our team at North Woods, and they have an influence on our kids. Their jobs are not easy. Have you ever wanted to pull over the car because you wanted to strangle your own three kids? Try driving with 40 or more. Their number-one job is to get the kids back and forth safely, and for that we appreciate our bus drivers the unsung heroes of our schools. I am pretty sure most of the drivers I had are gone, but I hope they felt appreciated. I appreciate our drivers and hope you do, too!

The bus stop in DonnyWood Acres in Britt was at the front of Wirtanen's driveway, about a quarter-mile from my house. I recall walking to the bus stop with my little sister, Laura, in the win-

North Woods nets nearly \$2,400 in leukemia event

ma Society, but they may teachers contacted famcalendar next year after the for their individual classdonations.

NHS has hosted the drive for LLS, according to counselor Jill Stark, but to adapt charts hanging in the high to COVID-19 constraints, school hallway and in the this is the first year they've done it online.

"In previous years we've only done our drive where students bring in coins and cash," Stark said. "I wasn't sure what to expect and I was a little nervous that we wouldn't be able to raise as much as we normally have, but this is our second highest donation total in five years. The North Woods community always amazes me with its generosity."

NHS members pro-

FIELD TWP- Mem- moted the event by going bers of the North Woods to each elementary and School National Honor So- high school classroom to ciety set a lofty and timely talk about the fundraiser goal of \$2,021 dollars for and provide information their 2021 fundraiser for about how to access the the Leukemia and Lympho- donation site. Elementary need to step away from the ilies directly with links drive netted \$2,386.25 in rooms. High schoolers could connect with the in-This is the fifth year formation through Google Classroom.

"We also had goal

COOK- The Cook area book club Readers and Rappers, will conduct its next meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, April 13 at 1

April is Poetry Month, so bring your favorite poems to share. Ellie Larmouth will be the moderator.

elementary hallway so they could visually see where each grade was at. These were updated daily.'

The charts were essential because ice cream parties for the top elementary classroom and high school grade level were on the line. The Junior class raised \$266 to claim the cool prize among high schoolers, but the Kindergarteners of Kira Kesanen were the "ice cream of the crop" overall with \$550.

The Zoom link will

'The Nickel Boys" by

be emailed to each mem-

ber prior to the meeting

by Shawna Kishel, who is

available for questions by

Colson Whitehead is the

book selection for the fol-

calling 218-666-5096.

lowing month of May.

EASTER DRIVE-THROUGH Kids receive Easter bicycles

COOK- The annual Easter Drive-Through at Cook Community Center on Saturday was a hit beyond what even organizers anticipated.

Beautiful weather prevailed as about a dozen volunteers set up tables and traffic cones in preparation for the arrival of families at 11 a.m.

Scheduled for two hours, the brightly-colored Easter baskets were all gone within 25 minutes, although the Easter Bunny stayed on to greet vehicles as volunteers continued to collect entries for the bicycle draw-

Bicycle winners for the boys (including

age groups) were Austin Laney (0-4), Marko Thompson (5-6), Landon Nuthak (7-8), and Tevin Shosner (9-10). Winners of girls bikes were Paislee Norup (0-4), Cora Lange (5-6), Samantha Amundson (7-8), and Emma Schuchard (9-10).

SAINT LOUIS	t. Louis County cycling Facili	
Ash River Trail Canister Site 11391 Ash River Trail Summer Hours Wed: 1pm-4pm Sat: 2:30pm-5:30pm	Kabetogama Lake Canister Site 10150 Gamma Rd Summer Hours Mon. & Wed: 9am—noon Sat: 10:30am—1:30pm	Sturgeon Canister Site 8380 Hwy 73 Hours Sun: 10am–4pm
Orr Canister Site 4038 Hwy 53 Summer Hours Tue: 9am—1pm, Thu: 2pm—7pm Sat: 8am—noon, Sun: 10am—2pm	Portage Canister Site 6992 Crane Lake Rd. Summer Hours Mon & Tue: 2pm-6pm Thu: 10am-1pm, Sun: 3pm-6pm	County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77 Summer Hours Tue:1–6pm, Thu: 8am–1pm Sat: 8am–5pm, Sun: noon–6pm
Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Hours Mon: 10am–6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm	Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm Sat: 8am–3:30pm	St. Louis County Environmental Services Department
Household Hazardo 5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia Tue, Sat: 8am—1pm	3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing Sat: 8am—1pm	1-800-450-9278 Office hours 8-4:30 Mon. thru Fri. stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle
Summer hours effective April	15th through September 30th	

READERS AND RAPPERS Book club to meet

COVID...Continued from page 1

dence rate of COVID-19 in Ely remains the lowest among all the North Country zip codes monitored by the *Timberjay* at 452 per 10,000. Cook is the highest at 750.

All but one of the other North Country zip codes showed slight case increases in March. Tower recorded eight, Cook had seven, Embarrass had five, and Soudan tallied four. Orr had no new cases reported for the month.

However, while the local figures are encouraging, the county as a whole has mirrored the statewide trend of steadily increasing numbers since the beginning of March.

"We continue to see a concerning trend of increasing COVID-19 numbers across the county. Multiple variant types have been identified in St. Louis County and we assume that many of our current cases are linked to these variants," said Amy Westbrook, St. Louis County Public Health Division Director.

Westbrook encouraged county residents to get vaccinated.

"Currently, 51 percent of St. Louis County residents age 16 years and older are at least partially vaccinated," she said. "Vaccines save lives and as a community we need to get more shots into people's arms. We don't want to see the virus circulating among unvaccinated, vulnerable populations and we certainly don't want to create opportunities for the virus to mutate further."

Troubling trend across the state

In a Tuesday press conference, Minnesota Department of Health CommissionerJanMalcolm added more support to the ongoing concerns health officials have expressed in recent weeks about the growth in COVID-19 cases.

"We've said from the beginning of the pandemic (that) it's so important to look at trends over time with our data and not focus too much on any one single day's number. And certainly, the trend for our cases has been going up for 25 days now. Our case rate per 100,000 people has been trending up without any interruption. Week over week, we've seen 2.5 percent more cases this week than the week prior, up from a 2.2 percent increase the week before that."

Troubling, too, Malcolm said, is the rapid escalation of positive tests.

"We're definitely not out of the woods yet with this pandemic, and to reinforce that point, I'll just note that our seven-day average test positivity rate is now at six percent. That figure has jumped a whole percentage point in one week."

With the increase in cases has come a rise in hospitalizations.

