



Fishers...See /4B

Holiday Deadlines

Dec. 23 issue: Ads/articles due by 10 a.m. on Dec. 21
Dec. 30 issue: Ads/articles due by 10 a.m. on Dec. 23
The Timberjay office will be closed Dec. 26 - Jan. 6.
No paper will be published on Jan. 6.

the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

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COUNTY SCHOOLS

North Woods, NER to swap principals

Surprising change to take effect Jan. 1; comes following concerns over discipline at North Woods School

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- A new year will bring new leadership to two area schools, as North Woods Principal John Vukmanich and Northeast Range Principal Kelly Engman will swap roles beginning Jan. 1.

North Woods parents were notified of the surprising development by Vukmanich on Friday via the district's Campus Messenger system:

"Our Superintendent, Dr. (Reggie) Engebritson, has looked at the needs of our schools and the leadership styles of our principals, and has made the decision that as of Jan. 1, I will be reassigned

to Northeast Range School in Babbitt. Current Northeast Range Principal Mrs. Kelly Engman will be coming to North Woods to be the new Principal."

Engebritson told the *Timberjay* on Monday that switching Vukmanich and Engman now would facilitate future staffing changes at both schools.

"I am making this change mid-year because we are hiring an assistant principal for North Woods and looking at some changes to the support team at Northeast Range for the next school year," Engebritson said. "Having two new administrators start at the same time at North Woods would not be beneficial and so making this change now

will allow each principal time to learn about their new school and then be involved in the hiring process for additional staff."

Engebritson acknowledged that some might disagree with her decision, but that she believes it is the right one from the perspective of the students. The *Timberjay* did

See...SWAP pg. 9



WEATHER

Winter wallop

First major storm of the season packs a punch in the North Country

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The area's first major winter storm of the season struck with a vengeance on Wednesday with heavy, dense snow and considerable wind as a Colorado low moved across the Plains and into the North Country.

Most schools in

the region were closed Wednesday in anticipation of the storm, although the Ely schools remained open. All St. Louis County School District schools were closed as were most schools on the Iron Range and especially near Duluth and up the North Shore, where more than a foot of snow was expected.

See...STORM pg. 10

Above: A MnDOT snowplow was out working Hwy. 169 in heavy snow on Wednesday.

Right: Forecasted snow amounts through 6 p.m. Thursday according to the National Weather Service.



CITY OF TOWER

Council OKs three-percent levy hike for next year

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— For the first time in three years, the city council here has voted to increase the city's tax levy, by three percent over the 2022 levy of \$394,761. That will push the city's property tax levy to \$406,604 next year.

Many city residents are likely to face an even bigger increase in their property taxes next year, however, in large part due to a change in the fiscal disparities pool which is costing the city about \$20,000 for 2023. That, combined with the three-percent levy increase, is expected to push the city's share of local tax bills up by about eight percent on average.

Council members were aware of that impact and had considered leaving the city levy unchanged for a third straight year. Clerk-Treasurer Michael Schultz had prepared fund balance figures that suggested the city was making some progress in restoring its fund balances. But council member Kevin Norby noted that Schultz's figures suggested little improvement in 2023 without a levy increase.

"We know that some things are going up," Norby said, citing three-percent wage increases for city employees, ambulance expenses, and the police contract.

Mayor Dave Setterberg said he was concerned that residents were already going to be affected by the

See...COUNCIL pg. 9

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Paul Bunyan awarded grant for expanded broadband

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL-Only one North Country broadband proposal was funded by the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development in the latest round of Border-to-Border grant awards released last week.

Competition for the awards was intense, and less than half of those entities that submitted proposals received grants. In all, 61 projects in 48 counties received almost \$100 million to bring high-speed broadband to an additional 30,000 locations.

Paul Bunyan Communications (PBC) has been

awarded \$3.05 million to expand its fiber optic services to portions of Ball Bluff, Bearville, Cornish, French, Pike, Sandy, Verdon and Wuori Townships in Aitkin, Itasca and St. Louis counties. This \$7.63 million all-fiber optic project will pass a minimum of 1,035 locations. PBC and local townships will be investing \$4.58

million to build out the system.

