



Winter sports... See /1B

Holiday Deadlines

Dec. 17 issue... Dec. 15 at 10 a.m.

Dec. 24 issue... Dec. 21 at 10 a.m.

Dec. 31 issue... Dec. 23 at 10 a.m.

No paper published on Jan. 7

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

State can't shake Delta COVID surge

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Healthcare systems continue to grapple with an unrelenting COVID case surge that is keeping Minnesota among the nation's hardest hit states. Only New Hampshire and Michigan currently have higher

Ely records 117 cases in past three weeks

COVID case rates than Minnesota, according to Tuesday's data on the Centers for Disease Control's COVID tracking site. Minnesota's seven-day case rate of 590.2 per 100,000 population was more than double the national



average of 247.1. Coupled with non-COVID

conditions driven up by seasonal illnesses such as the flu and those who delayed treatment of other medical conditions due to COVID, the current surge is taxing the state's hospitals like never before. Combined patient

loads in the state's adult intensive care units set a pandemic high record last week, with 98 percent of all beds occupied. On Monday, 56 of the 68 hospitals in Minnesota with adult ICU units had zero beds available. COVID-related hospitalizations hit their highest level of the

See...COVID pg. 9

ISD 696

Is Ely school renovation running out of money?

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - Costs for the \$20 million ISD 696 school campus construction and renovation, dubbed the 21st Century Learning Facility Project, are creeping ever upward, causing construction managers and school officials here to adjust priorities to finish the job.

At a study session Monday night, Superintendent Erik Erie announced that the Ely school board postponed a special meeting that was to be held that night to approve the bids received for \$3.5 million worth of renovation work on the Washington and Elementary buildings.

That postponement decision was made at a school board facilities meeting last week when the latest bids were reviewed.

"We wrestled with those items in the budget and took a look at what's left," Erie said. "Some decisions were made to adjust priorities."

The school board is expected to make a decision regarding the third bid package at their regular business meeting on Monday, Dec. 13.

"It is possible we may be removing the windows (replacement) to be able to do things like finishing the boys locker room," he said.

Other items listed in the notes from the facilities

See...ELY pg. 10



CELEBRATING THE SEASON

Four-year-old Maverick Wright, above, pondered what else he would like for Christmas while sitting on Santa's lap during Orr's Snow City Christmas festival on Saturday. Mike Hanson and his horses, right, took a wagon full of folks on a ride at part of Santa's Workshop festivities in Cook on Saturday. Kathryn Hetra, with Waylon Mankus seated in front of her, below, waves to the Snow City Christmas parade crowd Saturday from the Dam Supper Club float. photos by D. Colburn



GREENWOOD

Township hears options for better EMS response

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Virginia Fire Chief Al Lewis told township officials and residents here last week that there are ways to improve their emergency medical response system, but none are likely to be inexpensive.

Lewis made his comments as an invited guest to an informational meeting sponsored by the town board in response to concerns raised over the future of EMS in the community, including financial issues and the lack of advanced life support services. About 35 people, including township officials, residents, and local emergency responders, attended the public meeting.

Lewis said the challenges currently facing emergency medical services are systemic, created by an outdated funding structure, and that the only real solution will involve the creation of larger regional districts with professional staffs, along with a financial system that is based on actual needs, and not tied to where the financial resources are coming from.

Some township officials and a few vocal Greenwood residents have been critical of the Tower Area Ambulance Service. A few have even suggested the township look at joining the Cook Ambulance District (an option that would involve joining the Cook Hospital District, a taxing authority), or asking Virginia to locate a staffed ambulance in the township.

Town supervisors have made it clear they are not interested in managing or running an ambulance service, with the financial obligations involved. Meanwhile, first responders in the township, have expressed strong support for the Tower Ambulance Service.

See...GREENWOOD pg. 10



Al Lewis

WINTER'S ARRIVAL

Heavy snow and wind hit the North Country

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL - A slow-moving low-pressure system brought the first widespread and heavy snowfall of the season to the North Country this past Sunday, along with some of the

coldest temperatures so far this winter. Snowfall totals exceeded a foot in some locations, particularly on the Mesabi Iron Range, where Chisholm reported 15 inches, with 14 inches

recorded in Hibbing and 12 inches in Virginia and Britt. Snow totals were somewhat less north of the divide,

See...WINTER pg. 9



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## Holidays at the Symphony, Dec. 11

## Range of Voices choral concerts, Dec. 10 and 12

## Woodland Christmas at the Nelimark, Dec. 9-11

## Ice Candle and Holiday Gathering set for Dec. 18

## Essentia Health holding virtual advance care planning classes

If you are unable to attend a virtual class but are interested in learning about advance care planning, our pre-recorded webinar, “It’s about the conversation” is available at the above link, as well.

**Donate at the Ely DFL office for Ely Community Resource toy drive**

The holiday gift drive is part of “Democrats Care,” a nationwide initiative by the Democratic Party to embrace and act on its ideals and work to improve our country beyond the ballot, beginning in local communities.

## CELEBRATE THE SEASON

# A very merry Christmas in Ely

ELY – The Christmas season is in full swing here and local organizations are hosting festive events to celebrate the holidays.

00

**Pengal's Basswood Trading Co. won first place in the Ely Chamber of Commerce Shine Bright Ely window-decorating contest with their retro look at Christmas in the 1960s. photo by K. Vandervort**

This year, the event will also be held live at Ely's Historic State Theater. The Celebrate the Season Holiday Concert will begin at 7 p.m. on

This production is partially funded by the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust. This activity is made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Arrowhead

Email Molly Olson at molson727@gmail.com for more information. Masks will be required for all audience members as per VCC policy.

## Live Nativity at Babbitt Assembly of God, Dec. 18 and 19



submitted photo

**Memorial Blood Centers (MBC) is calling all eligible blood and platelet donors to step up and help save lives**

**REGIONAL-** The need for blood is constant, but the supply isn't. Founded by the community, for the community, donors with Memorial Blood Centers help supply nearly 40 local hospitals and more than a dozen air ambulance bases. Help hospital patients in need by scheduling an appointment online at [mbc.org](http://mbc.org) or by

Blood donation is safe  
and essential, and MBC has

a COVID-19 self-screening policy in addition to general eligibility guidelines. In general, you may be eligible to donate if you are in good health, 17 years or older—or 16 with written parental consent (form available online), at least 110 pounds, free of antibiotics for 24 hours, unless taken for preventative reasons, and

We are dangerously low on all blood types at this time.

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GUNDERSON TRUST

Gunderson Trust explores new management options

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- At a joint meeting between the city of Tower and the Gundersen Trust Board, the group heard from two community foundations interested in taking over management of the trust fund through conversion to a community foundation model.

The group also heard that the option of continuing to independently manage the trust through Frandsen Bank and Trust was off the table. The trust board needs to make a decision on the future management of the trust, and any decision that is made will require court approval.

Steve Vranich, Sr. Vice President and Trust Officer at Frandsen, was not able to attend the meeting due to a family emergency, but he wrote to Gundersen Treasurer Steve Wilson

detailing his recommendations for the trust board.

“I must say that after reading the letter from the Quinlivan and Hughes Law Firm, and the options they outline, it may be best to partner with a community foundation,” he wrote.

Frandsen would still be interested in partnering with a community trust to manage investment of the assets, he said.

Some members of the trust board have indicated they would prefer to keep control over the trust and work with a local bank. This option would still require the trust to seek court approval, and also would require an annual audit and other attorney fees, costs which are currently adding up to more than what the trust earns in interest in a year.

Vranich said he had spoken with Karl Samp at the Brainerd Lakes Area

Foundation.

“They would hire us to manage the assets of your portfolio,” he said. “They have the expertise on assisting the city of Tower to build and maintain the foundation and we have the expertise on investing the funds. They do not invest foundation monies but hire third-party investors to do so, which is what our role would be.”

The July 14 letter he was referencing was work from the Quinlivan and Hughes Law Firm, hired by the trust board, that outlined three options for the board to consider for the future of the assets of the trust.

The current legal and tax status of the trust, which now totals over \$900,000, has been the focus of the trust board this past year as they work to create a new framework that would allow for the trust to earn more income. The purpose

of the trust was to create income to contribute to the city and its residents, in perpetuity.

The attorney’s review of the trust brought into focus questions about how the trust is currently being operated as a “government trust,” and the fact the trust had never applied for 501(c)3 non-profit status.

“There is still uncertainty as to the exact legal status of the Gundersen Trust,” attorney Brad Hanson wrote to the trust board.

In addition, investment restrictions placed on the trust’s assets in a 2018 court order meant the investment options for the money were severely limited to options that currently, and expected in the near future, are earning almost negligible amounts of interest income.

Even before the presentation by two community foundation representatives,

some trust board members had reservations about moving the funds to a community foundation.

“Once you sign it away, it is gone,” said trust board member Dena Suihkonen. “I don’t think the Gundersen family gave it to us for something future generations can’t decide on. You are taking away future generations’ rights to possibly come up with a better way.”

“It is very clear in the historical record that this was something given for the perpetual benefit of the city,” said Wilson. “It was clear that when they set up the initial court order, they wanted a permanent endowment.”

Switching the money to a community foundation model does not change this, Wilson noted, and the authority for spending the proceeds would still be at the local level, not

decided by the community foundation.

But others noted that the local group does not have the expertise to be managing this fund on its own.

“We can’t match the investment brains that do this seven days a week,” said trust board member and city council member Sheldon Majerle. “And if it isn’t in a foundation, we need to deal with the IRS and auditors.”

Trust board chair Jesse Gornick said the board might have to look into hiring someone as their board treasurer if they choose to continue managing the fund themselves, another expense, and this also wouldn’t guarantee a long-term outlook for the investments.

A community foundation approach can create a

See TRUST...pg. 5

BREITUNG TOWNSHIP

Breitung board signs police contract with Tower

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA  
Staff Writer

BREITUNG TWP- The Breitung-Tower Police contract was approved by the Breitung Town Board at its last meeting on Dec. 2. The contract, if approved by the city, would have the city paying \$65,351 for police services each year, a large reduction from previous years when they had paid \$121,000.

The contract would begin on Jan. 1 and last for one year, with a review scheduled for October. The reduction in cost is due to a reduction in staffing hours, limiting the officer to 40 hours per week with no on-call time.

All personnel responsibilities, including the option to hire more officers, remain with the township. The contract states that, “Both parties will negotiate with one another in

good faith to potentially establish a joint powers agreement to manage the police department.”

The board heard from Police Chief Dan Reing that he gave out three citations in November, and he is exploring several grant opportunities for improved equipment and possibly body cameras. The department currently does not own any body cameras. Reing also said there was a fund for \$360 set aside for the Shop with a Cop program held by the police department in previous years. Reing will donate the funds to the local Operation Santa.

McKinley Park revenue is up by \$7,278 from last year. Campground manager Susie Chiabotti reported that the summer went well, bookings were strong and guests were happy. Chiabotti said that

costs stayed about the same last year, with the electric bill up by \$590 and the garbage bill down \$536, thanks to a recycling initiative. Chiabotti thanked the board supervisors, clerk and treasurer, and maintenance staff for their support and help over the summer.

Chiabotti signed a one-year extension of her management agreement for the park. The board raised the daily electric rate from \$44.50 to \$49.50 and the weekly electric rate from \$275 to \$300 to match other area campgrounds more closely. All other rates will remain the same.

In other news, the town board:

- Paid \$111,985 to JPJ Engineering for their services.
- Made a resolution to make application to and accept funds from FEMA for fire department safety

and operations equipment. The grant is for \$50,000 - \$100,000 and the township match would be \$2,500 - \$5,000.

- Paid \$6,600 to Mesabi Bituminous for class 5 gravel, street repairs, and gravel pit work over the past several years.
- Signed the Ambulance Vehicle Replacement Aid Agreement which includes a \$15 per capita contribution to the service.
- Heard that the hockey boards that were donated to the township and have sat unused for several years have found a new home at a private rink.
- Heard that the ambulance service has had the highest number of calls in a year with 452 calls and counting.
- Heard that the Tower Trails Plan is available for public viewing on the

township’s website, breitungtownship.org, and comments are being accepted.

- Approved a variance application for Mary Batinich.
- Approved a joint powers agreement with the State of Minnesota, stating that the township’s police department will provide

criminal justice data to the state.

- Made a resolution to apply to and accept funds from Vega 3 for the purchase of a newer ballot counter.

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 23 at 12 p.m.


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**Pelican Lake, Orr-\$179,900** Pelican Lake cabin, sauna, dry boathouse, 2 woodsheds and privy with 226 ft of shoreline. Electric to main cabin and sauna building. All buildings need some TLC. **MLS#142280**

**Ash River, Orr-\$98,000** Boat-access river property. 4.5 acres and 300 ft of shoreline. **MLS#139141**

**Cook-\$179,900** 289 acre parcel of land near Lake Vermilion with Flint Creek running through. **MLS#141043**







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# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

## Editorial

### The GOP’s court takeover

With partisans in charge, regulations that protect the public are in danger

The United States could well be on the precipice of a dramatic reshaping of its laws and regulations, by the six partisan judges who now control the Supreme Court. And we’re not talking about the court’s expected repeal or weakening of the precedent set by the Roe v. Wade decision.

The high court’s conservative majority has signaled its intent to roll back 100 years of legal precedent that could affect everything from the quality of the food we eat to the safety of our workplaces, to the quality of the air we breathe.

At issue is Congress’s longstanding practice of delegating the drafting of federal rules and regulations to federal agencies. For decades, Congress has passed laws that were goal oriented, setting broad objectives for improving some aspect of American life. Whether it was air and water quality, or the safety of pajamas for kids, Congress wrote laws that expressed a desired outcome, while recognizing that Congress lacked the practical ability and expertise to develop the fine print on how to get there.

That work was left to federal agencies, which were expected to employ individuals knowledgeable in various subjects to develop federal rules and regulations through which the executive branch would interpret and enforce the laws that Congress wrote. Since 1946, the process for doing that has been spelled out in the Administrative Procedures Act.

Conservatives had no qualms about this process back when the national political landscape was more favorable to Republicans. But after eight years of President Obama, and after considering that the Republican nominee has won a majority of the presidential vote only once in the past 33 years, conservatives have looked to the Supreme Court as the best way to win the big political arguments they haven’t been able to win at the ballot box. To do so, they are looking to an old legal theory that says Congress can’t delegate its authority to another branch of government. Under this dubious theory, virtually the entire edifice of the federal regulatory system could be dismantled, piece by piece, as unconstitutional.

It’s no secret that conservatives are gunning for what they term “the administrative state,” arguing that federal regulations should not be drafted by what they call “unaccountable bureaucrats.” It’s a popular sound bite these days among conservatives. It

is, also, complete nonsense.

For one, the bureaucrats who have drafted federal regulations for decades are hardly unaccountable. The promulgation of new rules and regulations must be clearly responsive to congressionally enacted laws. Based on the Administrative Procedures Act, they must go through an exhaustive public comment process before they are enacted. At any point in the process, Congress can call those “unaccountable” bureaucrats before a congressional committee for a good grilling, or pass a new law if they don’t like the regulations developed by the agencies. And, as always, the courts have the opportunity to review any new regulations should they be challenged, and such challenges are routine.

Anyone who suggests the current system is “unaccountable” had better consult an English dictionary for the definition of the term.

Unaccountable would better describe the Supreme Court majority’s plan to replace rule-making by federal agencies, with rule-making by conservative activist judges with lifetime appointments, who answer to no one.

While most federal judges are highly intelligent, no one expects them to be specialists in every possible subject matter. The various federal agencies deal with an almost unimaginable array of complex issues and they rely on the thousands of experts they employ to make sense of it all. That’s why, for decades, courts have generally deferred to the expertise deployed by the agencies subject to their review, unless they determine that statutory language is ambiguous or that the agency action was arbitrary.

Unfortunately, the current Supreme Court majority has a political agenda that centers around dismantling regulations designed to protect the public from the predatory impulses of market power and wealth. Citizens United, which all but dismantled controls on money in politics, was just the opening salvo. Now, with a 6-3 Republican majority on the court, regulations on clean air, clean water, food and workplace safety, voting rights, consumer protection, and a long list of other regulatory systems designed to protect the public and the environment, could soon be dismantled, leaving powerful special interests with the freedom to run roughshod over just about everything that protects the average American.

One thing’s for sure. It’s going to be a bumpy ride.



## Letters from Readers

### Vote for real transparency in the sheriff’s office

Wow. At long last, after saying no for years, after questionable claims of lack of money for such allocations, after, in fact, returning surplus funding to the county, the current sheriff buys body cams. Is he honest? You decide.

Contender for the sheriff’s office, Chad Walsh, has been out and about all around the county for the past year listening. Chad Walsh has been hearing from the people. And they want transparency. They

want to know what goes on when a confrontation happens between a sheriff’s deputy and a member of the public. You want to know. If fact, citizens have always felt they should know how their elected officials act in a tense situation, and they have spoken as loud as thunder about the subject. Just ask Chad Walsh.

Funny how, now that he is feeling a little heat from a challenged election, the sheriff who has heretofore chosen to work in the dark, has “suddenly” seen the light! The sheriff who said no to transparency until now. The person who didn’t really care what you wanted. The guy who didn’t

have enough money in his budget until Chad Walsh showed up. All of a sudden, whammo... the budget exploded! We got enough for body cams! Now.

Don’t be fooled by this sleight of hand.

Vote for the guy who will have your back. The sheriff who is true to his word. The man who will implement your ideas and consider your needs. The man who heard your thunder. That man is Chad Walsh. The election will be held Nov. 8, 2022.

**Carole Kapsner**  
**Aurora**

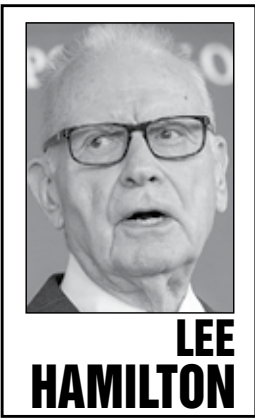
## COMMENTARY

### The fight over voting

Call me naïve, but I’ve never quite gotten why some politicians want to limit voters’ ability to cast their ballots. Sure, I know that plenty of people like to flip the classic Clausewitz quote and say that politics is war by other means. All’s fair, etc., they insist.