"Bed use is up by 40 percent just in the last ten days," Malcolm said. "There are 497 people currently in the hospital with COVID-19, and of those 114 are in intensive care. It wasn't too long ago that

our hospital levels were closer to 200, with under 50 in intensive care."

Malcolm addressed a new outreach initiative announced Tuesday by Gov. Tim Walz that will connect workers in critical frontline industries with the resources they need to get vaccinated. Her comments were particularly pertinent for the hospitality industry in the North Country as tourism season nears. "In the first week of the

campaign, the outreach will focus on workers in the food service industry," Malcolm said. "As you all know, the pandemic has been particularly devastating for restaurants, bars and other food service employees and employers. They have worked hard to find new ways to keep Minnesotans safe and to protect their workforces."

Malcolm said that the state has partnered with industry leaders, employers, influential restauranteurs, and chefs to educate workers about the vaccines and connect them with community vaccination sites through the state's online Vaccine Connector. No special allocation of vaccines has been reserved for food service workers, Malcolm said, as they are being encouraged to take advantage of community-based opportunities already available to them.

Malcolm noted that the number of vaccine doses administered to Minnesotans would top three million this week, with nearly 1.2 million people fully vaccinated.

BWCA...Continued from page 1

istration's decision to renew two federal mineral leases critical to the Twin Metals project has been stayed, at least temporarily, while senior Biden administration officials at both the Interior and Agriculture departments review the government's position in the case.

Ely area businesses and the Wilderness Society, which had challenged the Trump administration's decision to renew the two mineral leases, did not oppose the motion for a stay. The Justice Department requested the stay just ahead of a court-imposed deadline to file a brief defending the Trump administration's position in the case. The Justice Department will now have until June 21 to file a defense motion or reverse the Trump administration's renewal decision, which would likely end the litigation.

At the same time, the case challenging the Trump administration's decision to reinstate the Twin Metals leases, after they were canceled in the final days

MERCUR

BOAT WORKS

of the Obama administration, is on hold while the judge decides whether to expand the administrative record. That case could become moot as well if the Biden administration review finds that Trump officials acted illegally in reinstating the canceled leases. While the district judge hearing the case, a Trump appointee, has sided with the administration, the case is now under appeal to the D.C. appellate court.

The legality of the reinstatement largely hinges on a legal opinion drafted by Daniel Jorjani, a longtime legal counsel for a conservative foundation funded by the Koch brothers. Jorjani became chief legal counsel for the Interior Department under Trump and, in that role, drafted a legal opinion that claimed that the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service had no choice under the lease language but to renew the lease for another ten-year term. Jorjani's opinion was at odds with opinions issued by previous government attorneys dating back to the Reagan administration, but it enabled the Trump administration to justify reinstatement of the mineral leases. Emails from the early days of the Trump administration suggest that renewing the leases was a high priority for the administration.

Push for mineral withdrawal

With the Twin Metals leases potentially on thin ice legally, the campaign is also pushing to reinitiate a proposed mineral withdrawal affecting that portion of the Rainy River watershed located directly upstream of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The campaign gained a powerful advocate in that fight in U.S. Senator Tina Smith, who urged top federal officials in a March 28 letter to reinitiate a two-year study of the proposed withdrawal. That study would analyze both the economic and environmental effects of a 20-year withdrawal of mineral leasing on about 234,000 acres of the Superior National Forest, located outside the BWCAW.

A previous study, begun in the final days of the Obama administration, was abruptly canceled by the Trump administration just prior to completion and the administration blocked release of the findings.

As it stands today, any mineral withdrawal would not impact the two existing mineral leases controlled by Twin Metals, which are located within the area proposed for withdrawal. But it would prohibit the issuance of a third lease sought by Twin Metals as part of the company's plan to mine for copper-nickel and platinum group metals along the Kawishiwi River watershed, near Ely. If the two existing leases are rescinded, either by the courts or the Biden administration, the prospects for the Twin Metals mine would effectively disappear, at least for the next 20 years. To date, however, Twin Metals has yet to release financial projections demonstrating that the project is economically viable.

Permanent protection

Even as the campaign pushes for a temporary mineral withdrawal, it is working to advance federal legislation that would provide for a permanent mineral withdrawal within the Rainy River watershed, upstream of the BWCAW.

In the U.S. House, the campaign has an influential ally in Congresswoman Betty McCollum, of St. Paul, who introduced legislation (HR 5598) which would permanently ban sulfide-ore mining on the 234,000 acres in question. McCollum now has 47 co-sponsors for her legislation, which passed the House Natural Resources Committee last year. That bill will be reintroduced this year and the campaign is currently seeking a Senate sponsor to host a companion bill.







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ELY...Continued from page 1

velopment project for the city's west end, and gave the go ahead for the water tower repainting project despite exorbitant cost estimates.

As much as \$3 million, in two separate state bonding allocations, aisallocated for what has been dubbed the "west end trailhead project." The first phase, at \$1.3 million, was completed last year and included infrastructure and road construction at the city's west entrance.

A ribbon cutting was held during a regional ATV supporters convention last fall at the site of the trailhead visitor center. That same group will gather in the region again this fall and expect to utilize the new building.

Another \$1.5 million in bonding money was awarded last fall for the project's second phase that includes the construction of a visitor center at the trailhead and additional infrastructure work, according to Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski.

The trailhead will serve as a multi-faceted entry point for the Mesabi Trail, Prospector Loop, and Taconite Trail. The building will house public restrooms and there is talk of the Ely Chamber of Commerce moving into the facility. Plenty of parking will be available for vehicles and trailers.

Predesign documents have been submitted to the Minnesota Management and Budget office, and architectural renditions were released late last week.

"We also have our grant agreement in to MMB and the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) for approval,"Langowski said. "We want to be ready to start advertising (for construction bids) as soon we get the comments back. We have a couple of weeks 'buffer in our schedule. Our hope is still to have the project substantially complete by fall when the ATV Minnesota State Convention is here."

The ATV convention is planned for Sept. 17-19.

The third phase of the project includes a major expansion involving the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. That leg of the project is stalled and hospital officials have been slow to respond to inquiries on their plans. The third phase vision, as reported last week, includes an extension of Pattison Street behind the hospital, new housing, a new ambulance service facility, and development of the former city garage property.

Council members unanimously approved a low bid of \$79,800 for the city's water tower painting project.

"We were hoping (to spend) \$50,000, based on an estimate we had a couple of years ago," Langowski said.

He said he considered rebidding the project because of the surprising high cost quotes received.

"I've never had good experience with rebidding a project unless you change the scope," he said. "There is not much scope we can reduce."