"We are excited to continue our expansion efforts to provide access to broadband Internet speeds to those without it in our region," said Gary Johnson, PBC CEO/General Manager. "Our cooperative has a long history of expanding our network to underserved areas, but it has become

increasingly challenging to go it alone without grant support.

These areas will now not only get broadband access, but they will also go from slow satellite or dial up Internet to speeds of up to a 10 Gigabits per second and become part of one of the

See...AWARD pg. 9



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Community notices

Ice Candle and Holiday Gathering set for Saturday, Dec. 17 in Embarrass

EMBARRASS – The Embarrass Cemetery will be aglow Saturday, Dec. 17 during the annual Ice Candle display and holiday gathering. A holiday gathering will be held at the Embarrass Town Hall from 4-6 p.m. The public is welcome to come for coffee and Christmas goodies. There will be crafts for kids as well as a visit from Santa.

If interested in donating cookies or bars for the holiday gathering, they can be dropped off at the Town Hall. Call the clerk's office at 218-984-2084 with questions or to volunteer with placing and lighting candles.

Oh Fffudge! Lyric Center presents A Christmas Story, The Musical

VIRGINIA - The Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance (Lyric Center for the Arts) is presenting The Range's first full-scale, all-ages, community theater musical since the beginning of the pandemic; with shows continuing through Dec. 16, 17 and 18, at Minnesota North College's Mesabi Range Virginia Campus. American Sign Language interpreters will be on hand for the Friday, December 16 performance.

Based on the book by Jean Shepherd, the film adaptation has become an annual holiday tradition for many families. With a musical twist, the story follows young Ralphie in the 1940s and his quest to acquire an Official Red Ryder carbine-action 200-shot Range Model air rifle for Christmas. Much to the chagrin of everybody Ralphie encounters who consistently remind him that he'll shoot his eye out.

The show features well-known Range musician and singer Steven Solkela as The Old Man and introduces audiences to 11-year-old Parker Feldt as Ralphie. Rounding out the lead cast are Amy Peterson as Mother, Jase Matuszak as Jean Shepherd, and 9-year-old Dawson Paino as Ralphie's kid brother Randy.

Directed by Susan Nelson, with musical direction by Dorothy Sandness, and technical direction by Dustin Davidson, the show includes about 20 actors spanning across generations in age. Q'ori Goerdt serves as Stage Manager and is the glue holding it all together.

Also featured in the show are classic 1940s images from the Iron Range courtesy of the Virginia Area Historical Society.

In order to assist in funding the production, The Lyric has partnered with Canelake's Candies in Virginia, Minnesota's oldest candy store, to sell commemorative packages of "Oh Fffudge." A play on the memorable scene in the show where Ralphie says "Oh Fudge" while changing a tire with The Old Man. Though he doesn't actually say "Fudge." He says "the word. The big one. The Queen Mother of dirty words." Not to worry, there are no curse words starting with F in the show. Each half-pound box features Ralphie on the label and is \$10. The fudge is available in chocolate peppermint and chocolate marshmallow. The fudge stores well in the freezer and makes a great stocking stuffer or Christmas gift.

Advanced tickets for A Christmas Story, The Musical as well as commemorative "Oh Fffudge" packages courtesy of Canelake's are available at lyriccenteronline.org, by phone (218) 741-5577, in person at the Lyric Center at 510 Chestnut Street in Virginia Thursdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturdays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and at the door of each performance depending on availability.

A Christmas Story, The Musical is generously sponsored by Canelake's Candies, Buhl Water Company, Discover the Range, and W.A. Fisher.

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GET PUBLISHED

Minnesota North College's Spring Thaw magazine submission period now open

GRAND RAPIDS - Minnesota North College's annual literary and arts magazine, *Spring Thaw* seeks submissions of stories, poems, creative nonfiction, photography, and photographed art from both established and aspiring writers and artists for the 2023 edition of the magazine. Printed annually since the 1970s, this year's edition will award a \$100 prize for one accepted entry in prose, poetry, and art as selected by the editorial board.