But the cornerstone of representative democracy, the base on which everything else rests, is the people’s right to cast an informed vote to choose our leaders. There’s no argument about this: it’s just a basic right. Which means that the more Americans we hear from in the voting booth, the fairer and more representative the results. So, in my book, getting creative about restricting the ability to cast a ballot is pretty much an admission that you can’t win in the marketplace of ideas.

Over the course of our history, despite fits and starts, we’ve moved steadily toward expanding people’s ability to vote—from white men with property only, to allowing women, Black people, Native Americans, and people 18 and older to cast ballots. Yet here we are in 2021, still in a pitched battle over this most basic of



**LEE HAMILTON**

democratic rights—fought out this year in the state legislatures, Congress, and the courts, the same venues that have seen this issue for generations.

And right now, it’s looking like as a nation we’re on a determined march backward. Thanks to new legislation in Georgia, county elections officials—the backbone of our democracy—are being removed as new local and state laws take aim at elections administration in a bid, bluntly put, to put people in authority who can tilt rules and regulations in their party’s favor. Secretaries of state are losing their power as legislatures across the country move to shift power over the running of elections to, well, themselves. This does not inspire confidence in the future of American democracy.

Why? Because all these maneuvers take aim at the nitty-gritty details of running elections: voting hours; the locations of precincts and of ballot drop boxes; making it harder or easier for eligible voters to register; what’s in voter notifications—and who gets them; how often to purge voter rolls (and of whom); the ability

to certify elections. This is not about making voting fairer or easier for Americans. It’s about putting rules in place that make it harder. For a more-than-usually bold assertion of the partisan hue these moves take, you can look at Arizona: there, state legislators have introduced a bill that would take away authority from the secretary of state of the other party—until she leaves office, at which point the bill expires.

Looking to the courts for help is dicey. The U.S. Supreme Court has just signaled its willingness to allow the core value embedded in the 1965 Voting Rights Act—that what happens on the ground matters, whatever the intent—to fall by the wayside. In its decision, the Court essentially said that there’s no legal recourse if you can’t prove that a legislature acted with racist intent, regardless of how things play out in real life. There are state courts pushing back against this direction—New Hampshire’s supreme court, for instance, recently invalidated a law passed in 2017 because its impact fell unequally on voters. But that strikes me as a rearguard action.

When I began in politics, I thought it would be easy to protect the right to vote. I was dead wrong. One of my earliest

See **VOTE...pg. 5**

## Watching little personalities emerge

“I’m such an idiot,” I said to myself as I realized I made an obvious mistake with my bread machine. Over in the corner I heard my two-year-old daughter, Dot, fumble out the syllables, “Idiot-ot, you’re an idiot,” she said.

...I guess I’ll need to be more careful shows her personality with about how I talk, but it her spoken and body lan-



**STEPHANIE UKKOLA**

was pretty funny.

Dot’s ability to express herself has grown so much over the past few months. She has been able to say words for a long time but now she

guage. She can tell me what she wants and she can tell me what happened when she gets hurt.

When Dot has to think hard about how to explain something she holds her hand up, like a waitress carrying a tray, and looks up to the corner of her eye. She’s such a girly girl and sweet too. She likes to rub her face on my face and go, “mm, mm.” There’s truly nothing better.

But being two is rough. Toddlers have a lot of ideas

about things and think they know how things should go. They want to do everything by themselves, and they get cranky when things don’t go the way they want.

Being a parent of a two-year-old is rough too. It’s easy to be bull-headed because you too have your own ideas about things. But then you need to remind yourself day after day to compromise and let them lead, you need to let them write the script and then roll with the punches with your

best attitude.

I used to think I was a patient person, now I know I’m not. Parenting takes a lot of (mountains of) self-control. I spend a lot of time evaluating my parenting. Did I take the kids outside today? When my three-year-old Ed got angry did I respond the right way? Did I engage them enough? Did I feed them the right foods? Are my kids getting enough socialization during the pandemic? I feel guilty when things are

less than ideal.

I know it’s recommended that children watch less than two hours of television a day but it’s so overwhelming to have the kids focused on me all day. I often let them watch more than they should so I can have a break or get things done.

In the summer we watch almost no TV at all, we spend most of the day outside in the yard and

See **KIDS...pg. 5**



ELECTRIC SERVICE

Minnesota Power rate interim increase approved

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Customers of Minnesota Power will see their rates increase beginning Jan. 1, following a decision late last week by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The MPUC approved a rate increase on an interim basis while the commission

considers a permanent rate increase that Minnesota Power had requested last month.

Minnesota Power is seeking permission to raise an additional \$108 million by increasing rates on customers across the board, including residential, business, and industrial.

The permanent rate increase, if ultimately approved by the MPUC,

would amount to an 18-percent increase in overall rates and would raise the monthly bill for the average residential customer by about \$15, and \$28 for the typical business customer. The dollar impact on industrial customers would likely be far larger.

Minnesota Power had requested a 14-percent increase in its rates on an interim basis while the

MPUC reviews the larger rate request, a process that could take as long as a year. But Minnesota Power, after working with the consumer advocate Energy CENTS Coalition, agreed to reduce its request for an interim rate hike to seven percent for its residential customers. Business customers will see the 14-percent increase, beginning in January.

If the MPUC ultimately approves a smaller rate increase than allowed on an interim basis, Minnesota Power would be required to refund the difference to customers.

Minnesota Power filed its rate increase request on Nov. 1. The approximately 18-percent increase proposed by the company reflects changes in both revenue and expenses

related to Minnesota Power’s ongoing EnergyForward clean energy transition, evolving customer energy demand, business operations and regulatory requirements since the company’s last completed rate review submitted in 2016.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Are you looking for affordable housing in Tower?

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER— Are you interested in owning your own affordable home in Tower? The Tower Economic Development Authority is looking for a family interested in partnering with the North St. Louis County Habitat for

Humanity to build a new home on property located on S Second St. in Tower.

Habitat for Humanity is an international organization that helps make home ownership possible by partnering with volunteers and other agencies to provide affordable housing for individuals or families. The North St.

Louis County Habitat for Humanity (NSLCHFH) serves 14 communities in the North Country, including Babbitt, Cook, Ely, Embarrass, Tower, and Soudan. Prospective families for a Habitat home are expected to invest at least 200 hours of volunteer time, or “sweat equity,” into building their own home or

other Habitat homes in the region.

The prospective homeowners must also have the ability to repay a very affordable 30-year mortgage.

Anyone who meets the qualifications may be considered for a Habitat for Humanity home without regard for their race, reli-

gion, age, gender, or political views.

If you would like to be considered, you can request an application by emailing [habitat@nslchfh.org](mailto:habitat@nslchfh.org) with the subject title Application Request. You can also stop by their office located at 5558 Enterprise Dr. NE in Virginia. The office is open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday

through Friday. You can also download an application from their website at [www.nslchfh.org/how-to-apply](http://www.nslchfh.org/how-to-apply). You can also contact TEDA Executive Director Marshall Helmberger for assistance at 218-750-2510 or at [teda@cityoftower.com](mailto:teda@cityoftower.com).

TRUST...continued from page 3

stable source of investment profits, guaranteeing a specific return on the funds invested, mostly between four and five percent. Any income earned in a year above that amount gets reinvested in the principal and helps create a cushion for years when the market is poor.

At the joint meeting, the council and board heard from representatives from two Minnesota-based community trusts, Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation and Brainerd Lakes Area Foundation.

Community trusts are non-profits set up to professionally manage investments that then pay out a stable income to the beneficiary, year after year.

The city would need to terminate the trust and then transfer the funds to the community foundation,

which would carry out the purpose of the trust. This option also removes the need for an annual audit and other attorney fees.

Community foundations have guidelines for how they invest their clients’ money.

“Investments are governed by statute,” said Duluth Superior Foundation Development Officer Mark Danielson, who attended the meeting in Tower.

Danielson said their current investment mix is about 70 percent in stocks and 30 percent in bonds. Their stock investments are all in index funds which reflect broad swaths of the stock market and have low investment-related costs.

“We have a pretty straightforward investment philosophy,” he said.

The foundation manages over \$100 million

in assets and a total of about 450 individual funds.

The foundation would charge a 0.55-percent fee annually on the total amount in the fund. They also are hiring a new investment manager, and that charge will total 0.1 percent.

“We are solid with sound investment management,” Danielson said. “We are based in northeastern Minnesota, we understand our communities.”

Steve Joul, President/CEO, and Karl Samp, Executive Director, from the Brainerd Lakes Community Foundation gave their presentation via Zoom. Their foundation started with about \$18.5 million in assets but now manages over \$200 million in assets in over 850 funds, most based in central Minnesota.

They also have a focus

on helping communities grow their funds by soliciting new donations and bequests.

Costs for this fund would be 1.0 percent for an endowed fund and 1.25 percent on a flex fund, plus an investment fee that ranges from 0.24 percent to 0.57 percent, or the option of using Frandsen at 0.6 percent.

Both funds would then distribute the proceeds to the city, which would need to set up a board, like the current Gundersen Trust board, to oversee distribution of the income each year. The distribution would need to fit charitable guidelines. Currently, the Gundersen Trust is set up to distribute 75 percent of its annual income to the city’s general fund, and 25 percent to community education and recreation for

city residents. The actual terms of the distribution would be set by the future court order dismantling the current trust and selection of a community foundation.

The board made no decisions on selecting an option at this meeting. A motion by Wilson to eliminate the consideration of Option 1 (continuing to locally manage the fund) failed on a 3-3 vote, with board members John Burgess, Dena Suihkonen, and Sheldon Majerle voting against.

“Frandsen is saying thanks but no thanks,” said Tower Council Member Joe Morin. But council members did not decide to weigh in with a vote at this meeting.

“I don’t believe that Frandsen doesn’t want our business,” said Burgess. “Let’s hear from Frandsen.

That would solve my situation. I am only one vote.”

Wilson noted the board already had Frandsen’s answer in writing.

The board decided to have a second meeting in December to hear from the St. Paul Foundation, and also to see if Steve Vranich from Frandsen was willing to attend the meeting (in person or via Zoom) to answer questions. The meeting date will be set sometime in the second or third week of December.

In other business, the trust board decided not to automatically renew a group of five CDs at Frandsen Bank, which are currently earning .07 percent or less. The board is also looking into hiring a new audit firm.

KIDS...continued from page 4

garden. But in the winter, despite my best intentions outlined in my column last month, “Resisting the urge to hibernate” we’re still mostly hibernating. I try to make sure the kids get outside once a day for play in the fresh air.

Motherhood comes with a lot of questions. For something so “natural” that we’ve been doing forever, how can it be so complicated? There are thousands of books, blogs, and experts trying to dole out advice, offering answers to the never-ending questions that come up while raising little ones. Humans are complicated, and we live in a complicated world. Theories and best practices for parenting seem to change with every generation; they vary from culture to culture.

One hotly debated example: sleeping babies. Co-sleeping, or sharing your bed with an infant, is practiced around the world and is very common. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends not sleeping with your child in the interest of safety. Before the 1990s, we were advised to put babies to sleep on their stomachs, now we are to put them to sleep on their

backs. I can’t tell you how many Google searches I did for both my babies. I was so worried they would die in their sleep and I looked at article after article on safe sleep and spent hours trying to find answers to all my “What if” questions.

Now that they’re a little older I don’t worry about stuff too much anymore; I know mostly what is right and wrong and I try not to feel too guilty when things don’t go the ideal way.

In college I registered for a 400-level philosophy class on motherhood. After going to the bookstore and finding the 10 pounds of required reading, I decided that it was just more than I could handle that semester and I dropped the class. Now I wish I had taken the class. An armful of books sounds a lot easier than actual child-rearing and maybe I would have learned something helpful.

And all kids are so different! What works for one kid may not work for another. Just when you think you have everything figured out with your first kid, the second one changes the whole game. Ed and Dot couldn’t be more different.

Ed’s very cautious. He’s scared of dogs and

most other animals. But on the other hand, he’s rammy. He’s interested in being tough and fast. Dot is laid back, she loves animals and is cuddly. Ed was a very fussy baby and kid, Dot not so much.

When we potty trained Ed he would get so angry, “I DON’T WANT TO!” He’d scream in my face while on the toilet while I reassured him he could. After he was done he was fine but he’d scream and scream when he needed to go. I tried everything, I looked at a million websites for advice and I kept gently pushing him because I knew he was ready but it was so hard to know what the right thing to do was when he responded so violently. Once he figured out he could do it, he was great about it.

Dot has made more messes while potty training but just needed encouragement and reminders. She’s never gotten angry, she is happy to do it. We’re still working on it with her but she’s doing great. She gets a little Hershey’s Kisse every time she goes and that keeps her going.

It’s easy to think that when a child learns to talk, things will go more smoothly. Instead of guessing what

a child needs, they just tell you, right? I’m not so sure.

Sometimes Dot will randomly say, “go in the kitchen, mom.” Uh... ok. I think that’s another way of saying, “I’m hungry” but we’ll work on that.

“Why?” I ask.

“I want strawberries, I want the salad. Get up. I want candy. I need candy. I need candy, mom.” Nothing is ever simple with kids.

Her new thing is “uh, mom.” She keeps saying it over and over on repeat. With nothing else to say after.

“Uh, mom,” she says

“Yes?” I say.

“Uh, mom. Uh, mom. Uh, mom.”

My kids teach me to be a little more light-hearted. I’m prone to being so serious and straightforward about things. They help me exercise my imagination when we are pretending we’re on a boat ride. I enjoy watching them play with dinosaurs or showing them new ways to use their Play-Doh. They keep me completely exhausted and push me to my limits, but it’s really a privilege and a pleasure to see their little personalities emerge.



the  
**TIMBERJAY**

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VOTE...Continued from page 4

votes in Congress was to support the 1965 Voting Rights Act, clearly one of the most important pieces of legislation in our country’s history—and the one that the Supreme Court just undermined. I am constantly amazed at how much time,

energy, and effort some people put into denying other people the right to vote. This is a battle, and those of us who believe that the health of our democracy rests on ensuring fair, equal, and unfettered access to the ballot box for all eligible

voters have our work cut out for us.

*Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a 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.*



Week of Dec. 13

Monday

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

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 13

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 Dec. 21.

Greenwood Town Board- 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 14

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.

Tower/Soudan Community Bible Study- Thursdays from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the Tower Elementary School cafeteria. All are welcome. Call 218-984-3402 for more info.

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at [vermilioncountry.org](http://vermilioncountry.org).

Operation Santa taking donations through Dec. 16

TOWER- Operation Santa is a local fundraiser which purchases Christmas gifts (toys, gift cards, and warm winter items) for children whose families use the Tower Food Shelf. Last year's tally of 195 children was a new record, and thanks to everyone's generosity, we had gifts for all!

We are looking at donations of toys, games, art supplies, and sporting equipment for children, and gift cards to either Target or Walmart for our teenagers (\$10 or \$15). Stocking stuffer type gifts and holiday candy are also appreciated.

Donations can be dropped off at the Timberjay in Tower, and will be distributed at the food shelf on Dec. 21. Families who use the Tower Food Shelf and have not yet signed up, can call Jodi at the Timberjay at 218-753-2950, or email [editor@timberjay.com](mailto:editor@timberjay.com).

Tower-Soudan Singers final caroling event on Monday, Dec. 13

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Area Singers plans to carol on Monday, Dec. 13 at Sulu's in Tower. Coffee and treats will be available indoors during the performance.

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Tower-Soudan Elementary school concert on Thursday, Dec. 16 at 1 p.m.



Tower-Soudan Elementary students will hold their annual Winter Holiday Concert on Thursday, Dec. 16 at 1 p.m. in the school gym. They will be singing songs about peace and the holidays, including five different variations of Jingle Bells! The elementary band will also be performing. The Northeast Range Elementary Concert is set for Friday, Dec. 17 at 1:30 p.m. in Babbitt. photo by J. Summit

MAIN STREET

Vacant building now home to five new businesses

TOWER- Miranda Kishel, who works helping new and existing business owners at the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund in Virginia, now has a business to call her own.

Flexspace is the showcase business in her newly-renovated building at 615 Main Street, the old Classy Cars building.

The building has sat vacant for over 30 years, though at one point the previous owner, Ron Abrahamson, had planned to put in a gas station. He installed pumps and underground gasoline tanks, but the station never opened. The two-story building ended up filled up with all sorts of materials, and the parking lot in front was full of old parked cars, boats, and RVs.

"When I first saw the interior it was almost filled, with only a pathway cleared," said Kishel.

Abrahamson's children had their work cut out for them as they cleared the building for the sale. They hosted an auction to get rid of as much of the old materials as possible, and then figured out how to dispose of the rest. Then Kishel signed the papers to become Tower's newest business owner and was able to get to work.

Kishel's vision was to create a business incubator space. The building is now bright and airy and features smaller spaces for new business owners to rent (all currently rented out), and a larger co-working space that could be used by business people, tourists, and the public, basically anyone who needed access to high-speed internet, an office space, a meeting room, creative equipment, and more.

Flexspace is cozy and inviting. There are individual work stations, both sitting and standing desks, couches and chairs, and a large conference table. Furniture can be arranged to suit many types of work as needed. There are two private office spaces as well.

The 11-foot long conference table came from the North Star Credit Union in Cook, a place where Kishel worked while in high school and doing PSEO at Mesabi Community College. It is a reminder, for her, of her already-considerable resume. She saw it for sale and just knew she needed it for her new business. Working at the credit union while getting her high school diploma and AA degree, and then her bachelor's degree in finance and accounting online at University of Minnesota-Crookston, was her first step into the business world. It meant she was getting real life experience to reinforce what she was learning in college. She went on to get her master's degree in business strategy from Capella University, again online. And her education is still continuing; she has almost completed a program to become a Certified Valuation Analyst.

"Going to school online meant I could also work," she said.

Flexspace calls itself a place for entrepreneurs, freelancers, creatives, learners, do-ers, artists, hobbyists, outside the box thinkers, and everyone else. It is set up as a self-sufficient space. People need to sign up online to use the space, and the building



Pictured (clockwise from top): Miranda Kishel in the new Flexspace co-working space. A shopper browses the gift items at Little Blessings. Beth Debeltz is busy setting up her new spa business which plans to be open in the spring. Korissa Kishel (left) and Lisa Smith are operating a new natural foods store called Little Green Pantry. photos by J. Summit

has a keyless entry system. People can use the space for an hour or a day, and purchase monthly passes, and also reserve the private office areas. Pricing starts at \$10 a day, and a monthly pass is \$120.