Champion Tank Services, of Maple Grove, submitted the low bid. Four other bids included Classic Protective Coatings, \$81,000, TMI Coatings, Inc.,\$82,450,Central Tank Coatings, Inc., \$90,500, and Maguire Iron, Inc., \$122,900.

The city's new logo will be added to the water

tower.

"That cost is an \$8,000 portion of the project, and from what I understand, the paint is a significant cost for those colors," he said. "I recommend we award it and figure out how to make it happen."

Langowski said the water tower needs to be painted this year.

"We are starting to get some flash through with some rust," he said. "I would hate to let it go too long and then have a total overall coating project."

He said the water tower was last coated in 2001.

"If we can keep repainting the epoxy coat, hopefully we will get another 15 to 20 years out of it," he said.

Other business

In other business, the council took the following action,

► Approved a summary of the performance reviews of the department heads, Langowski, Rachel Heinirich, library director and Chad Houde, police chief. All scored above average in all areas of job performance.

Accepted the resignation of Ely Fire Chief Tom Erchull. "I no longer have the time or the passion to do the job effectively," he said. Erchall will remain on the all-volunteer firefighting force. The job will be posted internally.

➤ Reinstated John Zobitz as First Assistant Chief until a new fire chief is hired.Zobitz resigned his position last month.

Accepted the resignation of Ely police officer George Burger as firefighter and first responder.

Accepted the resignation of Roger Nyquist as city infrastructure worker, effective April 9.



The entrance to the Ely Trailhead Visitor Center will be on the east side of the building, as depicted in this architectural drawing. submitted

► Approved holding a special meeting on Thursday, April 15 to canvass the vote in the special primary election.

► Approved the equipment replacement purchase of a skid steer for \$58,410.

➤ Approved a residential rehab loan for Madalynne Reese and Kathleen Quigley, 1139 E. Washington St., for \$10,000 for insulation work.

► Approved the application from the Chamber of Commerce for the Blueberry Art/Festival and Harvest Moon Festival this year.

➤ Approved a temporary liquor license for the Ely Folk School for an event on May 12 at Semer's Park.

► Authorized a raffle permit for the Ely Rotary Club.

► Approved a liquor license for The Chocolate Moose restaurant at 101 N. Central Ave.



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TECHNOLOGY

Midco joins broadband quest in the Ely area

Competition to offer high-speed service is ramping up as various projects develop

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY - As a variety of highspeed fiber projects get off the ground here, a long-time cable provider recently announced they want to join the party as competition increases.

Existing cable and internet customers who are frustrated with all-too-common service disruptions recently learned that

Midco activated more than 200 an effort to reduce or eliminate additional miles of fiber to create

a northern Minnesota fiber ring that adds diverse network paths for the Ely area.

The expansion and investment by the cable provider is service disruptions caused by fiber cuts and other sources of internet and business connections. Their recent investment announcement also appears to give the cable provider a bigger

piece of the broadband pie in the immediate Ely area.

"You all saw Midco's announcement last week," said Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski. "Just so everyone knows, with our fiber loop downtown, we have a 10-year exclusive agreement with CTC and their sizable investment."

CTC is in the midst of installing a state-of-the-art fiber-optic network in the city's downtown corridor and is actively selling business services. In their first phase, CTC offers broadband technology to homes and businesses along Sheridan Street, and looks to offer business and residents internet, phone, and TV services along with business phone systems and IT services.

"We are scheduling a meeting with Midco at some point,"

See MIDCO...pg. 2B



HISTORY OF WINTON Old jail meets its end

1890s jailhouse was on the National Register of Historic Places



OFF-ROAD

Voyageur **Country spring ATV ride set** for April 24

Annual event raises funds for trail club

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL - ATV enthusiasts from across the region will converge in the vicinity of Elephant and Crane lakes on Saturday, April 24, for the annual Voyageur Country ATV Club spring fundraising ride.

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

WINTON-The former city jail here, built in the 1890s, met its demise last week when the brick landmark toppled in a cloud of dust as the owner demolished the building.

Kathie Hill bought the property and building from the city of Winton last fall with the understanding that she would tear down the building within a year.

With the spring came the demolition

project. Not much effort was required to bring down the building.

"It didn't take long at all," Hill said. "There was lots of dust and in about a half hour, it was down.'

Herson, Tim, was clearing brush from the site last Friday.

"The mortar between the bricks just fell apart and the building was soon just a pile of rubble," he said. Kids were helping to pile the salvageable bricks to give away to Winton residents.

The Winton landmark, at the corner of Third and River streets, was once the Old City Jail. It served as a storage building for the town's Christmas displays for many years before being abandoned. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Hill said they plan to add a storage building on their new property purchased from the city, located next to their house and Caterpillar Club House Child Care business.

"We are going to wait because the lumber prices are so high right now," she said. "After we clear the jail rubble we will seed the land and wait until next year.'

Winton residents are welcome to come to the site to gather bricks for repurposing. "We have had a couple

of folks gathering

the bricks to use them for other projects,' Hill said.

Winton officialshad looked into renovating

the building

Kathie Hill

SIt didn't take



was too old and run down to make the effort feasible. City officials (without Geraldo Rivera) gathered last October to open an old safe that was still in the structure and revealed the contents.

"It was a jail, so maybe there are guns in the thing or old ammunition or old files," said former Winton operations manager Terry Jackson in the video posted to Facebook.

City council member Lee Tessier, and Winton City Clerk Anne Jackson and current utility supervisor Destin Anderson were also at Above: Piles of red clay bricks were all that remained after the former Winton Jailhouse was demolished last week to make way for a storage building for the new owners of the property, who purchased the site from the city of Winton last year. photo by K. Vandervort

Below: The former jailhouse prior to its demolition. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. submitted photo



the reveal event.

"Whatever is in the safe is at least 125 years old," Jackson said at the time.

Old surveying records, a newspaper clipping dated from

1912, oath of office records from 1958, a 1912 liquor license application, keys, a pistol box, and other brittle documents were found.

The event won't be an organized ride where ATVers all travel together, but rather a destination where they arrive in their own little groups, utilizing the club's trail system to get there.

"We're going to do a picnic in a large gravel pit where we have lots of space and lots of distancing," club spokesman Bruce Beste said. "We're saying organize your own small rides, ride on our trails, and at some point, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., stop by the gravel pit and have a burger lunch, buy a sweatshirt or a cap from the club, and buy a raffle ticket." Beste said riders won't have any problems finding their way to the pit.