Drew Olson, faculty advisor and managing editor at *Spring Thaw* said the 2022 edition, published both in print and online at www.springthawmagazine.com, featured both new and established writers not just from region, but also from various states across the upper Midwest and Great Plains region.

The \$100 prize award, new to the publication for 2023, is possible by a donation and sponsorship from the Minnesota North College-Itasca Campus Foundation. Olson said he hopes it will help to further expand the publication's interest and reach in the greater northern region of the state.

Submissions of work from writers and artists will be accepted until



February 15, 2023. Submission information for can be found at www.springthawmagazine.com.

Published annually, *Spring Thaw* is a literary and arts magazine produced by students and faculty of Minnesota North College, and its six campuses throughout greater north-eastern Minnesota.

CAROLING IN TOWER-SOUDAN



The Tower-Soudan Area Singers will host their final night of caroling on Monday, Dec. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Sulu's in Tower. The concert will be outdoors, weather-permitting, so please dress warmly or people can park nearby and listen in their cars. Chili will be served inside the shop.

ARTS EVENTS IN ELY

Makers' market and mixer on Saturday, Dec. 17

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association and the Ely Folk School will host a makers' market and mixer at the folk school on Dec. 17, from 2-5 p.m. Attendees can shop for last-minute Christmas gifts at the event. The musical entertainment for the mixer portion of this event is Joey Kenig, who will perform from 4-5 pm.

Slovenian walnut potica Making on Dec. 17

ELY- The Ely Folk School will conduct a class on how to make yummy Slovenian walnut potica on Dec. 17, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Cost is \$42. The class can be taken either in person or online. Register at the folk school website.

December art show and Dec. 16 reception

In collaboration with the Ely State Theater, the NLAA December art show is currently open and will run through Dec. 18. The show displays the works of artist Dafne Caruso in a collection entitled "Ely and Beyond." The folk school will host a reception for the show on Dec. 16 at 5 p.m. in the lobby of the Ely State Theater.

Deadline for Ely Art Walk extended through Dec. 20

Local artists are invited to participate in the Ely Art Walk, a walking art gallery held in conjunction with Ely Winter Festival. Artists can display and sell their work in Ely storefronts throughout the month of February. Artists with a connection to Ely can register at www.elyartwalk.org. There is a minimal fee of \$10/individual or \$30/group. All

sales go to the artist. The deadline to apply has been extended to Dec. 20. Email any questions to artists@elyartwalk.org.

Apply for the NLAA 2023 art show season by Jan. 15

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2023 NLAA art show season. The organization wishes to showcase the work of BI-POC and LGBTQIA+ artists during 2023. Artists selected for one of the monthly shows will receive a \$250 stipend. Applications are available at <https://www.northernlakesarts.org/2023-art-show-application>.

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FALL PREVENTION

GREENWOOD

Fire department again on the agenda

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The state of the Greenwood Fire Department was again the focus of the township's regular monthly meeting.

Long-time fire department members Mike Indihar and Tom Mortaloni spoke about maintenance work that had been performed in the past few years. Lack of maintenance on department equipment has been a focus of the town board the past few months as well as one of the issues that led to the termination of the former chief and assistant chief.

"We have other jobs," said Indihar. "We don't work full-time here. We get things done as quickly as we can do it."

Indihar also noted that the department used to work with a mechanic who did regular maintenance on the equipment, but after that individual retired, the former town board didn't take any action.

"We didn't get support," he said.

Indihar noted two of the main fire trucks had passed their DOT inspections, and department members had done numerous repairs on the fire boats.

Indihar also said that many department members do not trust the new fire chief Jeff Maus.

"People are showing up at fire department meetings to see what is going on," he said. "We don't feel safe with Jeff Maus."

Mortaloni said the time he had spent working on the fire department equipment was basically volunteering for the township.

"I work at Minntac," he said. "I don't care about the \$10 an hour. We

are responding to calls because we care about our township."

Town board members again requested that fire department members keep maintenance logs in all the apparatus, detailing mileage in and out, maintenance checks, and any service needed.