Kishel said the co-working space can allow self-employed people to keep a better work-life balance. Members can rent lockers in the building, to leave their work at work, and eliminate the temptation to work at night. But for those who wish to work at night, members have access to the building 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The space can also serve as a spot to host meetings and classes. Kishel will be offering some business classes in the space, and hopes that others will use the space in a similar way.

With Flexspace now up and running, Kishel still plans to redo the exterior front of the building this year. Next year, plans are to build three two-bedroom apartments on the second floor. She also owns the vacant lot to the east of the building, and hopes to use that for future development and possible more upstairs apartments.

You can find out more at [www.theflexiblespace.com](http://www.theflexiblespace.com).

Other businesses

Lisa Smith has opened Little Green Pantry in the building. The shop offers foods sourced with natural ingredients, as well as more natural cleaning supplies, and gift items for all ages. The shop will be open Monday

through Friday from 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Winter hours may change, she said. Smith is no stranger to doing business in Tower. She has been a vendor at Ubetcha Antiques since the business first opened. And she is a natural fit for the building, which is owned by her daughter Miranda. Korissa Kishel, another daughter, is helping to run the shop.

"I've gotten a lot of positive comments so far," Smith said.

The shelves are full of all sorts of foods, spices, baking supplies, snacks and treats, juices, yogurts, soups, and coffee and teas. There are many items for shoppers who need gluten-free foods, or have other special dietary needs. Smith said she has done a lot of research when picking what items to stock in her shop, and hopes to make healthy eating easier for everyone in the area.

They are selling groceries without chemicals, preservatives, added sweeteners, or colorants. "We should be able to read and understand the ingredients labels on the things we eat," Smith said.

The shop is also selling locally-grown grass fed beef in their freezer case, and plans to have refrigerated ready-to-eat foods and meals soon. You can find out more on their facebook page, or at their website, [littlegreenpantry.com](http://littlegreenpantry.com).

Little Blessings Gift Shop and Beauty Counter owner Toni Monsivais is opening her sec-



ond location here in Suite 102. She has a storefront on Main Street in Cook as well. Toni has a great variety of gifts, books, affirmation signs, gift baskets, and chemical free makeup products from the Beauty Counter brand. There is a wonderful selection of Christmas and winter-themed hand-made gnomes, and plenty of other holiday decorations. There are also baby gifts and clothing.

Harbor View Health and Wellness will not be formally opening until later this winter or early spring. Owner Beth Debeltz is busy getting her space ready. She is looking to hire a massage therapist and nail technician. The spa will offer massage, manicure and pedicures, and facial treatments. They will have spa packages with special pricing, bridal parties, and birthday party events. They will also be selling medical-grade skin care. The space will also have a clothing boutique with women's fashions and accessories. She is looking at being open Wednesdays through Sundays.

Debeltz lives in Embarrass. Her husband Dennis and son Brandt run B & D Clearall, and they also manage Holmes Excavating. The family has a cabin on Lake Vermilion. Debeltz works at Essentia in Virginia and manages radiological care for Essentia in the Arrowhead region.

The fourth business is Aura Boreal. Owner Kim Yankowiak will be doing Reiki sessions by appointment. She is a Reiki Master and teacher who works with both people and animals. Her website is under construction at [TheAuraBoreal.com](http://TheAuraBoreal.com).

Call 753-2950 to subscribe to the Timberjay!





SUPPORTING THE ARTS

‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ radio play continues this weekend

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - Northern Lakes Arts Association’s first radio play event, It’s a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play, continues this weekend at Vermilion Community College and streaming online.

The remaining date for the performance streaming online only is Friday Dec. 10, at 7 p.m. Tickets for



the streamed shows are \$5 per ticket plus a small ticket fee.

Dates for the remain-

ing live performances at the Vermilion Community College Fine Arts Theater were adjusted due to last weekend’s snowstorm, to allow for two performances on Saturday, Dec. 11. A live performance scheduled for last Sunday was postponed because of weather travel concerns for the cast and audience. Director Vince

O’Connor said late Sunday morning, “Given that we’re still under a winter storm warning, and that one of the cast lives 17 miles down the Fernberg, in consultation with the cast we are canceling today’s performance of “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

“A second performance is scheduled for 2 p.m. this coming Saturday,

which would mean there would be two live performances, one at 2 p.m. and one at 7 p.m. We appreciate your understanding.”

Tickets for the live shows are \$10 per ticket plus ticket fee. Tickets are available online at bit.ly/nlaatkts.

The Ely radio play involves more than a dozen

local cast members and more than 60 speaking roles. Cast members include Grayson Scoggin, Katie Paige, Gil Knight, Karin Schmidt, Cade Thibodeaux, Vince O’Connor, Julie Maystadt, Irene Hartfield, Crystal Poppler, Gabe Mann, Tracy Thibodeaux, Alison Poppler, and Brennan Rue. Additionally, almost all sound effects are created live by Gregg Mann.

WINDOW INTO YESTERDAY

These old houses: Ely history celebrated

by DAVID KESS  
Ely-Winton Historical Society

Compared to some other Minnesota towns, Ely is, at 133 years old, not so very old, however, this community does have a number of buildings that are 100 years old or more, such as downtown business buildings, churches, schools, and houses.

Some have been remodeled so much they no longer look as they did originally, but here are four that have been kept much the same: the Jacob Pete house, the Skala house, the Gust Maki house, and the Samuel Knox house (in Winton). We call them by the names of the original owners.

On the corner of Pattison Street and Central Avenue above a stone terrace wall stands the Jacob Pete house. It has been called that for many years even though it began its life in Section 30 as a hospital and then the residence of George St. Clair, superintendent of the mine. Without access to an abstract, it is impossible to know what year this house was built or when it was moved to Ely. However, it is a known fact that the house was sawn in half and moved into Ely, very probably by Harry Kidd, a man who moved many houses in Ely. There is a visible saw cut on the basement ceiling.

Back in the early and even mid-1900s many houses were moved into Ely from places like Section 30 in Winton, and the five mining locations. Some homesteads were also moved in from the country. Their once-visible hewn log walls were usually covered up with clapboard siding.

The Pete house is an example of California bungalow style. Most likely it was marketed as a pre-cut house manufactured by either Sears or the Aladdin Co. Montgomery Ward also sold similar houses in the first part of the 20th century. “Bungalow” does not necessarily refer to the size, only that it was usually designed as a one-story house. Many had fireplaces, bay windows, wide eaves, and porches. The “Pete” house also featured a spa-



The “Pete” house, 331 S. Central Ave., is an example of a California bungalow style. photos courtesy of the Ely-Winton Historial Society



The Gust Maki house at 105 E. Conan St.

cious sun porch.

Similar in design to the Pete house is the former home of Jake and Ann Skala at 305 E. Harvey St. It also is an example of the California bungalow style. It was built on site and not moved. School children were often taken in the spring to see Mrs. Skala’s crocuses which were planted all over the large and meticulously-maintained lawn. The house has an interesting fireplace and the woodwork is Southern Yellow Pine in the American Classic design.

The Gust Maki house at 105 E. Conan was built in 1914, replacing an earlier three-room house that was moved near the park. Senja Maki had her heart set on a bungalow style house with leaded glass windows and a fireplace. Gust and Senja pored over plan books at the McMahan lumber yard, something many prospective builders did. Before construction started, Gust’s mother, a rather opinionated woman, changed all that saying, “Forget those

windows and that fireplace. Put on a full second-story with bedrooms. Hard times are coming and you will do well to take in roomers.” Senja reluctantly agreed but put her foot down about having boarders. She was not going to do meals. They mostly rented to teachers, the town florist, a surveyor, and a lawyer, using two of the upstairs bedrooms for their family.

Their plan was then modified to an American Foursquare design with six bedrooms. Senja insisted on a kitchen addition with a pantry, still used today. The couple had saved some money but they borrowed \$3,000 from Gust’s brother to go ahead with the building. The price of the house was something over \$3,000, more than \$80,000 now, without improvements and inflation.

While not nearly as grand as the Pete or Skala houses, the Maki house is unique in that its Southern Yellow Pine American Classic woodwork has never been painted in its 107

years. A fireplace and some leaded glass windows have been added in later years. I hope you are smiling, Grandmother!

While the plan came from a book, the materials were purchased locally. The millwork also came from the lumber yard. Hardware stores also sold millwork.

Perhaps the oldest and grandest house of these four houses is the Samuel Knox house on River St. in Winton. It is called the Shingle Style, part of the Craftsman movement. Mr. Knox was the superintendent of the big sawmill operation on Fall Lake. It no doubt is the oldest and grandest of all four houses, having been built in before 1900.

There were originally two houses side by side, both built by the Knox mill company. It featured a large living room with a brick fireplace, a quite large dining room and living room, a spacious enclosed sun porch, and a screen porch overlooking Fall Lake on River St. The woodwork and flooring were oak, as was the wainscoting, and the overhead beamed ceiling. A bay window in the dining room had prism glass windows. The house featured French doors, beveled glass doors and leaded windows. Other architectural items were imported from Europe.

The walk-up attic was spacious as was the basement. The radiators

throughout the house were of elaborate cast iron, themselves works of art. The Knox family moved away after selling the mill to the St. Croix Co. from Stillwater. Logging operations in the area later ceased in the mid 1920s. It appears the house was empty for some years after that. John Helberg then bought the house but later sold it to his renters and relatives John and Ellen Ostlund about 1952. John did much restoration such as wallpapering, and refinishing the oak floors. He also restored the fabric panels on the wainscoting.

John was a plumber by trade but was also quite a skilled carpenter. He eventually divided the second floor into one large and one small apartment and his family lived downstairs. The companion house next door had burned to the ground much earlier. After John died in 1983, his daughter rented the house but sold it in 2001 to Barbara Vinson.

During this time this grand old house had become deteriorated and when it was put up for auction within the last year, it appears it sold quickly. The minimum bid was reported to be \$30,000. The new owner has not been named. There is no doubt it will take much money and much TLC to put the house back into condition but it could potentially become one of the showcase houses of the area. You might even say it could be the Glemsheen of Winton.

In looking through several books on mail order houses, my guess is that both the Jacob Pete house and the Skala house came from the Aladdin Co., but I wouldn’t rule out Sears. Mail order houses were provided pre-cut materials that were shipped, most often by rail, to their destination. Everything, including door knobs, was included.

Pictures of these historic houses are displayed in the lobby of the Fine Arts Theater lobby at Vermilion Community College through the first of next year. Please call the historical society at 218-365-3928 if you can supply any further information or have any questions.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



they say a blizzard  
so soon snow painting all white  
eight to ten inches

Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday — Friday,  
9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.  
Closed on Saturday,  
Sunday, and holidays  
Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday	Noon-6 pm
Tuesday	Noon-6 pm
Wednesday	Noon-6 pm
Thursday	Noon-6 pm
Friday	Noon-5 pm

Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

**AA - Alcoholics Anonymous**  
**OPEN AA - 7:30**  
p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely.  
**SUNDAY NIGHT AA -**  
at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church is cancelled.  
**ELY WOMEN’S OPEN AA -** Every Monday at noon at Ledgerock Church, 1515 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.  
**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED**  
- Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, or 1-800-662-5711.  
**CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS:**  
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Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital

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OUR COMMUNITY

Fire departments respond to structure fires

REGIONAL – The winter heating season is well underway and already numerous structure fires around the Ely area have kept local fire departments busy since Thanksgiving weekend.

An early morning fire on Saturday, Nov. 27 caused extensive damage to a house in Morse Township, south of Ely. The fire was reported around 3:30 a.m. in the 1100 block of St. Louis County Highway 21.

Officials from the Morse-Fall Lake Fire

Department said the fire extended through the entire house and several floors had burned through. No injuries were reported. Fire departments on the scene included Morse-Fall Lake, Ely, Babbitt, and Eagles Nest Township. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Four Ely area fire departments fought a garage fire in Morse Township last Thursday, Dec. 2. The blaze was reported around 5:25 p.m. in the 2600 block of Grant McMahan Boulevard.

Firefighters were able to contain the blaze to the attached garage of the home. Departments responding to the fire included Morse-Fall Lake, Ely, Eagles Nest, and Babbitt. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Late Monday, Dec. 6, a trailer home in the Ely area was destroyed by fire. Morse-Fall Lake and Ely firefighters were called to the blaze on Snowbank Beach Road. The house is a total loss, according to officials.



Four area fire departments responded to a house fire on Highway 21 on Saturday, Nov. 27. photo courtesy of the Northland Firewire



# Season’s greetings and season’s givings



Christmas cheer and glad tidings in abundance were to be found throughout the Cook/Orr region on Saturday, including the Lights of Love tree lighting in Orr and Santa’s Workshop at the Cook Community Center.

Above: A small but enthusiastic group gathered outside the Orr Center to light the VHHP Christmas tree to kick off the organization’s Lights of Love fundraiser. Gazing upward in front is Soren Judas, son of VHHP board member Jennifer Judas, far left. Others lighting the tree included, from left, Orr Center Director Wendy Purdy, VHHP board chair Ivette Reing, and board member Barb Boutto.

Left: Santa’s tiniest visitor at Santa’s Workshop in Cook was sleepy little eight-week-old Eli Prescott, who merely yawned when asked what he wanted for Christmas.  
photos by D. Colburn

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### New winter fly-in event to take place on Dec. 18 in Orr

ORR- Small airplane aviators are invited and encouraged to join in the first annual Moose Lake Fly-In on Saturday, Dec. 18. The event will rekindle the fun and camaraderie once experienced in the popular fly-ins on Bell Lake hosted by Dennis Carlson.

Ski/wheel aircraft will be winging in and landing on the ice, to be greeted by fellow aviators as well as event organizers Bill and Patrick Hoffer. Stay warm around a toasty fire or in the warming cabin and take care of your appetite with an ample supply of chili, hot dogs, and Polish sausage.

Pilots can get exact coordinates of the fly-in location by calling Bill at 218-780-3886, or Patrick at 218-780-6535. They are also available to answer questions.

In case of inclement weather, Sunday, Dec. 19 will be the alternate date.

Non-fliers who would like to participate in the festivities are welcome. The address is 10119 King Rd., in Orr.

### Cook book club to meet on Dec. 14

COOK- The Readers and Rappers Book Club will meet on Dec. 14 at 1 p.m. at the Cook Community Center at 510 Gopher Dr. to discuss “Leonard and Hungry Paul” by Ronan Hession.

“Leonard and Hungry Paul” is the story of two thirty-something friends struggling to protect their understanding of what’s meaningful in life. It is about the uncelebrated people of this world – the gentle, the meek, the humble. As they struggle to persevere, the book asks a surprisingly enthralling question: Is it really them against the world, or are they on to something?

Vicki Lange will moderate the discussion.

The club’s January title will be “Nomadland” by Jessica Bruder.

### Church goes Italian for monthly community meal

COOK- You’re barely removed from Thanksgiving, and you’re already thinking about another big feast at Christmas, but what do you do in-between? Lasagna!

Trinity Lutheran Church, at 231 2nd St E, will feature the Italian favorite for its monthly community meal on Thursday, Dec. 16 from 4 – 6 p.m. Sides and dessert will also be provided, and the meal will be served as a drive-thru event.

As always, the meal is free and the public is invited.

### Fundraiser sale continues at NWFA

COOK- The ongoing “Arts, Antiquities and Other Curiosities” sale at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery offers visitors a wide variety of items from which to choose a special gift or unique collectible.

Fanciful and practical items on display in The Wolfe Den classroom have been donated by NWFA members and others in the community to support the fundraiser.

Shop local for “new to you” items at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. throughout December on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The gallery will be closed on Christmas and New Year’s Day.

## T.J. Chiabotti feted at state football awards banquet

FIELD TWP- North Woods Grizzlies stand-out running back T.J. Chiabotti was in rarified company last Sunday as one of ten elite high school athletes honored at the 2021 Minnesota Mr. Football awards banquet in Minneapolis.

“It is much deserved and pretty special for T.J. with the body of work he’s put in over the course of his career,” said Grizzlies Head Coach Joel Anderson.

Holy Angels’ Emmett Johnson, who rushed for more than 2,500 yards and scored 42 touchdowns in the 2021 season, was selected Mr. Football by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association. The award is sponsored by the MFCA and the Minnesota Vikings.

Chiabotti ended the regular season as the state’s top ground gainer and leader in yards per carry, but Holy Angels’ success in the postseason gave Johnson two more games than Chiabotti had, allowing Johnson to claim the overall rushing title.



North Woods Head Football Coach Joel Anderson was on hand Sunday at the Mr. Football awards banquet in Minneapolis to see Grizzlies running back T.J. Chiabotti receive a plaque for being named an award finalist.  
submitted photo

Chiabotti was the only Class A player in the state nominated for the award, which has traditionally gone to large-school players in and around the Twin Cities region.

## CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

# Bear River church to celebrate Hanging of the Greens

by GLORIA HEGG  
Contributor

BEAR RIVER- When the hardy pioneers of the newly-formed Bear River Lutheran Church gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus over 100 years ago, they worshipped at the old Bear River Log Schoolhouse. One of the traditions was to pull the tree out of the corner of the room, light all the little candles attached to its boughs (with one person standing nearby with a pail of water), hold hands with each other and sing Christmas carols as they walked around the tree.

Although we no longer “sing around the tree,” another event has become a favorite Christmas tradition at Bear River community church for over 20 years.

On Friday, Dec. 10

at 7 p.m., the community will gather at the little white church on the banks of the Bear River for the 26th annual “Hanging of the Greens” worship service. As we get ready for Christmas, we often find ourselves getting caught up in all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Sometimes we lose sight of why we are celebrating in the first place. The “Hanging of the Greens” worship service provides a way to stop and prepare ourselves for the real reason for the season – the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

As we progress through the season of Advent – the season of preparing for Christmas – we find ourselves embracing customs and traditions that have come down to us through the ages. It is true that some of our celebrations have their ori-

gins in pagan customs and have little to do with the birth of Christ. These traditions have been brought to Christmas by converts to Christianity. We don’t need to have any qualms about using these customs, for they – along with the people who celebrated them – were converted to Christianity. Their traditions were laid at Jesus’s feet as gifts. What is significant for us is not “what they may once have meant” but rather “what they mean for us today.”