"The pit is on County Road 180 near Elephant Lake," Beste said. "We'll put signs out on our trails directing people to the pit. They'll know where to go." Club business members have donated almost all of the food and supplies for the picnic, so nearly all of the \$12 lunch ticket (\$10 for riders 12 and under) will support the fundraising effort, Beste said.

And it will be well worth the trail ride for the holder of the lucky \$10 raffle ticket, who will win a Recteq RT-590 smoker/grill.

"It's a model that's a \$900 grill, and plus taxes a \$965 value on the thing, so it's pretty nice," Beste said. "We may do some other raffle items depending on the weather and the turnout.'

The picnic and raffle proceeds will help to fund the club's operational costs and lobbying efforts to secure major funding to continue building out the trail system.

"We've got seven trail projects keyed up, and we just completed our environmental assessment worksheet," Beste said. "Now we're in the process of getting final permits and permissions so that we can put the seven projects

See ATV RIDE...pg. 2B

MIDCO...Continued from page 1B –

Langowski said. "We want to discuss where our project is and where their project is. I was a little concerned when I talked with (Midco's) government affairs representative, who wasn't aware of what we are doing or what our project is. I told him he must have been living under a rock. If he had read our local newspapers, he would have seen that we have been working on this for the last decade-plus."

The first phase of the city of Ely's CTC Broadband project is limited to the downtown area. "I don't want it to sound like I'm not excited about (Midco's) investment," Langowski said. "I just want to make sure they don't come in and overlay what we just did and cut us out of the market."

Midco also announced that crews will begin installing FTTP (Fiber to the Premises) to homes and businesses in Ely and Winton in early 2022 capable of up to five Gbps. Connections can be upgraded to 10 Gbps, according to the cable provider.

The neighboring communities of Tower, Soudan and Babbitt will see similar construction activity with full FTTP network upgrades in 2023, company officials said.

"This expansion has been a high priority for us and our customers in Northern Minnesota who have been awaiting greater capacity, faster speeds and enhanced reliability," said Midco President and CEO Pat McAdaragh. "With a capital investment of \$3.75 million, this expansion will allow (expansion) for all of Midco's services and products."

Ely Mayor Chuck Novak welcomed the news.

"Improving our citizens' access to high-speed, reliable internet has been an overarching priority of the city of Ely," he said. "The speeds, redundancy and reliability Midco will bring to our community, and surrounding communities, is a game-changer for our residents, students and

businesses. I am grateful for the leadership shown by our community and citizens, and for Midco for making this happen."

A wireless broadband project is also moving forward in the Town of Morse around the Ely area. Isaac Olson of Treehouse Broadband uses directional antennas operating on the radio frequency spectrum to provide high bandwidth internet service. With direct line of sight to their towers and repeater locations, they service customers in the Ely area. Unlike traditional satellite service, according to Olson, rain, snow and other weather has no impact on the frequencies and shortrange transmissions he uses to deploy broadband.

Olson said last summer he had as many as 50 customers, not including many resorts which have multiple cabins, so that number could be doubled.

"Our upstream connection is through a regional fiber provider running over the NESC fiber network with redundant fiber connections out of Ely - one down Highway 1 to Two Harbors and the other down Highway 169 to Virginia," he said.

In addition to the network redundancy and FTTP upgrades in the Ely area, the northern Minnesota communities of International Falls, Ranier and Littlefork will see faster data speeds from Midco in the coming year.

"All three communities will have access to Midco Gig in 2021. Midco Gig is 35 times faster than the average high-speed internet," McAdaragh said.

A change is on the horizon for local calling for all Midco telephone customers. Starting Jan. 1, 2022, local calls will be required to include area codes. This change will affect Midco phone customers (and anyone else making local calls) in the 605, 218, 620 and 785 areas.

Minnesota State Senator Tom Bakk weighed in on the "critically-needed" broadband expansion

and investment for his constituents. "While the pandemic continues to impact learning, economic growth, medical and family needs, investments in robust infrastructure systems such as this are crucial in addressing the connectivity gaps that remain across our state," he said.

Minnesota State Representative Rob Ecklund added, "COVID-19 has accelerated our reliance on high-speed internet access, and while we've made progress in recent years toward connecting all Minnesotans, the needs in many rural areas have remained unmet. I am so pleased Midco understands this need and how increasingly important broadband is for conducting business, educating our students, providing medical services, and participating in daily life. Not only will these communities be able to fully participate in digital life, they will be a leader in a broadband accessibility throughout the state."

Founded in 1931, Midco serves 440,000 homes and business in 400 communities in Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

For more information, go to midco.com.

The Ely Economic Development Authority is in the midst of reviewing priorities from 2020 and looking ahead to 2021 and beyond. Broadband remains a top priority for the city.

The city's economic advisor, John Fedo, told EEDA commissioners last week that, despite initial assistance from the Blandin Foudation, "We took our own advice and literally put this on the shoulders of Ely in providing meaningful business assistance here."

EEDA commissioners will continue their priority planning session later in April.

FROM

\$1,749

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ATV RIDE...Continued from page 1B

out to bid, although not all seven at the same time. We have about \$1.5 million dollars already secured, and we believe we'll have another \$1 million secured by the end of this spring. We're already preparing an application for this fall for another half million dollars."

Matching funds

Another club fundraiser that coincides with the spring run and extends beyond it is the Voyageur Country Wall of Fame.

"We're just starting that drive," Beste said. "We're trying to raise \$25,000 to

purchase wetland credits, which is our leverage to some of these funders so we can say okay, we're digging into our pockets, to show that we've actually got skin in the game."

Any donation amount will be accepted, but donors who give \$500 or more will be recognized with plaques placed on one of two boards to be erected at two signature trail features, the Vermilion Bridge and the Pelican River Overlook. In addition to information about the donor, the plaques will have space for short inscriptions that can be used as donors wish.

Past spring rides have attracted upward of 300 riders, Beste said, but he anticipates that some people with ongoing concerns about COVID-19



may choose to avoid a "I'm speculating if the

weather is nice, we could see 250 people," he said.





FREE DATE CHANGES ON 2021 TOURS*



Memories of the Early Days A fascinating look back at the early history

Written by Marshall Helmberger • Published by the Timberjay

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WILDFIRE PREVENTION The high risk season for wildfires is right now!

Help keep your home and property as safe as possible by following these tips

by GLORIA ERICKSON Firewise Coordinator

REGIONAL- Spring has finally arrived; however, before spring "green up" is also when the region is at the highest risk for wildfire. Now is the time to get outside, enjoy the fresh air, and help your property become more wildfire resilient. There are many projects you can do with little investment to lower your wildfire risks.