Maus said he had realized that not all of the department members were given the instructions to maintain the logs, and the department was working on getting this and other information to all the members.

Maus also told the board that Mortaloni had done a "heck of a lot of work on our equipment and we really do appreciate that." He added that the board needed to be informed, and one way would be reviewing vehicle logs. Members had been detailing such work on run reports, but those aren't readily available for review by the town board.

The board voted to raise the regular hourly rate for fire department members from \$10 to \$15 for training and meetings. The cost would be an additional \$3,500, he said, based on 2022 training and meeting hours submitted by members. Members are required to attend at least 12 meetings or trainings a year, plus respond to a certain number of actual calls, to qualify for the annual pension.

They also approved a request from Maus to change the meeting schedule to include twice-a-month training meetings starting in 2023 and squeeze any regular business required into the training meetings. The board agreed to bring in outside instructors for up to 12 meetings a year. The other 12 meetings would include truck maintenance, work in the hall, reviewing the standard operating guidelines (SOGs),

and training of township equipment. The outside trainings cost \$500. The township has a grant that would cover \$3,000 of the cost of these classes.

"We do such a wide breadth of stuff," Maus said. "We need to spend more time on training."

Maus said he wants to focus the training on things that are the highest risk events.

Maus said the department is starting to use a software program to computerize run reports and other department business. The software is available at no charge through the state fire marshal. This will allow the department to easily access all the information from both fire, medical, and rescue calls, instead of having to sort through hundreds of paper reports.

The fire department is still looking to fill open positions and recruit new members. The board approved changing the job description for the administrative assistant to open it up to someone who is not a trained fire fighter.

The board discussed the issue of terminating two fire department members who had stopped participating, one about eight months ago, the other for over a year. The board decided to send registered letters to determine if these members intended to continue their membership, and then would consider termination at the January meeting. The department will also be notifying four department members who did not meet the requirements for earning their pension for 2022.

Budget

The board appointed Maus and John Bassing to work on the budget for the 2024 levy which will be voted on at the March 14, 2023, annual meeting. Maus said that town-

ship spending is running about \$90,000 lower this year than the previous year. Maus also asked the board to consider adding in a capital replacement fund for fire department equipment and levying a specific amount each year to build up the fund. He said the department will be creating an equipment replacement plan. He noted the cost to replace the two engines on the big fire boat will be between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Interim Clerk JoAnn Bassing asked the board to consider upping the hours for the clerk position from the current 12 hours a week.

"Former Clerk Sue Drobac found the job couldn't be done and resigned," she said. "The next clerk only did some of the duties, just those specified in the statute, and not what the board needed."

Bassing said she had put in many extra hours when she first took over the position.

"This isn't about my running again," she said. "I am not sure if I am."

JoAnn said the board needed a competent and conscientious person for the position, and they needed to pay for the hours that are required to do the job.

Drobac said the board needed to review the duties required for both the clerk and treasurer before making a decision.

Other business

In other business the board:

► Heard from Interim Treasurer Jeff Maus that the new CD rate for township reserves will be paying 4.75-percent interest and will pay out approximately \$23,000 in interest to the township over the two-year term. "This basically pays the treasurer salary for two years," Maus said.

► Agreed to pay a conciliation court order of \$170 plus the \$80 filing fee to Tammy Mortaloni, who had filed a claim against the township for a total of \$1,053. The claim was for late payment of wages when she was working as deputy treasurer. The court found that most of the delay was understandable, but not all. Town board members explained the delay was due to a processing error by the payroll firm the township uses, and the township was not notified that the payment they had entered did not go through. The township had notified Tammy of the reason for the delay.

► Heard the McGrath report on ambulance services should be completed by the end of December.

► Heard an update from Supervisor Rick Stoehr on the heating sys-

tem in the town hall and fire hall. Cleaning and repairs are underway, and one of the furnace units is not working and will need to be replaced at a cost of \$6,258. The board also approved installing additional hanging power cords in the fire hall, so that cords are not running on the floor.

► Heard that the board is still working on getting quotes for a new website provider.