We will make the Sanctuary ready for the birthday of the King much as we would make it ready for a banquet with a royal host, by dressing it with its best apparel. We are mindful that, though it is not Christmas yet, it will be here very soon. On this night of the Hanging of the Greens, each individual and family will share

in the furnishing of the Bear River Church for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

While we gather, not only will we explain the history of the symbols of these special seasons, but we will dedicate these symbols to the glory of God. Come and join with us as we prepare our church – and ourselves – for the wondrous celebration of the birth of our Savior.

Celebrating Jesus’s birth will continue

throughout the Advent Season during our weekly 10 a.m. Sunday worship times. Christmas Eve Candlelight Services will be held on Friday, December 24 at 4:30 p.m.

If you don’t have a mask, one will be provided so we can celebrate more safely during this season of COVID.

Bear River Church is located at 11141 Highway 22 in Bear River, three miles west of the intersection of Hwy. 5 and Hwy. 22, or four miles east of

Hwy. 65. Please direct any questions to Gloria Hegg at 218-376-4673.

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## COVID...Continued from page 1

year on Monday, at 1,621, including 335 people in intensive care.

To address the hospital capacity crisis, Gov. Tim Walz requested and received a third emergency federal medical team, this one from the Department of Health and Human Services, to join two Department of Defense teams in supporting hospital operations in Minneapolis, Edina, and St. Cloud. A fourth alternative long-term care site to accept certain COVID hospital patients in the Twin Cities area was opened last week, bringing the total of alternative placements created to relieve the capacity crisis to 88.

About 400 Minnesota National Guard members have been trained as certified nursing assistants and temporary aides to relieve staffing shortages in long-term care facilities, and the first 50 of those were deployed last week to North Ridge Health and Rehab in New Hope, Mille Lacs Health System Long Term Care in Onamia, and PioneerCare in Fergus Falls. Walz said more long-term care sites around the state would be receiving National Guard support as well.

“We continue to deploy every resource we have available to support our overworked and understaffed doctors, nurses, and long-term care staff who have been fighting on the frontlines of this pandemic for nearly two years,” Walz said in a Monday press release. “It’s very important as Minnesota grapples with the continued Delta surge and the uncertainties of the new Omicron

variant that we continue to do everything we can to support our front-line workers.”

As with the rest of the state, case numbers in St. Louis County are showing a new surge in the wake of Thanksgiving. The seven-day case average on Nov. 26, the day after Thanksgiving, had dropped to 138.1, but was back up to 160.0 as of Dec. 2. That increase was driven in part by the largest single-day report of cases during the current surge, 311 on Nov. 30.

“We were seeing a decrease in our numbers, but over the last few days we have seen them go up again,” said Amy Westbrook, county Public Health Division Director. “That could be due to Thanksgiving, but it’s hard to know. But we’re still way above where we have been in terms of our case rates and hospitalizations anytime in 2021. We’re close to where we were in 2020 without vaccinations.”

While the rate of vaccinations is highest among those over 65 and decreases according to age groups, Westbrook said, 74 percent of those 16 and over in the county are now vaccinated. That drops to 70 percent for the total eligible population, which now includes those age five and older. Vaccination rates in northern St. Louis County are slightly lower than overall county averages.

Westbrook also reported that 26 percent of the county’s newest vaccine eligible group, children ages five to 11, have received at least one dose of COVID vaccine after

one month of eligibility. The number is roughly in line with national polling of parents, in the months before eligibility was expanded, who said they would get their children vaccinated. Another group is likely waiting to see what happens before getting their children vaccinated, and Westbrook conceded there will also be parents who don’t take advantage of the vaccine for their kids.

Westbrook said the surge continues to exact a toll on regional hospitals as well.

“We are seeing our healthcare systems still really stretched,” she said. “In November, we had over 200 people hospitalized. That exceeded our October numbers and is only second to last November and December. In November, 51 people have died of COVID in St. Louis County, and in October we saw 27 people die. We’re seeing the same trend, unfortunately, that after cases start rising, we see an increase in hospitalizations and deaths.”

Only three adult ICU beds were available in northeastern Minnesota on Monday, with 39 percent of occupied beds filled with COVID patients. Ninety-one percent of non-ICU adult beds in the region were occupied, with just under 20 percent of patients with COVID.

The strain is also being felt outside of hospitals, Westbrook said.

“When we talk about health care systems being stretched, that extends to long-term care facilities that are really stretched with staffing as well,” she said. “So, it’s a system

that’s really, really stressed in a lot of ways.”

Repeated waves of COVID, the new omicron variant, and other factors are all taking their collective toll not only in health-care settings, but in the general public, Westbrook said.

“This pandemic just kind of keeps jerking us around, for lack of a better term, right?” she said. “We had Delta come, and now that’s the dominant strain. Now we hear there are more breakthrough cases and that we’re finding another variant. It continues to just really do a number on our collective psyche. People think let’s just get through vaccines and we’ll get back to normal, let’s get through boosters and we’ll get back to normal, then let’s just get through Delta and we’ll get back to normal, and it’s just not the case. We just keep seeing new variants and so many unknowns, and it’s hard to live with these unknowns the pandemic is creating.”

### North Country concerns

The Ely ZIP code was far and away the leader in new weekly cases reported last Thursday for the ZIP codes monitored by the *Timberjay*, with 50 new cases bumping the pandemic-long total for that area to 517. About 29 percent of those cases, or 117, have been reported in just the past three weeks, exceeding the numbers reported during any three-week period of the massive statewide surge experienced at this time last year.

Increases in the other five North Country ZIP codes stayed in single

digits. Embarrass had eight new cases, Cook, five, Tower, four, Soudan, three, and Orr, two.

Continuing COVID case growth throughout the region has led to increased interest in booster shots in the Scenic Rivers Health Services clinics, including Cook and Tower, according to chief operating officer Kayla Scrivner.

“The positivity rate in our communities up here in northeast Minnesota is still pretty high,” she said. “We’ve been very, very busy with boosters lately. Any time someone comes in for an appointment for something else, they’re getting their booster while they’re here. We also have been doing booster days several times a week. We’re averaging about 500 people a week right now. We encourage everyone ages five and over to make sure they get vaccinated, and everyone who is eligible for a booster to get one.”

Scenic Rivers is the primary provider of vaccinations and boosters in the Cook and Tower areas, as Cook Hospital does not offer vaccinations after having hosted multiple vaccination clinics earlier in the year.

COVID test availability is also a concern, with Westbrook noting that there are a number of rural “testing deserts” throughout the county where tests are hard to come by.

Scrivner said that anyone with COVID symptoms and those who have been exposed to someone with COVID should get tested, and Scenic Rivers clinics have PCR testing available.

“We can do those in

Tower, in Cook, and at our new clinic in Eveleth,” she said. “We’re getting pretty good turnaround time on those. I think the labs are telling us right now (to expect) seven days, and I think they do that to be safe. But on average, we’re seeing about a 48-hour turnaround. It’s a little bit more if it’s on Friday, because they don’t run them over the weekend anymore.”

Since testing procedures vary slightly across clinics, it’s best to call ahead to arrange a test, she said.

“We have options, depending on the site, to make sure that everybody can be tested safely,” she said.

Scenic Rivers is seeing a patient flow that, at a less severe level, somewhat mirrors the mix being seen in hospitals.

“We’re very busy with acute visits,” Scrivner said. “Beside all of the COVID in the community, students are back in school with all the viruses circulating related to that, there’s been some pretty nasty colds out there, just a lot more non-COVID illness that’s keeping our physicians and clinic very busy.”

And, like other health-care venues, health care workers at Scenic Rivers are feeling the stress of a pandemic that’s gone on for nearly 21 months.

“My heart goes out to my staff, they’re working so hard to try to take care of people,” she said. “If you can do anything for a healthcare worker in your life right now, they could really use some extra support.”

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## WINTER...Continued from page 1

with Ely reporting 8.7 inches, while Cook picked up 7.8 inches. An observer in Embarrass tallied ten inches, while reports from Tower and Orr both averaged about seven inches.

Snow totals diminished somewhat further north. Kabetogama reported 6.5 inches while International Falls picked up 4.5 inches.

For the most part, North Country residents weathered the storm without major incidents. While the storm created slick roads, few accidents were reported. The state patrol listed none with notable injuries in the region. No major power

outages were reported, in part because the snow that fell was dry and powdery and winds that picked up on the back side of the storm helped prevent excessive accumulations that could topple trees and branches.

National Weather Service meteorologist Josh Sandstrom, in Duluth, described the system as “pretty typical” for this time of year. The storm did not have an unusual amount of moisture, according to Sandstrom, but the slow-moving nature of the storm contributed to the substantial snow totals in many places.

“The long duration

of the storm just kept letting things add up,” said Sandstrom.

As the storm moved east, strong northwest winds on the back side brought the coldest air temperatures of the season so far as well as wind chill advisories for the area. Overnight lows Monday night hit the minus-20s range in some locations, with the Hibbing airport reporting an even minus-20. An unofficial reading of minus-24 degrees was reported to the *Timberjay* from Embarrass.

While the area’s first real blast of winter weather made an impression, the

mild pattern that’s been in place in the region since last spring appears set to continue. High temperatures are expected to rebound into the 30s by Sunday, with several days of mild weather forecast for next week as high pressure builds into the area.

Still, Sandstrom said the region appears to be in a more active weather pattern than it’s seen over the past few months, which could bring continuing snow chances in the days ahead. “It’s December in northern Minnesota,” said Sandstrom. “We can expect to get more snow.”

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ELY...Continued from page 1

committee meeting on Dec. 1 also indicated that building doors and the Special Education facility relocation are high on the priority list. The purchase of all furnishings for the renovation project have been put on hold. Repurposing of existing cafeteria seating, band room stands and chairs and Industrial Technology desks, chairs and tables, and other equipment are all likely necessary to help cut costs.

“There is some inflationary building cost, impacted by COVID-19, that has impacted (our project) and everybody else,” Erie said. “We might use the savings from removing the windows (replacement).”

Construction managers are expected to provide a “better picture” next Monday night on the district’s next steps in getting the project to the finish line next fall.

Erie was quick to say that the partially-completed campus window replacement project will ultimately be finished.

“The windows are something we can do through the LTFM (long-term facility maintenance budget),” he said. “There was already a plan, even before the building project,

to finish the windows. We will have to figure out where and how that fits in.”

Additional funding sources were also discussed at the recent facilities committee meeting.

“There didn’t seem to be an appetite about going back to the taxpayers and saying that because of inflation and COVID we’re going to ask for more money,” he said.

He noted that the Costin Group, the school district’s lobbyist, as well as the district’s financial consultant, Ehler’s and Associates, Inc. are also on task “to figure out what we can do,” so the school project can be finished.

Erie also noted that costs related to developing a campus-wide “crisis plan” are under consideration.

“There are some things, such as panic buttons, and colored (emergency) lights for Industrial Arts, music and areas where there is a lot of noise, that might need a visual warning to consider.”

**Safe Learning Plan**

The Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ELSPAC) completed a plan for 2021-22 that allows for ISD 696 to consider rolling back the protective

face mask requirement, put in place at the beginning of the school year because of increasing cases of COVID-19.

Slight modifications to the plan were made last week following the latest ELSPAC meeting, but Erie and the school principals are satisfied to present the plan to the school board to approve at their Dec. 13 meeting.

The metrics or COVID-19 conditions that will be considered to initiate a face mask recommendation, rather than a requirement, include:

- Local ZIP Code case report below the “high transmission” range for three consecutive weeks.
- Opportunity for all students in the Washington Elementary building ages 5 to 11 to be fully vaccinated by Jan. 30, 2022.
- Local COVID-19 outbreaks and conditions in the school and Ely community will be considered prior to face mask protocol changes.

There are some exceptions to the metrics, including an increase in positive cases in a classroom or among activity participants, if the local hospital is required to divert patients to another facility due to an increase in local

COVID cases, and if the local transmission rate moves to a “high” level for three consecutive weeks.

Erie said the “high” transmission level, using CDC guidelines, is a rate of 100 cases per 100,000 people. The Ely area is at a rate of approximately 563 cases per 100,000 people. “We are a ways away from that, but at least we have a number that people can look at to determine if we are in the high or substantial or low rate,” he said.

The Ely school current positive COVID-19 case count on Monday was at 20.

“Since last Thursday (Dec. 2) when the cumulative COVID-19 rate was at 67 for the 2021-2022 school year, the count has gone up to 74,” Erie said. “We had 48 positive cases for all last school year. This lets you know what we have been dealing with.”

School board members considered approving the Safe Learning Plan next week or waiting until January. With the current local COVID case rate hitting the stratosphere, waiting a month won’t appear to make any difference because the face mask requirement will likely remain in place well

into 2022.

In St. Louis County, the vaccination rate for children ages 5-11 years is at 26 percent. The vaccination rate for youth ages 12 to 18 years is at 48 percent.

According to Erie, an Emergency Temporary Standard from OSHA may require employees in workplaces with more than 100 employees (that includes Ely schools) to be vaccinated to remain employed there. A federal court is considering the order and could have a decision by Dec. 10, so Erie, under guidance from the Minnesota School Boards Association, suggesting waiting on collecting data on vaccination rates for ISD 696 employees.

Vermilion Community College currently requires all their employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19, or they are terminated.

“Right now, we could be asking our employees if they are vaccinated,” Erie said. “There is no HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) violation if we do.”

He related that at least two school districts in the northern Minnesota region are offering incentives

for their employees to get vaccinated.

School board member Tom Omerza pushed back on those in the Ely community who vehemently pushed back on the school district’s face mask requirement.

“We’ve been mask, mask, mask. What about talking about vaccinations?” he asked. “If we get to a certain point with vaccinations on campus then we go to ‘masks recommended.’”

He did not call for a vaccination mandate.

“If we are able to get (students and staff) vaccinated, then why the heck are we focused on masks so much when we can tell parents, and tell staff, that if we get to a certain (vaccination percentage) point, we can go to a mask recommendation. That is something we can shoot for, too.”

School board chair Ray Marsnik agreed.

“I would like to see something like that, like 80 percent or something like that,” he said.

The ELSPAC may consider amending the Safe Learning Plan to include a COVID-vaccination rate metric to consider for dialing back public health protocols.

GREENWOOD...Continued from page 1

Lewis started out his presentation with an overview of the systemic issues facing emergency medical services in our region.

“We are trying to keep a system going that was designed years and years ago,” he said. “The system has not evolved.” Even with a professional department, like Virginia’s, he said there are times when they cannot meet the demand. The Virginia department consists of 44 staffers, with trained firefighter/paramedics, as well as members who are just paramedics.

“We ran out of ambulances today,” he said. “We had to call on Eveleth.”

Lewis said that when the first fire departments were formed in this country, they were tasked with putting out fires.

“In the 1960s they started adding medical services, responding to vehicle accidents, working with hazardous materials, and doing rescues,” he said. “If you didn’t know what else to do, you called the fire department.”

Lewis noted that it was obvious this community did care about emergency medical services. He urged them to consider a collaborative coalition to bring about change, finding the level of community support, defining the public value, and then building the operational capacity.

“Legitimacy and support are needed to drive the funding issue,” he said.

The Virginia Fire Department has a budget of over \$5.5 million a year, which averages out to \$500

per household, Lewis said. The department brings in over \$3.2 million a year in EMS-related revenues.

He predicted that in the future, a regionalized EMS delivery model will emerge.

“No more single room schoolhouses,” he said. “A sustainable, broadly-spread funding base is essential for the tiered delivery according to need, not geographical location.”

“Ambulances do not save lives,” Lewis said. “Well-trained EMRs, EMTs, and paramedics do.”

Response times will always be a challenge in rural areas, he noted, and in cases that involve heart attacks, the time involved can mean the difference between life and death. It can take precious minutes between the time a 911 call is taken to when an ambulance department is dispatched. If a department does not answer a call within a minute, they are called on again. Dispatchers will try three times before paging out another ambulance service.

“It can take seven or eight minutes before that second department gets its page,” he said..

Right now, Lewis said, we are delivering these services based on who is using it and what they pay.

“What is your life worth?” he asked.

“There needs to be a balance of funding.”

Last year in northern St. Louis County (defined as a line drawn just north of Cotton), there were 11,669

EMS calls, 1,232 fire calls, and 792 other types of calls.

“The bulk of the call numbers are for EMS,” he said, though he noted that the call number does not equal the time required per call, since fire calls often require long deployments.

Of the 11,669 EMS calls, 3,089 were transports, where patients needed to be transported from one hospital to another that can provide a higher level of care.

Transfers take more time than other emergency calls, Lewis said, and mean an ambulance is out of the normal service area. But transfers also provide a source of revenue for many departments, including Virginia’s.

“This is why we are in the black,” he said.

**Local data**

The Tower Area Ambulance Service (TAAS) had 404 calls last year. Of those, Lewis said, they requested ALS (Advance Life Support, with paramedic on board) for 128 calls.

“The number of times TAAS calls us is a credit to their service,” he said. “It shows us they are putting their patients first. Not every service is amenable to calling ALS.”

First Responder Jeff Maus, a member of the Greenwood department, said they are trained to call for ALS based on the type of call.

Over half of the ALS calls for TAAS were to Greenwood, with about a third to Tower/Breitung, and the rest to other rural area townships.

Response times

Lewis said that emergency responders can’t magically decrease response times to rural locations. What they can work on, he said, is decreasing the time between the 911-page and the time the ambulance leaves the hall, the “chute” time.

The data on response times shows TAAS with an average chute time of 7:56 minutes, and average response time of 15:30. But when you look at the 90th-percentile times that filters out data outliers, the chute time increases to 13:36 and response time to 24:36.

This data doesn’t include the time it takes to have a First Responder on scene, Lewis said, noting that the care provided by these initial responders is also critical to patient care.

The response times for Tower are similar but slightly lower than for the Cook area, which had 90th-percentile chute times of 14:19 and response times of 28:11. Cook has a much larger geographical area to cover.

“They have a huge district, distance-wise,” Lewis noted.

**The future of EMS**

“The volunteer model worked fine when there were only dozens of calls,” said Lewis, “now there are hundreds and hundreds. We are burning out our volunteers.”

He noted that paid-on-call staff are often stressed, juggling other jobs, but still trying not to miss a call.

Another issue, Lewis said, is attracting profes-

sional leadership, which is essential for keeping ambulance services staffed with volunteer and paid-on-call employees.