Be ready for emergency personnel if the need arises:

> Check and clear around address and street signs. Make sure the sign is perpendicular to the road and reflective on both sides.

► Make sure your driveway is cleared of overhanging trees and branches at a minimum of 14 feet wide and 14 feet high for easier access for emergency vehicles.

Make your home more wildfire resilient:



► Screen areas below decks and porches with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent material from accumulating underneath.

► Cover exterior attic and soffit vents with 1/8" metal wire mesh to help stop sparks from entering your home.

► Enclose eaves to help prevent embers/sparks from entering your home.

Sweep pine needles and leaves from porches and rake from under decks, porches, play structures, etc.

 Clear any needles and leaves out of gutters and off of roofs.

➤ Inspect and replace shingles or roof tiles as needed. Cover ends of tiles and metal roofs with fire resistant stops to help prevent embers being sucked in during a wildfire.

► Make sure chimneys have spark arrestors.

Remove debris from around your home:

➤ Move woodpiles, construction materials, trash and other flammables at least 30 feet from your home or other buildings. This includes project wood under the porch and any stored propane or gas cans near the home

► Rake and remove pine needles and leaves from three to five feet around your home and other buildings. Maintain the grass and weeds in the same perimeter.

Make your property more wildfire resilient:

► Remove lower limbs of trees up to 10 feet from forest floor that are within 30 feet of all structures to help keep future fires on the forest floor. Removing lower limbs will lower the risk of the "ladder" fuel from the forest floor getting up into

the crown of the tree.

► Make sure trees are cut, brush is removed, and grass is trimmed around your propane tank. A full tank is a safer tank as we go into fire season.

➤ Dispose of branches, weeds, leaves, and pine needles at designated hazardous woody debris drop-off sites. Check county websites for locations and operating hours.

Preparing our homes and communities for wildfire resiliency is a shared responsibility. We all can play a role to lower our risks and build stronger community relationships.

Contact St. Louis County Firewise Coordinator Gloria Erickson at gloria@dovetailinc. org or 218-365-0878 with any questions about the Firewise program.

PUBLIC HEALTH **New podcast series** focuses on opioid addiction

Series produced by MN Department of Health provides listeners with insight, hope and help

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL - What sets apart the Minnesota Department of Health's newest effort to address the evolving opioid epidemic isn't a new take on harsh but sterile statistics. The way to provide a voice to those who have experienced this substance use disorder, say Injury and Violence Prevention section staff, is to use technology to get personal.

"Stories from the Field," a new podcast series launched by the department on Tuesday, strives to do just that. By blending the real and often unsettling stories of real people deeply affected by opioid abuse with the voices of health care experts and community leaders, the series aims to illustrate the complexities of the epidemic in a way that connects with listeners on a level that will lead many to positive change. 'You're going to find that the podcasts feature a real person who has been impacted in some way," said Julie Bartkey, opioid prevention communications officer. "We have a mother whose son was very recently found dead of an overdose, sitting up while packing for a vacation. We have another mother whose daughter has been revived twice by Naloxone. What we've tried to do is partner a real person with community advocates who are trying to instill change and to try to destigmatize substance abuse, destigmatize overdose, so that people understand that recovery is possible and that these are all preventable deaths." The first podcast, available now, is a departure from that formula in that it sets the stage for the series by telling the history of opioids, heroin, and other drugs from the perspectives of white, tribal, and Black communities. It provides background and context for listeners to more fully engage with subsequent episodes that reveal the raw emotions of people who have battled substance misuse, lost loved ones, and managed to get through it. The diverse group of guests represent communities of color, tribal communities, the LGBTQ population, and a variety of economic backgrounds.

sode dedicated to what's being done in one tribal community that has started a nation-leading effort to turn drug courts into wellness courts," Bartkey said. "So people can get some inspiration and knowledge about what's happening on other tribal lands, and then they can reach out for more, because we know that there's great communication between tribes for the most part."

The five-episode series is a pilot for what Bartkey and her colleagues hope will become an expanded effort in the future if the response is good.

"I think we did a really solid job of trying to represent Metro, Greater Minnesota and underserved communities, but there's room for more, there's always room to build on this," Bartkey said. "But we had to start someplace, and this seemed like a good starting point." The overarching goal is connection - stories and discussions connecting with listeners in a way that will help them to connect with resources in their communities to help them make safer choices and find possible solutions. The first podcast, "The History of Opioids," is avail-able online now at https:// www.health.state.mn.us/ communities/opioids/communities/fieldstories.html. The second podcast, "Great Challenges in Greater Minnesota," will be released on Tuesday, April 20, with additional episodes posted every two weeks on Tuesdays until all five are up. The "Stories from the Field" webpage also serves as a gateway to additional resources. "By featuring the work being done throughout the state, we hope to leave listeners with a sense of hope and that help is available," said Dana Farley, injury and violence prevention supervisor. "Podcasts are just one way the Injury and Violence Prevention section at MDH engages with our communities to address the emerging opioid crisis."

New scam is targeting area food shelf clients

REGIONAL- The AEOA in Virginia is reminding residents to never provide their Social Security number or any other personal information to callers claiming to be a representative of a local food shelf. Food shelf staff or volunteers would never phone and ask for that information. Call your local police right

away if you have been contacted in such a manner.

There is a report of an unidentified individual who contacted a client of a local food shelf to acquire their Social Security number. The caller falsely claimed to be a representative from a local food shelf. No client is required or expected

to provide their Social Security number over the phone for food shelf programs. For your protection, do not provide your Social Security number to any caller. The AEOA is working with area law enforcement regarding the incident. The AEOA oversees most food shelves in our area.

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For more information and other resources, visit MDH's Opioid Overdose Prevention page.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION

Questions raised about Border-to-Border OHV trail

by GREG AAMOTT MINNPOST

REGIONAL – Six years ago, the Legislature directed the Department of Natural Resources to develop a motorized touring route from the North Shore of Lake Superior to the North Dakota border, utilizing an extensive network of existing highways and back roads. Tower and Ely are both included along the route.

The idea was to provide a designated route for motorists – including those who prefer off-road vehicles like four-wheel drive trucks and all-terrain vehicles – who could drive across northern Minnesota, experience the state's natural beauty and, perhaps, camp and stop in some small towns along the way.

"Definitely, one of the selling points was that (the route) would connect people to places they wouldn't ordinarily see, to some other outdoors opportunities," said Andrew Brown, a DNR project manager based in Grand Rapids.

With the help of a consultant, and after public hearings in several communities, the DNR settled on a Right: A wetland borders a trail that may be designated as part of a new border-to-border OHV trail.