“When you treat people well, pay them well, and give them training, their pride will show in the care they give to their patients”

As far as working towards a new model, the first step, Lewis said, is education.

“Allow people to see the data and ask questions,” he said. “Meetings like this are a good first step.”

“People don’t know what they don’t know. There is a naivete about how the system currently works.”

Talking with local and state officials is also important, he said, as well as working with surrounding cities and townships to talk about joint delivery of services. The state does not consider EMS to be an essential service, Lewis said, something that needs to change at the state and county level. Itasca County, he said, has started to help fund EMS.

Recent changes to state law have opened up taxing districts as a more viable funding model, he said. And paying more is required for better service.

“You can’t get a better service for what you are paying now.”

Lewis said he feels that joint fire/ambulance services are the model for the future.

“Fire departments are generally well-funded for the small number of calls they get,” he said, “But

EMS has many more calls. One department can do both fire and EMS... Some firefighters do not want to do EMS, but as many as 80-plus-percent of our calls are EMS. We have to provide funding to do it.”

The real question is, Lewis noted, “Are people willing to pay?”

St. Louis County spends almost \$50 million a year on the county sheriff department, Lewis said.

“Where is your county tax bill going?” he asked.

**Rumors, future steps**

Lewis said he didn’t know where the rumors about Virginia bringing an ambulance up to the Greenwood area had come from.

“We don’t have the money, personnel, or legal authority to do that,” he stated.

He said there are consultants that work on developing models for rural areas, and figuring out what type of taxing district would be needed, and potential costs involved.

The creation of a fire district takes administration and funding away from individual governments, which can then focus on other issues.

“A fire district is just worried about fire and EMS,” he said. “City councils have to worry about the whole city.”

Such districts generally have career staff for day-to-day duties, but still rely on paid-on-call volunteers.

There are grant dollars available for pursuing a fire district, but the process is complicated and time-consuming.

The meeting was not an official town board event, so no board action or discussion was held. Greenwood holds their regular board meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Domino’s franchise getting nearer to opening in Ely

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY—A new Domino’s store is gearing up to open here soon. The popular national pizza chain will be located in the former Pizza Hut building (and most recently Two Gringos) on Sheridan Street.

Owner Duane Carlson, of D&S Pizza Inc., who owns several Domino’s franchises in northern Minnesota, including Duluth, the Iron Range and International Falls, is in town these days helping with the building renovation.

“Our Ely expansion has been on the books since the beginning of 2021,” Carlson said. “My growth agreement with Domino’s has us locked in for five



stores. Adding a location in Ely works for us.”

Carlson said he lives in International Falls and travels to the Ely area and the Boundary Waters

Canoe Area Wilderness for recreation.

“Now I can mix business with pleasure,” he said.

Carlson is leasing the

former Pizza Hut building from the Alley A Realty development company of John and Tanner Ott, who have renovated many downtown structures in

**A new Domino’s restaurant franchise is getting closer to opening in downtown Ely. The store will be located in the former Pizza Hut building.**

photo by K. Vandervort

Ely.

“I can’t say for sure when we will open,” Carlson said last week, adding, “There is a potential for the very end of December, but it is more likely to happen in early to mid-January. We continue to wait on contractors for some of our renovation work. They are just so busy. It is taking much longer than I anticipated.”

Banners with “now hiring” information were hung up last week at the Ely store.

“We started hiring people and are beginning with on-the-job training in our other stores,” Carlson said. “We would love to see 20-25 employees here in Ely, and potentially more when we are in full operation.”

His plans call for the Ely Domino’s store to offer more than delivery.

“We will also have food pick-up and will offer dine-in here, too,” he said. “It won’t be full-service dining, but we will have customers pick up their food and they can eat it here if they like. We will have the full menu that Domino’s offers. We have the benefit of having a national supply chain, so we won’t be dealing with shortages or delivery delays of our product.”

PUBLIC WORKS

# Facing worker shortage, city of Ely looks to hire trainees

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

Equipment operator positions remain unfilled after two job postings

hope we are successful.”

The city’s public works department normally operates with a staff of nine, and now is working with a staff of six employees.

“The public works foreman is pulling in staff from other departments to help clear the streets and sidewalks from the latest snowfall,” Langowski said. “We have staff to get the job done, it just may take a little longer. And with COVID, we’re telling everyone that if they feel sick to stay home, we don’t want to lose the whole department. The crew did a great job earlier this week with the first big snowfall.”

City council members will have the union memo of understanding agreement to consider at their Dec. 21 meeting, and then the new trainee position will be posted after approval.

ELY – City officials here are getting creative in finding ways to fill at least one of the many open positions in the city’s public works department by looking to hire an equipment operator trainee.

On Tuesday, the city council’s employee relations committee, on the recommendation of the clerk-treasurer, approved drafting a letter of understanding with union representatives and working on an appropriate job description for the new type of worker, as more and more positions go unfilled because of a continuing lack of qualified applicants, or any applicants at all, for various open positions on the city payroll.

The equipment operator position is just one of many current and upcoming employment vacancies

for the city, according to Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski, who has been working with the city council committee to update and revise a slew of job descriptions as long-time workers parade toward the retirement door by the end of the year.

A veteran wastewater plant operator, longtime electric lineman foreman, and the Ely Utilities Commission’s experienced billing clerk are all retiring, Langowski said.

“These are all very difficult shoes to fill,” he said.

Council members agreed to send letters of appreciation to the outgoing employees.

“These people are all greatly appreciated,” Langowski said.

For the open equipment operator position, Langowski said two recent

job postings resulted in just one applicant.

“The state and county are having these same (hiring) issues,” said Mayor Roger Skraba. “And if you are in the private sector, you are all having similar issues trying to find people with a CDL (Commercial Driver’s License), or anybody to apply.”

Council member Paul Kess stressed the importance of building a city workforce from within.

“Having these trainee positions will put people in the pipeline with a chance to advance,” he said.

Langowski said updating the job positions makes sense.

“Looking at all the positions to fill, we have room in our categories where we didn’t have an equipment operator trainee but we had an electrical

worker trainee, and now we can slide (a position) into that category,” he said.

He explained that the Equipment Operator I position, the ground floor position in public works department, requires one year of experience, and the Equipment Operator II position requires three years of experience.

“With a trainee, what we would do is require them to get their commercial driver’s license within six months,” he said. “They would be a trainee until they get their CDL, and then work the rest of the year to move up to the Equipment Operator I position.”

All of the other requirements remain for the hybrid position, including a pre-employment physical and drug testing.

“And to get the CDL, you need to have access to

the equipment to get the rating,” Langowski added. “That is a big barrier for many people, unless they know a contractor or know someone with that kind of equipment. Obviously, with the city, that equipment is here and all ready to go if we can find the right candidate.”

There are currently two open equipment operator positions for the city of Ely. Starting pay is \$24 per hour.

“We plan on posting a third position next mid-summer,” Langowski said. “Technically we have those three open positions in public works. We have three retirees. Just one of those positions (the utilities billing clerk) is filled so far. It has been a little stressful. The (job) postings are not getting applicants, so we’re going to try something a little different here, and

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

# Public input sought for how sheriff’s department body cams should be used

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

two hurdles had to be overcome before they could proceed.

“One is easy to point to and that’s funding,” Rasch said. “It’s costly, not just the units themselves, but the data storage.” Rasch said that well over half of the cost of the system will go toward data storage through a subscription to a cloud-based storage system.

“There’s all this technology packed into your cell phone that can do amazing things, but in order

to keep it running there’s that monthly payment for service,” Rasch said. “In a similar way, that’s how the body camera system works, and the ongoing storage of data becomes costly because it’s so large.”

One cost-saving measure, putting cameras only on uniformed officers, was considered but dismissed, Rasch said.

“What we determined is that with just a partial rollout, we wouldn’t be doing the proper service

to the community of what we’re trying to accomplish,” he said. “There would undoubtedly be some (situation) that would not be captured (on video) by a plain-clothes deputy that was doing something. Then we’d have to point to the fact that not all our deputies have cameras, only some of them do. We just felt that that was a poor way to roll it out, kind of piecemeal, even though it might be saving money.”

But now the county’s Information Technology department has some money available for public safety innovation endeavors, which makes the purchase possible.

“This obviously fits correctly into that,” Rasch said.

The second challenge had to do with the recordings themselves.

“The other main issue would be the statutory obligation for the data itself,” Rasch said. “Does it fall into different categories for data retention and data privacy? How can that be released and disseminated?”

Time has benefitted the department in this regard, as the increasing use of body cams over the years has spawned an array of policies, legal opinions, and legislative actions that have helped to define answers to those questions, and the department put this information to good use in developing its proposed body camera policy.

“What we have done with our draft is to try to take what we believe applies best to our agency, not only what covers all the bases of statutory obligations, but also what works procedurally for us and addresses questions that come up with community members and stakeholders,” Rasch said.

The department believes that body cameras will benefit both officers and the public by providing additional evidence documenting officer encounters and incidents.

“That evidence can help to prove wrongdoing on anyone’s part,” Rasch said. “It also can dispel rumors or allegations that were unfounded, again on both people’s parts, whether that’s a citizen encounter or the law enforcement officers. We’ve come so far as a nation in the prevalence of body cameras, and I can’t speak enough of how they have helped everyone out.”

The specific rationale for having body cams is spelled out in the proposed policy:

- To enhance deputy safety.
- To document statements and events during the course of an incident.
- To enhance the deputy’s ability to document and review statements and actions for both internal reporting requirements and for courtroom preparation and presentation.
- To preserve visual and audio information for use in current and future

investigations.

- To provide a tool for self-critique and field evaluation during deputy training and to assist with on-going training and evaluation.
- To enhance the public trust by preserving factual representations of deputy-citizen interactions in the form of recorded media.
- To assist with the defense of civil actions against deputies and the county.

The St. Louis County Board is scheduled to vote at its Dec. 14 meeting on a resolution that would authorize the purchase of 110 body cameras, along with supporting accessories and equipment, at a cost of \$790,000 to be paid over five years.

The sheriff’s office would like to receive public comments on both the implementation of these devices as well as the proposed policy of when and how they’ll be used.

The proposed policy can be found online at [stlouiscountymn.gov/sheriff](http://stlouiscountymn.gov/sheriff). Public comment on both the implementation of body worn cameras, as well as the proposed policy surrounding their use, can be submitted via email to [slcsheriff@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:slcsheriff@stlouiscountymn.gov), by calling 218-336-4347, or by mail to: St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office, Attn: BWC, 100 North 5th Avenue West, Room 103, Duluth, MN 55802.



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# SPORTS

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## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Wolves top Hill City in a rout

Two Ely players tally double-doubles in season opener, played at home

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

ELY— It was all over from the start here last Saturday as the Timberwolves blew past Hill City in their regular season debut, taking a 29-2 lead in the early-going en route to a 61-31 rout.

“It was a bit sloppy at times but that’s expected for the first game of the season,” said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Despite a few miscues, it was an impressive start for the Timberwolves, who have a solid

base of upper classmen and some height, with six players measuring six feet or taller.

Returning six-foot, one-inch junior guard Joey Bianco led the way for the Wolves, with 22 points. Bianco was a leading scorer for Ely last year as a junior and it looks like he’ll be picking up where he left off as he notched a double-double on Saturday, with ten rebounds and seven assists in addition to his 22 points. Five-foot, eleven-inch senior Harry Simons was a big contributor as well on Saturday, adding 19 points, while five-foot, nine-inch

**Right: Harry Simon pivots as he works the ball down the court against Hill City on Saturday.**  
photo by J. Greeney

junior guard Jason Kerntz tallied a double-double, with ten points and ten boards.

The Wolves were set to make a run to the border on Thursday, to face the Broncos at International Falls. They’ll host Two Harbors on Saturday, with a 2:45 p.m. varsity start. They’ll be back on the road on Tuesday, to take on the Mariners in Silver Bay.



## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Twin routs highlight NW start

Defense proves a turnover machine

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- North Woods boys hoops fans probably don’t have West Coast musical comedy duo Tenacious D on their Spotify playlists, but they’re going to get more than enough tenacious ‘D’ from their Grizzlies this year, as evidenced by season-opening road smackdowns of South Ridge and Bigfork.

The taller Panthers had neither the speed nor agility to solve a withering Grizzlies’ man-to-man defense that forced an astonishing 41 turnovers in a 77-54 North Woods win on Dec. 3. The Grizzlies nearly equaled that scoring total in the first half on Tuesday against hapless Bigfork, riding a huge

See **NORTH WOODS...** pg. 4B

## HONORS

### Two NER swimmers named to All-Section team

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

BABBITT – The Northeast Range High School swim team has a pair of Section 7A Girls Swimming All-Section Team 2021 honorees this season. Area coaches made the selections for the honors at the conclusion of the 2021 season.

The honors for the Nighthawks follow a record-breaking season for the team.

Junior Lily Tedrick, who broke a number of team records this season, was named to the All-Section team for the 200 Medley Relay Breaststroke event. She was the team’s highest finisher at the Section 7A meet in Duluth, and was fourth overall in the 200 Individual Medley event. She set school records in the 200 IM this season with a time of 2:25.52, and in the 100 Butterfly with a time of 1:05.49.

Sophomore Morgan McClelland was named to the 200 Freestyle Relay team. She placed 15th in the Section 7A meet with a time of 2:16.87 in the 200 Freestyle and 14th in the 500 Freestyle with a tie of 6:15.47.



## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Grizzlies improve to 3-1

Notch solid wins against Cook County and Bigfork Huskies

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods girls basketball team has flipped the script on last season’s 1-3 start, picking up solid wins against Cook County and Bigfork this past week for a 3-1 opening to this year’s campaign.

The Grizzlies bounced back from a loss at Chisholm with a 50-34 win on the road at Cook County on Dec. 3, then returned home for a 55-38 victory on Monday against Bigfork.

Center Hannah Kinsey had the early hot hand for the Grizzlies at Cook County, scoring ten first-half points as North Woods controlled both ends of the floor for a 26-16 lead at the break. Hannah Cheney kept things rolling in the second half, collecting nine points and finishing with a team-high 15 for the game, one more than Kinsey’s 14. Seven Grizzlies contributed points in what North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney described as a complete game by her team.

“The girls played such good defense, tight defense,” Cheney said. “They played as a team, they were cohesive, and we had an inside and outside game (offensively). It was fun, and they had fun.”

More fun was to be had on Monday against Bigfork, but it wouldn’t come quite as easily to the Grizzlies this time.

Riding a six-point salvo from Cheney and two buckets from Kinsey, North Woods raced to a 10-0 start, but cooled down after a Bigfork timeout. The Grizzlies had trouble capitalizing on shots down low, and

“They played as a team, they were cohesive and we had an inside and outside game.

**Grizzlies Coach Liz Cheney**

Cook County took advantage, trimming the deficit to 16-13.

Helen Koch got the Grizzlies back on track with a baseline drive for a score, and then fed the ball to Talise Goodsky for a fast break bucket. A three-pointer by Kiana LaRoque put the Grizzlies up by 11, 24-13, and they carried a 30-22 advantage into the locker room.

“At halftime, we talked about the need to take control of the game,” Cheney said. “Even though we were ahead, I felt like Bigfork was controlling the court. So that was the talk at halftime – we need to get out there, we need to dominate, and they did.”

The halftime speech clearly

See **GRIZZLIES...** pg. 4B

**Above: The Grizzlies’ Kiana LaRoque works to fend off a break by Bigfork’s Kambry Pearson.**

**Below: The Grizzlies’ Hannah Cheney takes it to the bucket under heavy pressure from a slew of Bigfork defenders.**

photos by D. Colburn







# Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

WILDLIFE RESEARCH

## Study: Warmer summers pose challenge for moose

Impact of winter ticks worsens after warmer summers, according to new study

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— For years, biologists who study moose have believed that milder and shorter winters are playing an oversized role in the decline of North America’s largest member of the deer family. Yet, a new study based on 20 years of research at Isle Royale, suggests that warmer summers could be as big a problem for moose as mild winters.

While moose in the upper

Great Lakes region face a myriad of challenges, from parasitic brain worms to liver flukes, to heavy wolf predation of calves, the impact of winter ticks could be among the most difficult to overcome. Moose are enormous animals with thick coats adapted for the harsh cold of northern winters, which makes them a hospitable home for a species of tick known to scientists as *Dermacentor albipictus* and as winter ticks or moose ticks to everyone else.

Where tick numbers are

**Right: A female moose on Isle Royale with the telltale signs of a heavy winter tick infestation.**

photo courtesy Sarah Hoy/  
Michigan Tech University

high, tens of thousands of them can attach themselves to a single moose. The presence of so many ticks irritates moose, so much so in fact that they often scrape away much of their fur as they try to rid themselves of the pests by

See **MOOSE**, pg. 3B



WILDERNESS QUOTAS

## USFS to cut BWCA permits

Officials say heavy use and overcrowding is prompting the reduction for 2022

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — The COVID-19 pandemic prompted more Americans to spend time in the outdoors over the past two summers and, for many, that meant taking a trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. But all that love came at a cost to the resource, according to U.S. Forest Service officials who are tasked with protecting the 1.1 million-acre wilderness. It also impacted the experience of visitors, many of whom reported congested portages and difficulty finding campsites.

That’s prompted a decision by the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the number of overnight permits in the wilderness, a decision that is likely to exacerbate the already intense competition for access.

Forest Service spokesperson Sue Catton said managing the Boundary Waters is always a balancing act, between the need to protect the wilderness, provide for a quality wilderness experience, and maintain the business community that serves wilderness users.

According to Catton, the Forest Service maintains 74 entry points into the BWCAW, but is most concerned with 24 of the highest-use locations. “These are where we’re seeing the most crowding and competition for campsites and resource damage,” she said.

While at least one media report suggested that the Forest Service might cut permits by 13 percent, Catton said the reduc-

**“It’s a significant change for the wilderness. Some may be warranted, some maybe not.”**

**Ely outfitter Jason Zabokrtsky**

tion likely won’t be that large, and that the reductions could be phased in over a couple years. The Forest Service will make its final permit numbers public before the end of December. Reservations for Boundary Waters permits open on a first-come, first-served basis beginning on Wednesday, Jan. 26.

**Mixed reviews**

For wilderness outfitters, who experienced the overwhelming demand for permits the past two summers, the news of reductions effective for the 2022 paddling season came out of the blue, without any input into the decision.

“It was a surprise to us,” said Steve Piragis, who operates Piragis Northwoods Company and Outfitters in Ely. Piragis said finding available permits was tough last summer. “A lot of folks ended up entering through Trout Lake because there was no alternative,” said Piragis. “All the popular entries were filled up for the whole summer,” he added.

The Forest Service confirms that wilderness use is up sharply. Nearly 166,000 people

visited the Boundary Waters in 2020, a 16 percent increase over the year before. Visitation numbers for 2021 are due out in January but may be tempered somewhat by last summer’s closures due to fire conditions.

While fewer permits will likely bring disappointment to more wilderness users, Piragis agrees it was probably necessary given the increased visitation since the COVID pandemic.

“I think it’s a good idea that the Forest Service is doing what they do: protecting the wilderness,” he said.

That view isn’t universal. “It’s a lot of people they’re excluding from the wilderness,” said Jason Zabokrtsky, who operates the Ely Outfitting Company. “It’s a significant change for the wilderness. Some changes may be warranted, some maybe not.”

Zabokrtsky argues that the Forest Service could do more to educate visitors in an effort to minimize user impact and he urged the agency to work more with outfitters and other stakeholders to develop ideas for doing so.

“There are definitely issues of concern about some resource damage, and campsite availability and congestion at portages,” acknowledged Zabokrtsky. “I think a comprehensive look at those issues is important, but I also think there are a lot of options to address those concerns. Excluding people may not be the best way to do that.”

Catton agrees that educat-

**Above: A rainbow appears to dip into the clear waters of Big Moose Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Fewer visitors may have access to Big Moose and the more than 1,000 other lakes in the 1.1-million acre wilderness as a result of entry permit reductions planned for 2022.**

photo by M. HelMBERGER

ing visitors is important, and that was something that proved more difficult in 2020, when most Forest Service offices were closed due to the pandemic. The Forest Service did eventually develop a virtual “Leave-No-Trace” program, but Catton said having in-person contact with visitors is still the best option.

She said the Forest Service is also committing to hiring additional wilderness rangers to ensure that education and outreach continues even when visitors are in the wilderness.

But education can’t solve every problem associated with overcrowding. And Catton notes that the Forest Service has received thousands of comments over the past ten years from users who complained about overcrowding and damage to campsites. “We’ve heard from people who have left the wilderness early because they couldn’t find a campsite,” she said.

**Other factors contributing**

The pressure on the Boundary Waters has been exacer-

See **PERMITS**, pg. 3B

Outdoors in brief

### Vermilion creel survey underway

LAKE VERMILION— Ice anglers here may be asked to participate in the lake’s first winter creel survey since 1984, which is now underway.

Creel clerks from the Department of Natural Resources will be traveling the lake on foot or on snowmobile to interview ice anglers about their harvest through Feb. 27.

During the interviews, the creel clerks will ask anglers a few questions about their fishing trip for that day and record information on the fish species caught. Creel clerks may ask to record measurements of fish that anglers keep. Additionally, DNR pilots and a local contractor will conduct aerial ice house counts to obtain information on angling effort.

Fisheries managers rely on creel surveys to collect information on fishing pressure, catch, harvest and size distribution of several important fish species in Lake Vermilion. This information, when combined with scientific data collected during standard fisheries population assessments, is used to make informed fisheries management decisions.

Angler participation is an essential part of this study, so the DNR is asking anglers to be patient with the creel clerks and provide information that is as accurate as possible. Since 1984, 13 creel surveys have been conducted on Lake Vermilion, all during the open water season.

For additional information or questions, contact Matt Hennen at the DNR Tower area fisheries office: 218-300-7810 or [matthew.hennen@state.mn.us](mailto:matthew.hennen@state.mn.us).

### DNR certifies new state record muskie

MILLE LACS LAKE— A 55-pound, 14-ounce muskie caught Nov. 22 on Mille Lacs Lake is the new state record for this popular game fish.

Nolan Sprengeler was with friends Kevin Kray and Zack Skoglund when he latched onto the monster fish. “On our last spot of the evening at about 9 p.m., I felt a tap on the end of my line. I fought the fish to the boat and Kevin Kray netted it for me. The fish measured 57.75 inches by 29 inches,” Sprengeler said. “After trying to revive the fish for about an hour we realized she wasn’t going to make it. We made the decision to bring the fish in to get weighed on a certified scale.”

The fish beat the previous weight-based state record of 54 pounds, caught on Lake Winnibigoshish in 1957.

Although news of the fish has spread quickly on social media, a record is not official until the certification process is complete.

The DNR announces new state records in news releases, on social media and on the DNR website. Find current records and guidelines for each type of state record at [mndnr.gov/recordfish](http://mndnr.gov/recordfish).



AFTER THE STORM



Pine trees on the north shore of Shagawa Lake, in Ely, are freshly flocked from last Sunday’s snowstorm. The storm dropped six to ten inches of snow across the area.  
photo by K. Vandervort

MOOSE...Continued from page 2B

rubbing against trees. This creates further burdens to affected moose. The loss of fur requires them to expend more energy to keep warm in the winter. The loss of blood from so many ticks can cause anemia, further weakening moose. It leaves them more susceptible to predators, primarily wolves, and likely reduces the reproductive potential of female moose as well. If climate change increases the abundance of ticks, as most researchers believe is already happening, life in the more southerly parts of the moose range, like here in northern Minnesota, is likely to get even tougher for moose in the future.

Long-term study

For more than 50 years, researchers with Michigan State University have monitored the wolf and moose populations on Isle Royale and how they interact. Since 2001, they have taken careful note of the amount of hair loss that moose there have experienced due to heavy tick loads. It was that data, combined with temperature records, that have formed the basis for their latest findings, which were published late last month in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*. The researchers found a strong correlation between average temperatures in July and the extent of the tick burden that moose would face that following winter. Warmer temperatures in summer appeared to promote faster egg development and increased egg survival, leaving more viable ticks on the landscape in the fall when the winter ticks begin their quest for a host.

The study also found a correlation between high tick burdens and predation from the small number of gray wolves on the island, although the correlation wasn’t as pronounced as that involving temperature.

The study does note that summer temperatures have been slower to increase in much of North America as a result of climate change, at least as compared to winter temperatures, where dramatic warming has already been experienced in many places, including northern Minnesota. But the study notes that summer temperatures are expected to increase by anywhere from two-to-eight degrees Celsius over the next 80 years, depending on the actual reductions in carbon emissions achieved over the next few decades.

“If such temperature increases occur, then our results suggest that average hair loss may regularly exceed 50–60 percent, which is indicative of severe tick burdens for moose,” concludes the study. “The ramifications of any such climate related changes in parasite dynamics are likely to be substantial and widespread given that parasites play an important role in shaping the composition, structure, productivity and stability

of communities and ecosystems.”

This suggests that the long-term outlook for moose in southern portions of the species’ range remains dire, even as the slower rate of warming in summer may postpone the decline or disappearance of moose in northeastern Minnesota for a few more decades.

Still, milder and shorter winters remain a factor that impacts winter tick abundance and, ultimately, the health of moose populations. Previous studies have documented how shorter winters improve winter tick reproduction and give the cold-sensitive ticks a longer period to find a host.

The one-year tick life cycle begins when female ticks lay their eggs in June, after which they die. The eggs hatch in late summer into the fall and immediately begin searching for a host. While whitetail deer encounter winter ticks, they are usually able to protect themselves through grooming. Moose are less effective at doing so, which is why as many as 100,000 ticks can attach themselves to a single moose when tick populations are high.

When snow and cold temperatures arrive later in the season than in the past, ticks can survive longer into the fall, increasing their chances of finding a host. Tick survival is also dependent on how long snow and cold lingers in late winter. The ticks eventually drop off their hosts, typically in late April. If they fall on snow-covered ground, the females typically won’t survive to lay eggs. But when snow disappears earlier, tick survival improves, meaning there will be more young ticks seeking hosts later that year.

And, if warmer summers allow more of those eggs to hatch and quicken the pace of development of the larval ticks, it not only increases tick numbers but provides for a longer period for ticks to find a host. All of which adds up to bad news for moose.

It should be noted that the findings of this latest study may not apply the same way outside of Isle Royale. The Lake Superior island, which is a national park, does not have white-tail deer, which carry a host of other parasites, such as brainworm and liver flukes, that can be fatal to moose. That further complicates the survival picture for moose on the mainland.

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LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
27 6					23 12					35 20					36 22					36 27				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
11/29	26	12	0.00		11/29	26	9	0.00		11/29	26	15	0.00		11/29	30	19	0.01	0.1"	11/29	27	9	0.00	
11/30	32	20	0.05	1.4"	11/30	30	15	0.09	1.1"	11/30	30	19	0.08	1.5"	11/30	28	19	0.03	0.5"	11/30	30	13	0.18	1.5"
12/01	33	20	0.02	0.4"	12/01	31	18	0.04	0.5"	12/01	29	21	0.06	0.6"	12/01	41	25	0.02	0.2"	12/01	31	16	0.03	0.4"
12/02	41	30	0.02	0.2"	12/02	41	29	0.00		12/02	41	29	0.02		12/02	37	27	0.00		12/02	41	29	0.00	
12/03	32	26	0.06	0.2"	12/03	32	25	0.00		12/03	32	26	0.00		12/03	34	27	0.00		12/03	31	25	0.00	
12/04	34	21	0.00		12/04	34	18	0.00		12/04	33	21	0.01	0.1"	12/04	25	12	0.00		12/04	34	19	0.00	
12/05	23	12	0.02	0.4"	12/05	22	11	0.06	0.5"	12/05	20	12	0.02	0.3"	12/05	27	16	0.00		12/05	22	10	0.03	0.5"
YTD Total			17.18	6.9"	YTD Total			20.71	5.4"	YTD Total			19.31	6.8"	YTD Total			21.70	4.3"	YTD Total			23.77	7.4"

Outdoors briefly

Itasca and Koochiching counties added to state’s deer feeding ban

REGIONAL— Minnesota’s deer feeding ban will expand on Thursday, Dec. 30, to include 44 of the state’s 87 counties, including Itasca and Koochiching. The expansion of the deer

feeding ban is the result of additional discoveries of chronic wasting disease, or CWD, in deer.

The recent detection of CWD on a deer farm in Beltrami County adds Beltrami, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods and Roseau counties to the list of counties where deer feeding is not allowed. Deer feed includes grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay and other

food that is capable of attracting or enticing deer.

Feeding bans and attractant bans are part of the DNR’s CWD response plan and necessary because feed and attractants often cause deer to concentrate, greatly increasing the risk of deer-to-deer disease transmission.

PERMITS...Continued from page 2B

erated since the COVID-19 closures prohibited access to Quetico Provincial Park, which has long served as a kind of pressure-relief valve for the much-busier BWCAW.

“I think that contributes to the crowding we’re seeing on our side,” said Catton.

While primary entry points, like the crossing at International Falls, have re-opened to fully vaccinated individuals, the remote access border crossing program remains suspended, according to Trevor Gibb, Quetico’s park superintendent.

Gibb notes that the park has no jurisdiction over border crossing policy and he said he doesn’t know whether remote border crossings at places like Prairie Portage will be allowed in time for the 2022 pad-

dling season.

For now, said Gibb, Americans will need to plan to use the crossings at International Falls or at Pigeon River and access the Quetico from the north if they wish to visit the wilderness park next year.

The concerns about overuse and overcrowding in the Boundary Waters are, in part, a reflection of the changing ways in which visitors use the wilderness, said Catton. “Fewer people are going into the heart of the wilderness,” she said. “There’s a lot more base camping along the periphery.” That tends to concentrate people and the resulting impact on a relative handful of lakes located near popular entry points.

Zabokrtsky agrees, but says there are ways to address the situation. He said restricted permits,

which would provide entry point access while prohibiting users from camping on the most popular lakes along the route, could help spread the use out and limit the impact on high-traffic lakes and campsites.

He said the Forest Service’s first-come, first-served policy has contributed to the problem, and means there will always be situations where sites fill up too quickly in popular areas.

Zabokrtsky said more education for users can also help, particularly if the Forest Service could encourage use of the more remote parts of the wilderness. “We found if people were willing to travel a solid day into the wilderness, they left most of the groups behind.”

### Ask Brock the Doc

Variants

**Q: Do they test for variants when someone gets a COVID-19 test?**  
**A:** Standard COVID-19 tests don't tell you whether you have a variant. Variants are identified when scientists at the state's public health lab pull a certain percentage of patients' tests for further examination to see what variants may be in the state. Enough samples are reviewed to create a clear picture of which variant is causing the infection and to watch how the virus changes. Results from the variant tests are not shared with patients or their doctors because even if you have a variant, the steps are the same: quarantine or isolation.

**Q: Can I get a variant if I have already had COVID-19?**  
**A:** Yes, you can get a variant, but if you have had COVID-19, you might have some natural protection for a period of time. However, your chance of getting a variant increases because the mutations are different from the initial infection, so natural immunity may not always be able to prevent illness. On top of natural immunity, getting vaccinated will increase antibodies to give you the best chance at stopping variant infections.

**Q: What do I need to know about the Omicron variant?**  
**A:** In November, a new variant was found in random samplings of COVID-19 tests collected in South Africa, and the World Health Organization labeled it Omicron. The first confirmed case of Omicron was identified in the United States in December and has since been identified in nearly twenty states, including Minnesota. At this time, we don't know how easily it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, or how well our current vaccines and medications will work. Our current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths due to infection from the Omicron variant. To help prevent the spread of Omicron, continue practicing social distancing, get vaccinated, and wear a mask.

Dr. Brock Urie is an Emergency Room Physician and the Chief Medical Officer at Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. Dr. Urie graduated from the University of MN Duluth, with his Bachelor's Degree in Biology and attended Medical School at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine. He completed his Residency in Emergency Medicine at Western Michigan University's School of Medicine in 2015. During residency, Dr. Urie served as a flight physician and county medical control physician, and a clinical instructor of Emergency Medicine.

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STATE FINANCES

# State forecasts record-setting \$7.7 billion surplus

by BRIAN BAKST  
Minnesota Public Radio News

REGIONAL— Oodles of money is piling up in Minnesota’s state government accounts, giving the Legislature plenty to spread around in the 2022 session and adding another layer to next year’s campaign themes.

The Department of Minnesota Management and Budget projected Tuesday that the state has a whopping \$7.7 billion surplus in the general fund. Strong growth in income, consumer spending and corporate profits drove extraordinary revenues in fiscal year 2021, according to MMB, and higher tax receipts are expected to continue with the improvement

of the economic outlook.

In percentage terms, it amounts to 15 percent of the current spending in the two-year budget adopted this summer.

The forecast provides a look through the end of the current budget in mid-2023 and the two years beyond. The estimate will be apart from roughly \$1.2 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds headed the state’s way and not directed yet to a specific purpose.

DFL Gov. Tim Walz previewed the report in a speech Monday to county leaders, saying the forecast figures “will be the best that they have ever been.” Walz has promoted monthly tax collection tallies as evidence the state economy is in solid shape

three years into his watch.

The fiscal gusher will undoubtedly feed calls for tax cuts, increased payments to schools and additional programs to help people regain their footing after the long pandemic.

“The top priority of Senate Republicans this session will be to provide additional tax relief to Minnesotans across the state,” said Republican Majority Leader Jeremy Miller of Winona.

Business groups are already lobbying to head off a hike in unemployment taxes set to kick in to refill a fund drained over the past two years, and House Republicans are on board with that idea, saying it would block a tax increase on businesses of up to 15 percent.

DFLers have not yet committed to refilling that fund but are taking credit for the surplus.

“Democratic policies work. When workers, families and small businesses get help, the economy booms,” said House DFL Majority Leader Ryan Winkler on Twitter. “This is the time to double down on our support for working Minnesotans with paid leave, child care, housing, infrastructure and better schools.”

Not all of the money the forecast estimate is built from has actually materialized, and lawmakers won’t get to dictate where all of it goes.

By law, some dollars are taken off the top to bolster dedicated funds, pay off accounting

shifts and restock the reserves. That could mean hundreds of millions of dollars are locked up before the Legislature does a thing. Without that law the surplus would have been even bigger.

Some \$870 million were shifted into the state’s rainy-day reserve, bringing it to an all-time high of \$2.6 billion.

Lawmakers don’t return to the Capitol until Jan. 31, and they’ll be aiming to finish by mid-May to hit the campaign trail. The governor’s office and all 201 legislative seats are on the line in November.

*Minnesota Public Radio News provided this story. You can listen to MPR News at 89.3 FM in Ely and at 92.5 FM on the Iron Range.*

GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Defense, LaTourell lift Wolves over Greenway

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

GREENWAY— A good defensive performance, and a big offensive night for Grace LaTourell, helped the Timberwolves eke out a razor-thin victory here on Tuesday in

a game that was close from start to finish.

“This was one of those games where you just do whatever it takes to get a win,” said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt.

LaTourell, a sophomore guard, largely carried Ely’s offensive performance, pouring in 24

points in a game that ended with the Wolves up 39-38. LaTourell notched a double-double on the night, with ten rebounds, while adding seven steals. Junior Madeline Kallberg added five points and eight boards.

Other players struggled to find the bucket, as the team shot

a lackluster 26 percent from the floor. “But we managed to pull out a win with good defense and key stops at the end,” said Gantt. “We’re going to have to play much better against teams coming up, but I’m super-pumped we were able to find a way to win an ugly game like that. Our

defensive effort saved us.”

The Wolves were set to host International Falls on Friday, with a 7:15 p.m. start. They head to Silver Bay on Tuesday to take on the Mariners.

## NORTH WOODS...Continued from page 1B

74-13 halftime bulge to a 105-30 win that could have been far worse had North Woods Head Coach Will Kleppe played his starters more than three minutes in the second half.

While the Grizzlies are going to have to work to replace last year’s productivity of departed senior Darius Goggleye, Kleppe has everyone else back. Familiarity gives the Grizzlies the edge on defense as they work on their half-court offensive flow.

“Darius was a huge part of our team last year, and his leadership and his performance on the floor are hard to replace, but we do have a lot of experienced guys,” Kleppe said. “We hit the ground running when we came to practice.

These guys were familiar with what was going on and what the expectations were. Everything we do starts with our defense.”