Courtesy of Citizens for Sustainable Off-Roading

750-mile Border to Border Touring Route that it plans to soon mark with signage and begin promoting as an "adventure trail."

The project has met with resistance, however, with calls for the DNR to further evaluate the route's impact on the environment

See OHV TRAIL....pg. 5B





FOOD FROM THE WOODS

Maple's magic



FISHING

Opener set for May 15

REGIONAL—The fishing season for walleye, bass, trout, and northern pike opens on Saturday, May 15, with this year's date taking the prize for the latest possible opener under Minnesota statute.

"We know there is some confusion about this year's opener date," said Jon Hansen, fisheries program consultant for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Minnesota statute sets the fishing opener as the Saturday two weeks prior to the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. This year, with Memorial Day on May 31, that puts the fishing opener on May 15.

Also related to May fishing, there is an error in the printed version of the Minnesota Fishing Regulations book regarding the dates for the 2021 Take a Mom Fishing Weekend.

The correct dates for this year's Take a Mom Fishing Weekendwhen Minnesota-resident moms can fish without purchasing a license-are Saturday, May 8, to Sunday, May 9. That special weekend is defined in Minnesota statutes as the weekend that coincides with Mother's Day. Most years, under Minnesota law, the fishing opener and Take a Mom Fishing Weekend fall on the same weekend, but not this year. "We encourage Minnesota moms to get out and fish for free on May 8 and 9," Hansen said. "Even though the walleye season won't be open, there are still plenty of fun and easy fishing opportunities for crappie, or sunfish." Fishing season dates, and the corrected Minnesota Fishing Regulations handbook, are available online at mndnr.gov/fishing.

Syruping season is lots of work, but the reward is sweet

ome the maple sugaring season, you have to watch the weather. If it's too cold, the sap won't flow. If it's too warm, without temperatures dipping below freezing at night, the sap won't flow, either. Like Goldilocks, the maple trees want it just right in order to offer up their springtime nectar.

For years, I only watched the weather this time of year to gauge the

status of the crust for my late-winter ski adventures in the Lost Lake Swamp and beyond. A few years ago, however, I counted the number of red maples near the house and realized that the changing climate had left us with a decent sugarbush. So, we invested in some taps, some of those heavy blue plastic bags, and made use of a couple of old buffet-line chafing pans, which I suspended above my blacksmith forge, to boil

down the sap. It can be a little smoky tending the fire at times, but it all works pretty well.

So, I've added late March well in April to our annual seasonal calendar of food gathering from nature. It's actually given us a jump start on the year, since, in the past, our food gathering typically didn't begin until July and August, when the blueberries ripen and the chanterelles begin to appear in the pine woods.

When September rolls around, it's time for ricing, which eases us into grouse season and soon enough into deer season, when we add another year's worth of meat to the freezer. Add a few walleye, northern pike, whitefish, and maybe a lake trout, to the mix, and it reminds you that one could live pretty well off the fat of this land. No wonder the Ojibwe and Lakota fought pitched battles over this country.

You may have heard that you can only make quality syrup from sugar maples, which are largely limited to mild microclimates here on the edge of the

boreal woods. Turns out that red maples, which have exploded in abundance in our region over the last quarter century as our winters have warmed, make a syrup that's indistinguishable from sugar maple. Red maples, which seem to thrive in our shallow, rocky soils, don't get very big up here, but anything over about eight inches can be tapped, in my experience. Ten inches and above is better but given that my largest red maple is probably no more than 12 inches in diameter, one can't

be too picky.

The sap typically starts to flow in late March after a few of those warm, sunny days start to melt the snow and activate the maples. The season came early this year... we were in full collection and boiling mode by the middle of March. Over about three weeks, we gathered over 100 gallons of sap from 20 trees, which boiled down to just under three gallons of beautiful, sweet, amber syrup.

The tools of this trade are pretty basic and can be purchased at places

See MAGIC...pg. 5B

Top: The sweet reward after hours of work gathering maple sap and boiling it down into syrup.

Above: A drop of sap hangs from the tap. Below: A blue bag hangs heavy with sap. Bottom: Steam rises from the boiling sap.





Watch for trail closures when riding ATVs

REGIONAL— With the early disappearance of snow this spring, DNR conservation officers report that ATV activity is ramping up in the region— and that can cause problems when ATV riders operate on trails that are closed due to spring conditions.

A number of trails in the region are currently posted as closed to prevent excessive rutting, which can easily occur just as unfrozen ground is thawing. The damage can require costly repairs for ATV clubs and can create erosion that can impact streams and wetlands. Riders should pay attention if they're riding during the spring breakup to make sure they're sticking to trails that are hardened enough to prevent damage this time of year.



OHV TRAIL...Continued from page 4B -

and for the state to find other ways to enhance off-road sightseeing, such as through the expansion of motorized recreation parks. Last year, the Sierra Club, the Izaak Walton League and other environmental groups asked the DNR to conduct a formal environmental review known as an environmental assessment-of the project, arguing that the potential for damage - especially to lakes and streams - needs to be better understood. The agency declined those requests.

In February, a group called Citizens for Sustainable Off-Roading (CSOR), which includes cabin owners, year-round residents, wildlife biologists and others, delivered a petition to the DNR requesting the environmental assessment. In a press release, the group said it believes "there are better alternatives available than increasing high-impact travel on forest road systems that are often poorly maintained and not designed with today's standards for environmental protection in mind."

A member of the group deferred questions about its position to Willis Mattison, a retired regional director of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency who has advised the group on the project. He told MinnPost that the dispute is an example of the longstanding tension between motorized recreation and traditional activities like canoeing and hiking. While both are legitimate pursuits, the DNR, in his view, has favored motorized sports at the expense of the environment in recent years. "Motorized sports and silent sports-that's the line of demarcation," he said.

Critics of the Borderto-Border Touring Route are asking for a closer examination because of a host of potential problems, including runoff from dirt roads into lakes and streams.

Creating touring options

In 2015, the Legislature directed the DNR to designate an off-road touring route across northern Minnesota and to work with eastern edge of the route was subsequently moved to Silver Bay in adjacent Lake County.

Ron Potter, the executive director of the NOHVCC, did not respond to email and phone messages asking for comment. Dan Larson, a lobbyist for the Minnesota 4-Wheel Drive Association, also did not return a phone call.

Managing the route

Minnesota Parks and Trail, a division of the DNR, is developing a plan to implement and manage the settled-upon route, a process that will include more opportunities for public input, Brown said. The process could take months, if not a few years.