**South Ridge**

The Panthers scored first in the opener, but after buckets by T.J. Chiabotti and Jared Chibotti ignited a 10-0 run, the Grizzlies never trailed again. Davis Kleppe hit the team’s first three of the season as the Grizzlies’ lead grew to 20-10 on the strength of steals and scores by Alex Hartway and Jonah Burnett. Brenden Chiabotti picked up eight points with two treys in a run that put North Woods up by 20, 34-14, but the Panthers wouldn’t go down quietly, cutting the lead to 42-28 at the half.

Hartway drained the Grizzlies’ first three

buckets of the second half, a trey by T.J. Chiabotti put North Woods back up by 20, 55-33, and the Grizzlies rolled on from there for the win.

“We definitely didn’t want to get in a half-court game with a team that had 6’10”, 6’7”, and 6’4” players on the floor,” Kleppe said. “We came out with a lot of energy, put some ball pressure on, and forced some turnovers which gave us some easy baskets. That really boiled down to the difference in the game.”

The Grizzlies’ first win left the team with plenty to work on, however. While they feasted on shots close to the bucket, North Woods only got off three mid-range jumpers in their half-court sets, all of which missed.

They were a lackluster 7-for-33 from three-point range and made just six of their 12 free throws.

“We certainly took what their defense gave us, so we got a lot of open threes,” Kleppe said. “Unfortunately, we didn’t shoot the percentage we want to shoot, but there’s going to be games like that, and that’ll improve. As long as the defense keeps playing with the energy they had on Friday, that will cover up some of our shooting woes.”

Brenden Chiabotti topped Grizzlies’ scorers with 19 points, knocking down three treys and all four of his free throw attempts. Hartway was 7-for-10 from the field for 14 points, and T.J. Chiabotti and Jared Chiabotti were the other

Eleven Grizzlies scored in the contest, with five of them hitting for double digits. Brenden Chiabotti led the way again with 17, and T.J. Chiabotti was close behind with 16. Jonah Burnett tossed in 14 points, Morrison had 13, and Jared Chiabotti chipped in 10.

The Grizzlies have a string of three home games coming up, including Friday’s home opener against Hinckley-Finlayson. On Tuesday, Dec. 14, North Woods will host Nashwauk-Keewatin, and round out the home-stand with a Thursday, Dec. 16 contest against Moose Lake-Willow River.

## GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

hit home with Goodsky and Koch. Goodsky came out playing in-your-face defense and made two steals that turned into scoring opportunities for Koch. The sophomore guard popped in two three-balls and a pair of free

throws to pad the Grizzlies’ lead to 39-25, and another three by Shyla Adams forced Bigfork to take a time out, trailing 42-27. North Woods pushed the lead to 20 enroute to the 17-point win.

“We had some really

good moments today, and we had some really sketchy moments,” Cheney said. “It wasn’t the game we played at Cook County, where we were in it the whole game. Today we started out fast and then slowed down to Bigfork’s pace.”

Cheney also suggested Tuesday’s practice would involve a lot of practice on the inside scoring opportunities that often proved elusive against Bigfork.

“That’s been a thorn in our side for the last several years,” she said. “We can’t

have that. That’s going to be the key to a win or a loss someday.”

Koch scorched the net for 13 second-half points and ended up with a team-leading 17 for the game, the only North Woods player in double



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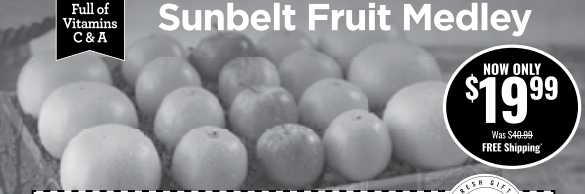
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ELY

# Ely economic developers wrap up a busy year

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – This city’s Economic Development Authority wrapped up its activities for 2021 on Tuesday night with a summary and discussion of accomplishments for the year and a look forward into what they face next year.

City council members, acting as the city’s economic development authority, and Ely Economic Developer John Fedo, prioritized four main areas of activity for the last year including development of the Trailhead and the city’s West End redevelopment district/workforce housing, expanding broadband access, supporting business creation and expansion, and supporting recreation opportunities.

Fedo said the city ended the year on a positive note for funding of the stalled Trailhead parking area and welcome center at the city’s west entrance

## Looking at west end development, housing shortage for 2022

with progress on a \$1.5 million award through the federal Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program recently put in place by the Biden administration.

“There was a concerted effort by the whole team, including our engineering firm and the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, and we have letters of support from outside the city government,” he said. “The project is fully funded and will be part of a larger package of funded projects coming out of the regional Chicago Economic Development Authority,” he said.

He noted that it is a competitively judged grant application.

“Our indication is that we have a very competitive grant submission and we are keeping our fingers crossed. Our Trailhead is obviously a very integral part of tourism activity here, and this particular

program was geared toward communities like Ely that rely on tourism and specifically speaks to how we are improving,” he said.

Fedo said he anticipates a response to the application early next year.

Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski said the state legislative bonding bill request for the Trailhead development project is moving forward.

The \$4 million bonding request was spilt into two parts, he said, including \$1.5 million specifically for the Trailhead welcome center and parking lot development, and the remainder to be used for the remaining aspects of the West End development project, including workforce housing, ambulance service infrastructure, and the hospital expansion area.

“That’s looking good,” Langowski said. “Obviously, somebody within the bonding com-

mittee requested we split that so that means we are getting some support. It would be nice if we gain a parallel (funding) path and have to decide which one we take.”

The downtown broadband fiber loop continues to gain new customers, according to Langowski. He pointed to recent excavation permits applied for by several major local businesses for hookup to the loop, including the Veterans Administration Health Clinic, Zup’s Market, the state Department of Revenue, the North American Bear Center, and Grand Ely Lodge.

“That is a real positive move for our broadband project,” he said.

“Development efforts for the former Zup’s grocery store building continue to move swiftly,” Langowski said. J&L Hardware is planning to move and expand their business into the building.

Some areas of support

and improvement for economic growth in the city continue to elude the local EDA.

“Our dentist shortage is an issue of concern that was brought to my attention again last month,” he said. “I wish I had some solutions and answers. I know Dr. Anderson worked very hard to find another dentist. That is something we need to keep on our (priority) list as we move forward.”

A housing shortage continues to plague the Ely area.

“We continue to work with the Housing Redevelopment Authority on that,” Langowski said. “It is interesting to see how other communities are solving that issue. It is not just with a bunch of free money being handed out. It is pulling up the boot straps and figuring out a project and how to make it work, because this isn’t a quick enough return on investment for private de-

velopment. We’ll keep our eyes on that.”

Ely EDA President Heidi Omerza related that at a recent Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities conference, state legislators indicated their distaste for developing apartment buildings as part of the housing shortage solution.

“They are against that, even though that is the greatest return on investment. So, what are we supposed to do?” she asked. “I left the conference a little conflicted.”

Langowski added, “Workforce housing is kind of the key phrase that is tied to our bonding request. And the state’s Department of IRRR favors infrastructure support for housing projects, such as extending utilities. They look at the whole picture, such as what partners we bring to the table.”

A group of lots in the Spaulding area on the north end of town contains as many as 11 lots ready for development.

## Obituaries and Death Notices



### Earl J. Schmidt

Earl J. Schmidt, 84, of Lake Vermilion-Tower, passed away on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, at Essentia Health-Virginia. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 10 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower with Pastor Liz Cheney officiating. Visitation will be for one hour prior to the service at the church. Burial will be in North Star Cemetery in St. Cloud. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

Earl was born on Oct. 8, 1937, in St. Cloud, to Herman and Mary (Streitz) Schmidt and grew up there, graduating from St. Cloud Technical High School. He played football in high school and was an avid card player.

Earl married Lois Swanson on Aug. 19, 1960, in Tower. He spent his working career in the family business, St. Cloud Jobbing Company, and retired in 2000 and moved to Lake Vermilion.

Survivors include one son, David Schmidt of Lake Vermilion; four sisters, Donna, Mary, Judy and Susan; and three brothers, Roger, Tom and

Milt.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and wife, Lois.



### Maria Zoe Planton

Maria Zoe Planton, 81, of Soudan, known to everyone as Zoe, died peacefully in her home surrounded by family on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. A very special thank you to the East Range Hospice Team. The family would also like to recognize Jo and Joan for the exceptional care provided to our mom.

A Funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 17 at St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower with Rev. Fr. Beau Braun as celebrant. Visitation will be for one hour prior to the service at the church. A reception will

follow in the parish hall. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Landmark Funeral Home of Virginia.

Zoe was born on July 26, 1940, to Joseph Zupancich Sr. and Mary (Gasperlin) Zupancich in Ely. She graduated from Ely High School in 1958 and following graduation attended St. Catherine’s University in St. Paul. On Oct. 21, 1961, Zoe married the love of her life, Frank Planton, and pursued her dream of being a mom.

Zoe’s family was her priority. Zoe’s home became known as Zoe’s Bed & Breakfast to her children, with delicious home-cooked meals and everything they needed when they visited. Zoe’s fondest memory to her children was to always be in the front yard waving goodbye until she could no longer see them as they departed from her home.

Zoe and Frank loved polka dancing and attended 36 polka festivals in Cleveland, Milwaukee and Chicago. She loved the outdoors (especially the national and state parks she visited and her beloved North Shore), collecting rocks, and the sheer beauty of na-

ture. Zoe really enjoyed playing bridge every chance she got and treasured all the friendships she made over the years.

Zoe is survived by her husband of 60 years, Frank A. Planton; children, Margie (Rodney) Burgess, Frank J. (Carmen) Planton, John Planton, Mike Planton and Annie (Tony) Tekautz; eight grandchil-

dren, Carleen (Mike), Brian (Julia), Cole, Bradley, Leanne, Stefanie, Bren and Nathan; and two great-grandchildren, Mason and Greyson.

Zoe was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph Sr. and Mary Zupancich; and brother, Joseph Zupancich Jr.

### Lolita M. Schnitzius

Lolita M. Schnitzius, 83, of Ely, passed away on Sunday, Dec., 5, 2021, at Carefree Assisted Living in Ely. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.



## International Wolf Center

1396 Hwy 169, Ely, MN 55371 • (218) 365-4695 • wolf.org

In 2021, the International Wolf Center worked closely with a number of fantastic local businesses. Sending a howl of thanks for all of your help and support this year!

Ace Hardware	Dan’s Garage
Adventure Inn	Northern Tier
Anderson Construction Services Inc	OJ’s HVAC and Refrigeration
The Boathouse Brewpub and Restuarant	Casey Peterson
Brandau Plumbing	Range LP Gas
Clark Gas Station	Sir G’s Italian Restaurant
Cunningham Electric	Subway
Custom Theaters	The TimberJay
Dairy Queen	Tony’s Towing
East Range Mowing	Ely Veterinary Clinic
The Ely Echo	Vermillion Community College
Ely Auto Services	Voyageur Lumber
Ely Flower and Seed	WELY-FM
Ely Northland Market	White Wilderness Sled Dog Adventures
Grand Ely Lodge	Wintergreen Northern Wear
Holiday Station Store	Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge
Insula	Wolfland Computers
J and L Hardware	Zup’s Food Market -
Jeff Schultz Excavating	<i>providing bone dust since 1989</i>

**RANGE JEWELRY & GIFTS**

*“A Gift For Every Occasion”*

- **In-store jewelry & watch repair**
- **Cash for Gold & Silver**

**OPEN: Tues-Sat 10-5**  
**218-827-2515**  
Babbitt Shopping Center

**BIRD SEED**

**HIBBING FEED and SEED**

**262-3049**

***Ethnic Creations***

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**Gifts in Weaving, Woolens, Quilting & Needle Arts Classes & Custom Orders**

**Open Monday & Tuesday from 10-4**  
7148 Cty Rd 715, Embarrass, MN 55732  
**218-741-1536 or 218-750-0475 (cell)**  
**dlw715@yahoo.com debwiitanen.etsy.com**

**RETURN TO HARMONY**

MESABI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2021-2022 Season

CONCERT SERIES #2:

**HOLIDAYS AT THE SYMPHONY**

**Virginia, MN - Goodman Auditorium**  
Saturday, December 11, 7:00pm

**www.MesabiSymphonyOrchestra.org**

**TICKET PRICES**  
\$15 adults • \$8 students • \$12 seniors • \$25 family groups

Operating support is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



EMPLOYMENT

PT POSITION AVAILABLE  
at the  
TOWER SOUDAN INSURANCE AGENCY

We are looking for a part-time employee with good customer service skills to answer phones, file, take payments, as well as other general office duties. This employee would also fill-in when the full-time employee is out on vacation.

This job would be for 8 hours a week; days worked and schedule are flexible.

If interested, please call 218-753-2101 or e-mail [tsagency@frontiernet.net](mailto:tsagency@frontiernet.net). 12/10



Building Maintenance  
Worker - Public Works  
Apply by 12/17/21

[www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov)  
or call 218-726-2422

Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer 12/10

HELP WANTED  
RECEPTIONIST

Computer skills and people skills a must!  
Drop off your resume at Peshel Accounting,  
1704 E. Camp St., Ely or call 218-365-2424 tfn

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF BOARD APPOINTMENT  
TOWN OF CRANE LAKE

The Crane Lake Town Board of Supervisors will be making two appointments to the Crane Lake Water and Sanitary District Board of Managers for a three-year term that will commence on January 1, 2022 and expire on December 31, 2024. Application forms are available at the Clerk's office. A completed application, current resume and cover letter stating qualifications and experience to serve must be filed with the Clerk of the Town of Crane Lake by December 13 prior to the Board of Supervisors' Meeting on December 14, 2021.

Jo Ann Pohlman  
Clerk, Town of Crane Lake  
218/993-1303  
[info@cranelaketwp.com](mailto:info@cranelaketwp.com)

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 3 & 10, 2021

KABETOGRAMA TOWNSHIP  
Notice of Filing for Town  
Offices to be Elected

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Kabetogama, St. Louis County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 8th day of March, 2022.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be Tuesday, December 28, 2021. The last day will be Tuesday, the 11th day of January, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

Filings may be made with Clerk Mary Manninen. You can either make an appointment by calling 240-9325 or Town Hall 875-2082 or emailing [kabtown@frontier.com](mailto:kabtown@frontier.com). You may file without appointment by coming into the Town Hall on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The following terms will be expiring:

Supervisor Seat #2 for the term of three years

Clerk for the term of two years

Filing fee is \$2.00.

Mary Manninen, Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 10, 2021

GREAT GIFT IDEAS!

In-Stock  
Traeger  
Grills

Pellets & Accessories

TRAEGER



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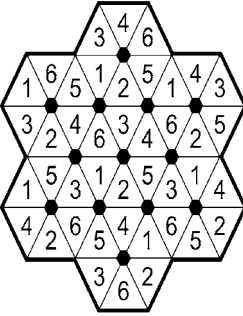
VERMILION LUMBER



HOME OF THE PROFESSIONALS  
218-753-2230  
302 Main St., Tower, MN  
M-F: 8 AM-5 PM; Sat: 8 AM-Noon



SNOWFLAKES  
solution



Get  
Results!



Advertise  
in the  
Timberjay!



The International Wolf Center is hiring!  
Facility Coordinator

The Facility Coordinator oversees the cleanliness and safe operations of the interpretive center facility.

- 32 hours/week
- \$18-\$20/hr. Benefits eligible.
- Deadline to apply is Dec. 15, 2021

Visit <https://wolf.org/about-us/employment/> to apply 12/10



Full-Time Sewing Technician

Wintergreen Northern Wear creates quality outdoor apparel on the main street of Ely, MN. We are looking for creative, talented individuals to sew our garments. If you love to sew, we'd love to have you on our team! Sewing experience is required; experience with garments is preferred. We'll train you on our industrial machines. A cheery, clean work environment and benefits included. Competitive wages based on skill level and experience. Call 218-365-6602 or email [sola@wintergreennorthernwear.com](mailto:sola@wintergreennorthernwear.com) for more information. Apply by email or at our store located at 205 East Sheridan Street, Ely, MN. 12/17

CAMP VOYAGEUR  
Grounds/Maintenance  
Person Wanted

Construction and plumbing experience helpful  
Please call 218-365-6042 or email us at [cvspirit@campvoyageur.com](mailto:cvspirit@campvoyageur.com). tfn

PUBLIC NOTICES

KUGLER TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The Kugler Town Board will hold their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 6 p.m. at the Kugler Town Hall.

Chris Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 10, 2021

FIELD TOWNSHIP  
FILING NOTICE

Affidavits of candidacy may be filed with the Field Town Clerk at 9998 East Lind Rd., Angora from Tuesday, December 28, 2021, through Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 5 p.m. for the offices of:

- 1 Supervisor - 3-year term
- 1 Clerk- 2-year term

Filing Fee \$2.00.

Please call the clerk to make an appointment to file your application, 218-780-7012. The clerk's office will be also be open Jan. 11 from 1-5 p.m. for filing.

Pat Chapman, Clerk, Field Township

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 10, 2021

FUNERAL SERVICES

Range Funeral Home



Virginia  
741-1481

Hibbing  
263-3276

"Friends Helping Friends"

Super Crossword

Answers

S	I	D	E	M	E	T	T	L	E	I	M	P	S	L	A	S	S
O	M	I	T	C	A	R	E	E	R	H	A	U	L	E	R	L	E
N	A	N	A	V	I	S	I	T	O	R	E	N	N	A	A	R	I
A	G	E	I	N	T	O	L	A	D	Y	G	O	D	I	V	A	
T	I	T	S	T	E	T	S	T	O	R	M	W	O	V	E	N	
A	S	T	R	O	O	R	B	I	T	E	R	S	P	I	N	N	E
S	T	E	E	R	S	T	O	A	T	E	E	A	D	E			
			P	S	H	A	W	R	E	N	M	C	C	O	R	M	A
P	O	G	O		L	O	U		U	R	E	A	R	O	N		
S	P	A	S	M	E	D		N	O	O	D	L	E	A	T	T	I
Y	I	N		D	R	O	O	P	Y	D	R	A	W	E	R	S	
C	O	D	D	L	E		P	A	L	E	S	T		L	E	A	R
H	I	H	O		S	E	C		E	D	S		O	A	R	S	
O	D	I	E	B	L	A	C	K	M	O	N		I	A	M	S	O
			E	E	L		S	A	L	O	O	N		I	N	S	I
B	A	Y	S	T	A	T	E		P	L	U	T	O	P	L	A	T
A	R	E	A	S		D	E	L	A	N	O		Y	E	P		S
G	O	O	F	Y	S	M	I	L	E		A	L	P	O	D	I	S
F	U	M	E		C	O	B	B		C	A	R	T	O	O	N	D
U	S	E	S		O	S	L	O		A	C	O	R	N	S		A
L	E	N	T		W	H	E	W		R	E	C	A	S	T		H

EMPLOYMENT



OPEN POSITIONS

10 Fifth Street SE Cook, MN 55723

Nursing

PT RN House Supervisor

Adult Day Services (ADS)

PT ADS Assistant

Lab

FT Medical Laboratory Tech (MLT)

Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist

Care Center

FT & PT Nursing Assistant (Wage starting at \$16.36/hr - \$1,500 Sign-On Bonus)  
PT RN/LPN (\$4,000 Sign-On Bonus)

Dietary

Casual Dietary Aide/Cook

Activities

PT & Casual Activities Assistant

Environmental Services

FT Housekeeper

Casual Laundry Aide

Casual Housekeeping & Laundry

TO APPLY:

[www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/](http://www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/)

More Info? Contact Human Resources

218-666-6220

[humanresources@cookhospital.org](mailto:humanresources@cookhospital.org)

The Cook Hospital & Care Center offers competitive pay and benefits including PERA retirement, Health and Dental coverage, Life and LTD.