A DNR fund created by fees on off-road vehicles will cover the cost of the planning and also support local road maintenance, according to the agency.

CSOR, the citizens group, argues that the route needs a closer examination first because of a host of potential problems, including runoff from dirt roads into lakes and streams and the potential for invasive species to reach the region. Without that assessment, any management plan will be flawed, the group says. Better yet, the state could invest in the expansion of off-road recreation parks, such as the Iron Range Off Highway Vehicle State Recreation Area in Gilbert.

While its request is being reviewed, CSOR is keeping up the pressure. On March 26, Dan Wilm, a group member and retired DNR forester, argued in a column in the Grand Marais paper that some of the roads along the route, built for loggers a century ago, are inadequate for heavy vehicles.

If the DNR rejects its request for an environmental assessment, the CSOR could take its case to the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

Mattison, the retired MPCA official, understands the stated reasons behind the touring route. More economic activity in remote regions, more recreation options, more exposure to the natural environment – those are all good things, he said. But

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MAGIC...Continued from page 4B

like L&M Supply or Tractor Supply in Virginia. Those stores also have short handbooks on the basics of making your own maple syrup. I also found a kit online, that came with taps, an appropriately sized drill bit, blue bags, and cleverly designed two-inch pvc pipes that you attach to your bags. Then you hook them over the tap and you're set to collect the tree's offerings.

Don't be disappointed if the initial flow is limited. My trees went a week with almost nothing, but when the tree's internal "pump" turns on, the sap can come in a hurry. A blue bag, which can hold at least two gallons, can fill in a single day when the flow gets rolling. I pour the sap into plastic, five gallon jugs, which I pull in a sled as I go from tree to tree.

Once the flow starts, you'll have to be ready for the next step in the process, since the sap will only keep a week at the most, and only that long if it's kept cold. If you leave it out in the sun on a couple warm days, it can start to sour and then it's not worth the effort to boil it down.

So, if you have to store sap, set your jugs in a cold garage or other outbuilding, where they'll stay cold but preferably won't freeze solid, which will make them difficult to



Filtering hot syrup for final finishing on the kitchen stove. It's worth it to purchase the heavy wool filters and the thinner filters that go inside the heavy one.

pour into your boiling setup.

Unless you're only trying to boil down a gallon or two for fun, boiling sap is not an indoor activity. When you're reducing a hundred-plus gallons of sap into three gallons of syrup, you're making an awful lot of steam, which you probably don't want to add to the inside of your house.

The key to a good boil is to keep

a sustained heat. A well-managed fire will keep your sap at a steady boil and that can make shorter work of the boiling process. Still, it takes time, so I always try to combine sap boiling with other chores in the yard.

Some people like to use a propane burner to heat their sap, but most purists prefer to use wood since it imparts a somewhat smoky flavor to the finished syrup.

Once I've boiled the sap down almost to the end, I filter the near-boiling and, by now, amber-colored sap through a wool filter designed specifically for that purpose (you can buy them at L&M Supply in season). I set a large kitchen pot underneath the filter and once it's all dripped through, you're ready to take it into the kitchen for final boiling. You want to get the sugar content just right and the easiest way to do that is through the use of a digital candy thermometer. When the sap's boiling point reaches 219 degrees, it's finished syrup and you're ready to can it. I leave those details to my wife Jodi so I'm not going to offer any advice on the canning process.

I'm not going to kid you. Making maple syrup is a lot of work, but it's the best kind of work— deliberate and meaningful. And the reward at the end is especially sweet.

Scenic Rivers —Clinics— COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Available

Scenic Rivers is now scheduling appointments for individuals to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at our medical locations following state eligibility guidelines. Supply is limited and call

volumes are high, so we appreciate your patience. If you believe you meet the MN state vaccine eligiblity requirements, please call the number below to schedule an appointment.



the Minnesota 4-Wheel Drive Association on identifying possible potential routes. The DNR subsequently hired the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) to help it plan the project.

Over three years or so, Brown said, project planners met with county and township boards, road authorities, American Indian tribal leaders and others before settling on the route. The DNR evaluated the route and determined that an environmental review was not needed. All of the roads that will be part of the route already exist, he noted.

"We engaged in a pretty robust outreach to these counties and communities," Brown said. "For those communities that expressed [concerns about the project], we have honored that and moved the route. We are not cramming this down anyone's throat."

To that end, the route was moved out of Clearwater, Hubbard and Cook counties after discussions in those regions.

Cook County was dropped from the route after county officials shared their reservations with project planners. The beware the cost.

"The tourism industry needs to welcome motorized recreation, but it also needs to protect the natural environment for the silent sports," Mattison said. "The thinking needs to be long term."

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Obituaries and Death Notices



Roseann V. Redetzke

Roseann V. "Rosie" Redetzke, 88, of Tower, passed away on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, at Vermilion Senior Living in Tower. There will be a private family gathering at a later date. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home of Virginia.

She was born on Nov. 5, 1932, in Shirland, Ill., the daughter of Henry and Ruth (ReCoy) Harrington. She resided in Rockford, Ill., where her three children were born. They moved to Tower in 1970. where she owned and operated the Tower Cafe for 10 years.

She was united in marriage to Donald Redetzke on Dec. 30, 1982, in Virginia. They lived in Eagles Nest before moving to Tower, where they had since resided.

Rosie enjoyed knitting, crocheting and cooking. She loved giving dinner parties for her family and friends, especially on the Fourth of July. In her later years, she enjoyed planting many flowers and vegetables, which she mostly gave away. She also loved shopping, playing cards and board games.

She is survived by her loving husband, Donald Redetzke of Tower; children, Jayanne (Bill) Suihkonen of Kugler Township, Joel Ward of Mitchell, S.D., and Jill (John) O'Neil of Sebring, Fla.; stepchildren, Patricia (Rodney) Martin of Embarrass, Barb (Tim) Thomas of Soudan and Jeff (Angie Miller) Redetzke of Soudan; grandchildren, Bill (Kristy) Suihkonen, Angela Suihkonen, Chad Mattila, Sasha (Darius) Stewart, Tiffany (Jay) Clemenson, Amber (Josh) Burton, Chelsea (Brandon) Zubke and Briana Tibbetts; great-grandchildren, Kaija, Kash and Kinsley Suihkonen, Morgan, Easton, Hayden, Kyler and Lyrik Dahl, Royce Stewart, Levi Clemenson, Ava Redetzke, Cohen Rowland, Nora Zubke, Ellis Rowland,

Everleigh Burton, Lennon Zubke and Nakoa Burton; numerous nieces and nephews; special friends, Lex and Polly McDonald; best friend of 67 years, Nancy Fry; and favorite 12 Mideast airgreat-granddog, Cocoa.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Warren and Clifford Harrington; sisters, Viva Pearson and Kathleen 15 Pattern Bellars; grandsons, Ryan 17 Help a hood and Jonah Pulju; and greatgranddaughter, Cora Dahl.

Carolyn Mae Gangl

Carolyn Mae Udovich Weldon Metzer Gangl, 79, of Hibbing, passed away on Sunday, April 4, 2021. A memorial service will be held at the Nashwauk Cemetery at a later date.

She leaves behind siblings, Mary Rose Gaag of New Ulm, Elizabeth Hendersen of Soudan, Kathleen Arasimowicz and Zita Wilkstrom; son, Craig Metzer and his children, Kyle Metzer, Kimberly Baker, Elizabeth Metzer and Samantha Baker; daughter, Ann Godette and her children, Amanda Christian, Lauren, Emily, Gabrielle and 41 Ump's call Jillian Godette; son, Kenneth Metzer and his children, Jamie, Jodie and Jacob; and five great-grandsons.

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BEARVILLE TOWNSHIP Local Board of Appeal and

Equalization Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Bearville Township shall meet on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. at the Bearville Town Hall (13971 Hwy. 22, Bearville Township. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization. The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

The Bearville Township Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting will be held in person at the Town Hall; masks and social distancing will be required. The Bearville Township Board encourages those wishing to appeal their valuation to contact the Itasca County Assessor prior to the meeting with their concerns. If you wish to connect remotely, please contact the Town Clerk (bearvl@frontiernet.net or 218-376-4495) by Monday, April 19 for a link and

EMPLOYMENT

HELP WANTED Would you like to work outside? Would you like to work on the lake?

Docks on Wheels in Ely is looking to fill a variety of positions. All positions require the ability to lift 50 lbs continually. Call to schedule an interview, 218-365-6210. 4/30

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools Head Football Coach

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for a Head Football Coach for the 2021 fall season. Background check required.

Qualifications include:

Bachelor's Degree: Coaching licensure or ability to obtain (certification required to be an MSHSL head coach prior to the start of the 2021-2022 season). Previous coaching experience preferred. Must be available for several practices/

games per week from mid-August through early November, including some weekends and during school break periods.

Application and full job description is available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us

A complete application must include the following:

directions to connect.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 2 & 9, 2021

VERMILION LAKE TOWNSHIP Local Board of Appeal and Equalization Notice

Important Information Regarding Property Assessments. This May Affect Your 2022 Property Taxes.

The Board of Appeal and Equalization forVermilion Lake Township will meet on Thursday, April 22, 2021 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Vermilion Lake Town Hall 6703 Wahlsten Road

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

If you believe the value or classification of our property is incorrect, please contact your Assessor's Office* to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with the assessor, you may appear before the local Board of Appeal and Equalization. The Board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed.

Generally, you must appear to the local board before appealing to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

Assessor's Office 218-749-7147 North Land Office Center - Suite 2R 307 1st Street South, Virginia, Minnesota

Crystal Alaspa, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 9, 2021

Subscribe Today 218-753-2950

- District Application
- Resume

Copy of credentials declaring appropriate License (per M.S. 122A.22)

Mail materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us Stipend: \$5,600 Deadline to apply: April 16, 2021; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, April 2 & 9, 2021

HELP WANTED Well Being Development **Executive Director**

Seeking 20+ hr/week Executive Director for managing WBD's mental health and wellness nonprofit programming. Tasks include overseeing board committees, HR, and finances. \$20-24/hr DOQ, PTO, and a flexible schedule.

> More Information: www.wellbeingdevelopment.org Email Resume: info@elynlc.org

FUNERAL SERVICES



Weekly SUDOKL

by Linda Thistle

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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: ••



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TIMBUK

MARIN

LAKE VERMILIO 218-666-2276

Boats C MERCURY

SUZUKI @ YAMAHA

Sales, service, storage, boat lifts,

timbuktumarine.com

trailers and accessories

• Premier

WEERES

7B April 9, 2021 *TIMBERJAY* CLASSIFIEDS

Considerations of personal privacy, time and resources prevent the newspaper from investigating ads placed in the classified section. If you respond to an ad, we urge you to use the same care and prudence that you would use when conducting business in any other situation.

Try out the Timberjay classifieds Line classifieds cost 30¢/word, \$6.00 minimum. Classified ads can be run a second time at half price (private parties only). We now accept payment by MARINA Visa, Mastercard, AmEx, and Discover. Call your ad in to **BUILDING** LAKE VERMILION 218-666-2434 218-753-2950. Display (boxed) classifieds SERVICES are billed by the "inch"- please call for prices **Cabin rentals** and information on discounts. Year round boat Call Today - 218-753-2950 or 218-365-3114 storage and dockage

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DREAMWEAVER SALON & DAY SPA- Open Monday-Friday 8:30 - 6:30. 218-666-5594. tfn

AUTOMOTIVE

Langevin Auto

& Truck Repair

Full Service

Auto Repair & Garage

Hours: 8 AM-5 PM M-F 2 Miles South of Tower 218-749-0751

HAIR CARE

HOSPICE

VIRGIE HEGG HOSPICE PARTNERS can provide help for patients and their families in ways such as: comfort care, massages, last wishes and more. For more information, contact Program Director Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423 or vhhpdirector@gmail.com. This ad is paid for by Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meet-ings, 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 any-one 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.

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



bartenders, dishwashers, line cooks, and dock attendants. Apply in person at the Vermilion Club, 3191 Old Hwy 77, Tower.

4/9



ADLARKRAFT CODFREY

Rentals

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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.



MOCCASIN POINT MARINE **Centrally Located On** 4655 Moccasin Point Rd Lake Vermilion Lake Vermilion Boat launch, rental, 218-753-3319 Covered Wet & Dry Boat Storage Storage, Boat Rentals, Cabins for a great, Lease or Purchase Options Service/Repairs/Sales Marina • Mechanic on Duty Mechanic on Duty **Convenience Store** See us at: www.grubens.com moccasinpointmarine.com 24-Hour Fuel • Live Bait Call us at: 218.753.5000 4551 Bradley Road, Tower • 753-5457 🛞 YAMAHA 4296 Arrowhead Point Rd, www.shamrocklanding.com

Boat and pontoon

rental

Convenience store

Gas, bait & liquor

timbuktumarina.com

Super Crossword

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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 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, tollfree 1-888-647-BAAN(7226)

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