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Alum
- 5 Spell-off
- 8 Pit
- 12 Taylor of "Mystic Pizza"
- 13 Approves
- 14 Satan's forte
- 15 Leading man?
- 16 Landlocked Mideast territory
- 18 Disney's Ariel, for one
- 20 Van Gogh venue
- 21 CBS logo
- 22 Mimic
- 23 Wedding VIP
- 26 "I'm No Angel" actress
- 30 '60s chic
- 31 Green shade
- 32 Cattle call
- 33 "The Great Gatsby" setting
- 36 Self-reproach
- 38 Stop — dime
- 39 "— voyage!"
- 40 Skater Ohno
- 43 Within earshot
- 47 Oater setting
- 49 Author Bellow
- 50 Within (Pref.)
- 51 "Shoo!"
- 52 Exile isle
- 53 Beheld
- 54 Sugary suffix

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18					19				20			
			21				22					
23	24	25			26					27	28	29
30					31					32		
33			34	35				36	37			
			38				39					
40	41	42			43					44	45	46
47					48				49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

- 55 Marvel super-heroes
- 10 Queue
- 35 Sufficient, old-style
- 11 BPOE members
- 36 Deity
- 17 Carton sealer
- 19 Nay undoer
- 37 Gender-neutral
- 22 Motorist's org.
- 39 Montana city
- 23 Upscale auto
- 40 Dazzles
- 24 Shad product
- 25 Egos' counterparts
- 41 Freshener scent
- 26 Jo's sister
- 27 Brit. record label
- 42 Shoppe description
- 28 Fa follower
- 29 Youngster
- 31 Links org.
- 43 Unrepaired
- 44 Lip soother
- 45 Garage job
- 46 Panache
- 48 Conceit

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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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.

**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**

**BUILDING SERVICES**

**EAST DHU RIVER SAWMILL INC**  


*“Put A Piece Of Northern Minnesota In Your Home”*

*Superior Quality*

- Plank Paneling
- Trim
- One-Of-A-Kind Moldings
- Industrial Lumber

**218-744-1788**  
8825 Hwy 101, Iron, MN 55751

**HAIR CARE**

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

**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 meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS- East Range meetings and information, call 218-749-3387 or www.district8online.org.

AA FRIDAYS- 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 262 E Harvey St., Ely. Meets in the basement.

**CryptoQuip**  
answer  
Clothing ensembles so goofy-looking that they make passersby crack up: apparel of laughs.

**King Crossword**  
Answers  
Solution time: 23 mins.

GRAD	BEE	HOLE
LILI	OKS	EVIL
ADAM	WESTBANK	
MERMAID	ARLES	
	EYE	APE
BRIDE	MAEWEST	
MOD	PEA	MOO
WESTEGG	GUILT	
	ONA	BON
APOLLO	AUDIBLE	
WILDWEST	SAUL	
ENDOGIT	ELBA	
SEEN	OSE	XMEN

**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 Visa, Mastercard, AmEx, and Discover. Call your ad in to 218-753-2950. Display (boxed) classifieds are billed by the “inch”- please call for prices and information on discounts.  
Call Today – 218-753-2950 or 218-365-3114

**MARINE**

**MERCURY OUTBOARDS**  
**Frank's Marine Sales & Service**  
Mercury, Crestliner, Lund  
www.franksmarinesales.com  
franksmarine@centurytel.net  
Hwy 53, Orr • Call 218-757-3150

**Handberg's MARINA**  
ALUMINUM • POLARIS • YAMAHA  
SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS  
General Store  
**218-993-2214**  
www.handbergs.com

**ARONSON BOAT WORKS**  
LAKE VERMILION, TOWER  
Located two miles southwest of Tower on Hwy. 169  
Winter Hours:  
Mon-Fri: 9 AM-5 PM  
Sat/Sun: Closed  
Storage • Complete Service • Sales

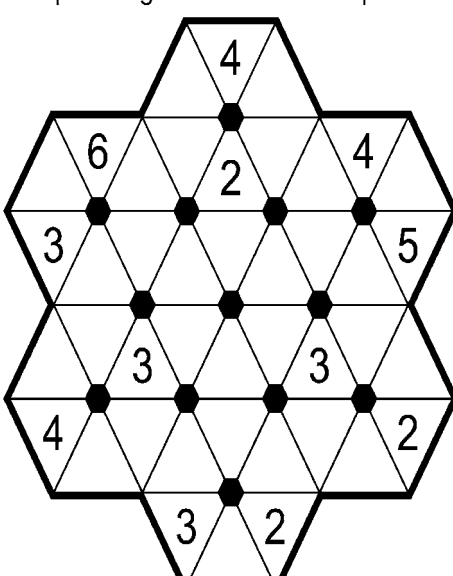
**Grubben's MARINA & VILLAGE**  
Boat launch, rental, store & repair  
Cabins for a great, fun vacation  
See us at: www.grubbens.com  
Call us at: 218.753.5000  
4296 Arrowhead Point Rd, Tower MN 55790

**MOCCASIN POINT MARINE**  
4655 Moccasin Point Rd Lake Vermilion  
**218-753-3319**  
Storage, Boat Rentals, Service/Repairs/Sales  
Mechanic on Duty  
moccasinpointmarine.com  
**YAMAHA**

**TIMBUKTU MARINA**  
ON LAKE VERMILION  
218-666-2131  
7101 Oak Narrows Rd - Cook MN  
Cabin rentals  
Year round boat storage and dockage  
Boat and pontoon rental  
Convenience store  
Gas, bait & liquor  
timbuktumarina.com

**TIMBUKTU MARINE**  
LAKE VERMILION  
218-666-2276  
2125 Vermilion Dr - Cook MN  
Ranger PREMIER WEERES  
G3 Boats MERCURY SUZUKI YAMAHA  
Sales, service, storage, boat lifts, docks, trailers and accessories  
timbuktumarine.com

**Don't Miss a Single Issue**  
**(218) 753-2950**  
**timberjay.com**

**SNOWFLAKES**  
by Japheth Light  
There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.  
  
**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦ ♦ ♦  
♦ Easy ♦ ♦ Medium ♦ ♦ ♦ Difficult  
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**Weekly SUDOKU**  
Answer

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

**Super Crossword**  
**ANIMATED WOOFERS**

**ACROSS**  
1 Agree (with)  
5 Ability to cope well with difficulty  
11 Mini-devils  
15 Girl  
19 Forget to say  
20 Vocation  
21 Heist booty  
22 — Stanley Gardner  
23 She played Kira Nerys on “Deep Space Nine”  
25 Sicilian resort city  
26 Rain-starved  
27 Get riper  
28 Taken with  
29 Legendary nude horse rider  
31 Small bird  
32 Enhaloed Fr. woman  
33 Lightning source, as shortened in weather reports  
36 Like wicker baskets  
37 Rotating rocket ride at Disney theme parks  
40 Alternatives to dice  
43 Has the helm  
44 Exactly  
46 Lime drink  
47 “Oh, go on!”  
49 Kevin Bacon's “Footloose” role  
55 Spring-loaded stick  
58 R&B's Rawls  
60 Suffix with script  
61 Elvis — Presley  
62 Twitched, as a muscle  
65 Pasta strip  
69 Raiment  
71 — and yang  
72 Depressing or untidy sort  
75 Santa —, California  
76 Overprotect  
78 Most ashen  
79 Discovered  
81 Old cracker brand  
82 Short time, for short  
83 Sheeran and O'Neill  
85 Regatta tools  
86 Grammy nominee for writing the Lee Ann Womack hit “I May Hate Myself in the Morning”  
92 Retort to “No you're not!”  
95 Moray, say  
96 Gin mill  
98 Be emphatic  
102 Moniker for Boston's locale  
107 Flying disc renamed “Frisbee” in 1957  
109 Zones  
110 FDR part  
112 “Indeedy”  
113 “Law & Order: —” (NBC series since '99)  
114 Silly grin  
117 Gravy Train competitor  
118 Insult, in rap  
119 Be very mad  
120 Baseball's Ty  
121 Their names begin eight answers in this puzzle  
125 Wields  
126 Major city in Norway  
127 Squirrel food  
128 Actress Hathaway  
129 Period before 6-Down  
130 Close-call cry  
131 Present in a different form  
132 Attention-getting cries  
**DOWN**  
1 Piano recital pieces  
2 Free-verse poet  
3 Kitchen nook  
4 Hellenic H  
5 Red apple  
6 It follows Holy Week  
7 Stooges, e.g.  
8 New Year in Vietnam  
9 Zodiac sign  
10 Mess up  
11 “Word has it ...”  
12 Munchies from Mars  
13 Pint-size  
14 Smelterly junk  
15 Entice  
16 Get there  
17 Split-off bit  
18 Alternatives to coupes  
24 Sun blockers  
29 Oscar winner Sophia  
30 Proprietor  
33 Uncle, in Spanish  
34 Sky shiner  
35 Head, in French  
38 Creditors' takebacks  
39 Square in the first column of a bingo card  
41 Speed  
42 Nuptial vow  
45 Try to equal  
48 “We're No Angels” actor — Ray  
50 Regatta group  
51 Gym pad  
52 Pop singer Grande  
53 Intersection  
54 Presses and stretches  
55 Hitchcock film of 1960  
56 Downer drug  
57 India's Indira  
59 Takes stuff out of a suitcase  
63 Nero's 1,550  
64 Up 'til  
66 Popeye's Olive  
67 Lofty poem  
68 “ER” roles  
69 Exist  
70 Luggage-screening org.  
73 Oil gp.  
74 “Frozen” heroine  
77 Fawn nurser  
80 Hen's perch  
82 Road deicer  
84 T. rex, e.g.  
87 U.S. flag sewer Ross  
88 Meadowland  
89 Sappy tree  
90 Earthen cooking pot  
91 Person, place or thing  
93 Motorist's distance marker  
94 Attach with a click  
97 Siouan tribe  
99 “All finished!”  
100 “Kids” actress Chloë  
101 Bridge supports  
102 Amount a sack will hold  
103 Stimulate  
104 Naval petty officers  
105 Most secure  
106 OK for eating  
108 Traffic cones  
111 Funny bone locale  
115 Garbage barge  
116 Dance violently  
117 Razor choice  
121 Uber order  
122 Fabulous flier  
123 Fabled flier  
124 “Zip-a-Dee-Do- —”

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# JUSTICE PROJECT

# Ojibwe author participates in Ely's Justice Project

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The continuing Native American Justice Project here, “Awareness...Then Change,” recently provided community members and students the opportunity to participate in events that highlighted the published works of author Linda LaGarde Grover.

Grover is professor emeritus of American Indian Studies at UMD, is a member of the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe and author of fiction, poetry, research articles, newspaper

columns and essays.

The local justice project is sponsored by the Ely branch of the American Association of University Women in collaboration with the Ely EMPOWER organization. The Ely-area community participated in readings and workshops related to Grover's book, “In the Night of Memory.”

As part of the One Community, One Read project, a reading and presentation was conducted at a recent Tuesday Group and included a follow-up discussion of her novel.

“Nothing really happens in a vacuum, and the

issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) has long been with us, and recently drew more attention in the media,” Grover said. “This is the running thread and the basis for In the Night of Memory.”

She said her grandmother, of the Bois Forte Band, was born “somewhere near here” in northern Minnesota, and she is a also descendent of the Fond du Lac Band.

Grover recently retired from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

“I had many different roles there, but recently I had my best job ever, teaching and researching in the American Indian Studies department,” she said. “That is when my stuff really started getting published. Having that position in life and employment likely helped in getting my work noticed.”

She noted that the work of local artist Shaun Chosa, “Survivor II,” provides a label or image that depicts the MMIW message and helps to identify it.



Linda Grover spoke at the Piragis Second Floor Book Store. photo by K. Vandervort

“It is something that got to the media's attention. I'm not even sure how that actually happened since (this issue) has been a constant in Indian country for a long time,” Grover said.

“There has been interaction and intermarriages with native women since first contact with the explorers and settlers in this area,” she said. “There were native populations here, and there were young guys from other countries who were also here, working really hard doing back-breaking, dangerous work in the fur trade. Just like those first people on the Mayflower, they could not have survived if not for help from people already living here. The interior lands here were dangerous places.”

The interracial interactions were bound to happen, according to Grover. Those marriages produced children, and there are many people here who were descendants of those fur traders and the young native women.

“These marriages were not legal and they were not church marriages,” Grover said. “Those men were encouraged to not marry the native women, but if they did, they were advised to have a priest take care of it. They were mostly marriages conducted in the custom of the country and the women were called ‘country wives.’ And they had no protection when they were no longer wanted.”

Grover continued, “Down through 200 years or more, that is our history, including mine. There is such a high number of native women who have met violence at other people's hands, or have simply vanished or disappeared. That is only inevitable.”

It is unknown how many native women are actually missing. Grover guessed that number at about 6,000 women.

She related an experience in her own family.

“In my family, my grandfather had a sister who just disappeared sometime after 1940. Nobody ever knew where she went. There are no Social Security records. She is legally bound to a land allotment, with no descendants that anybody can find. She just vanished after the 1940 census. No work record. Nothing.”

In the Night of Memory is a story that about a young woman who vanished in the late 1970s.

“The story is not about her, so much, as it is about the people in her extended family and community,” she said.

In the Night of Memory, her third work of fiction, follows her first story, The Dance Boots, about a fictional Indian boarding school, not unlike those institutions that some in her own family attended from as early as 1914 through 2010.

“I was just astonished that I could get something like that published,” she said.

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DRINKING WATER

# Iron Range water lab seeing increased interest in testing

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

HIBBING- With rising concerns over elevated levels of arsenic in Greenwood Township rural wells, as reported by the *Timberjay*, RMB Environmental Laboratories, located in Hibbing, is seeing a rising number of requests for water tests. RMB assists local residents by providing affordable testing services throughout the area without requiring a minimum number of tests, said RMB CEO Robert Borash. The lab is certified by the state of Minnesota to conduct a wide variety of tests on drinking water sources.

RMB is a full-service analytical testing laboratory, located in a 31,000-square-foot facility, which has been providing full time jobs on the Iron Range for over two years now.

“Creating new science-based employment opportunities on the Iron Range is one of the most satisfying accomplishments of my career,” said RMB Board Member Zach Lamppa.

RMB is a privately-owned analytical laboratory that was founded

**Greenwood arsenic issue clarification and additional information from the MDH**

REGIONAL- Doug Schultz, from the Minnesota Department of Health, sent additional information and clarifications about the Nov. 17 story in the Timberjay about arsenic in the water at the Greenwood Town Hall.

The arsenic level in water from the Greenwood Town Hall outdoor water spigot, which tested at 102 ppb, was 10 times over the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 ppb set by the EPA and the Minnesota Department of Health Drinking Water Protection Program.

The MCL for arsenic is for long-term exposure. Water at approximately 100 ppb would likely pose a health risk only for people drinking that water over many years. The risk of acute health effects from arsenic would occur at levels much higher than 100 ppb. The level of concern is low for people who used this water sporadically, short-term, or for several weeks in a summer. The concern would increase if they were using it routinely for longer periods, such as six months out of the year and for multiple years. For the vast majority of people, it takes a lifetime of exposure for illness to develop because of exposure to arsenic, even at a concentration that is quite a bit above the MCL. People who have a history of diabetes, heart and/or cardiovascular disease may want to check with their physician about their exposure to determine if any testing is appropriate.

Private well owners are advised to test at least once for arsenic, according to the MDH.

The *Timberjay* story reported on statements at the Greenwood Town Board meeting in the wake of the testing, including a claim that it was 200 times over the MCL. In fact, the results were 200 times over the non-detectable limit of 0.5 ppb.

by Minnesota native Robert Borash in 1995. Virginia native Zach Lamppa joined the company in 2017 and spearheaded the addition of the lab in Hibbing. RMB provides a wide array of environmental services to both the public and private sectors. RMB’s other Minnesota facilities are in Bloomington and Detroit Lakes.

“Let’s bring and keep our money local. No need to ship that value away from the Range,” said Lamppa.

The company encourages visitors to come tour their facility.

“We all have a vested interest in what’s in our water,” said Lamppa.

“We see what’s happening right now in

Greenwood Township, for example, and we can help,” said Borash.

Water test requests are easiest when residents call the lab. Lab staff will help figure out what type of analysis is needed. Requesting and returning a kit is quite easy. Residents can either call RMB directly for kit shipment (small fee required) or

look at their website for other area pick-up sites. RMB can also arrange pick-up and delivery using a courier service. The lab does request that a customer notify them if they are using a pick-up site, so the sample gets picked up promptly. Residents can also come directly to the lab in Hibbing to pick-up or drop off a testing kit.

Results for Total Coliform and Nitrates take two to three days to get results. Metals, like arsenic, will take five to seven business days depending on the season. Rush service is available for an additional fee.

Find out more on their website at [www.rmbel.info](http://www.rmbel.info).

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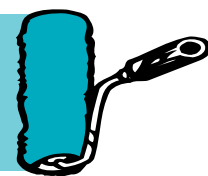
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