► Heard that Interim Clerk JoAnn Bassing will be posting regular office hours now that she is retiring from her dentist job.

► Made \$100 donations to both the W.C. Heiam Foundation and the St. Louis County Fair.

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Young voters

The GOP has lost an entire generation. It's not because of professors.

Think liberal professors are pushing young voters into the open arms of the Democratic Party? Think again.

Republicans are doing themselves a tremendous disservice by turning to easy (and false) answers to explain the utter collapse in support for the party among younger voters. Republicans have been blaming liberal professors with indoctrinating young people for more than 50 years.

Does anyone think there were fewer liberal professors in the 1960s and 1970s? Yet when presented a Republican candidate who spoke to their concerns or presented an upbeat portrait of America and its future, young voters backed Republicans. Nixon won the youth vote in 1972 by six points and Ronald Reagan captured the youth vote 61-39 in 1984, a margin that exceeded his overall winning percentage. George W. Bush, as recently as 2000, won as many votes from young people as Al Gore.

Young people, traditionally, have shown the least allegiance to a particular party, but have shown time and again that they respond to a hopeful message that speaks to issues that concern them.

Young people live in a very different world than those of us from the older generations grew up in. They came of age in a time of greater cultural freedom than at any time in American history and they are more tolerant of diversity than any previous generation.

They've also witnessed colossal policy failures by Republican leadership. Voters under 40 in the U.S. came into political consciousness in the wake of 9/11 and witnessed a disastrous war promoted by the Bush administration based on lies. They watched the financial meltdown under the Bush administration that left many new college graduates struggling with tuition debt and a job market that was slow to provide them with the economic opportunities they had expected.

They saw a Democratic president in Barack Obama who was relatively young, hopeful in his outlook, and addressed, within the limits of our political process, issues that were of concern to younger Americans.

And then they saw the darkness that consumed the Republican Party and that has yet to release its grip. Donald Trump was the opposite of hopeful. He was the candidate of white grievance, who railed about “American carnage” and spewed a hateful message while pretending the concerns of young people— issues like climate change, economic and

racial inequality, the crushing influence of student debt, and police brutality, were mere hoaxes perpetrated by radical left activists and, apparently, professors.

At the same time, they witness a Republican Party that has been more than happy to mimic Trump's rhetoric, particularly his vilification of “the other,” whether they are immigrants, people of color, gays and lesbians, or trans. Keep in mind, most young people have grown up in a world that's racially diverse and where variances in sexual orientation are of little concern to the people they know. Most young people don't care if a trans person is in their bathroom at school, and many of them can't understand why Republicans are riling up their parents and grandparents over such a trivial issue.

If there is actual indoctrination of young people in schools, it's that teachers regularly highlight the importance of kindness, understanding, sharing, and tolerance of our differences. Today's GOP dismisses such tenets of the Golden Rule as “wokeness” and elevates cruelty toward others in both their rhetoric as well as their policies. Is it any wonder they're facing a mismatch with young voters?

Young people were witness to four years of the Trump presidency and saw him order the tear-gassing of peaceful protestors of the George Floyd killing in front of the White House, while he praised armed and violent right-wing protestors who stormed the U.S. Capitol, leaving one police officer dead and more than one hundred wounded. They saw a president whose only major economic policy was a massive tax cut for corporations and the uber-wealthy, which simply exacerbated America's already glaring economic inequality. And they watched as he appointed ultra-conservative justices to the U.S. Supreme Court who promptly overturned Roe v. Wade. Perhaps the only surprise in the 2022 elections was that the Democrats won the youth vote by ONLY a 28-point margin.

If Republicans want to lay blame for the astonishing gap in support among young people, they should stop blaming teachers, college professors, and popular culture and start looking in the mirror. When young people see a party that preaches intolerance, that restricts individual freedom, promotes inequality, and pretends climate change isn't happening, they don't need professors to tell them which candidates to support. They can figure that out for themselves.



Letters from Readers

Kudos to the Timberjay

What wonderful entertainment to read the disparagement of Maxwell Helmsberger by a Dave Akerson. Pretty obvious where the better mind lies.

Here's some more of Akerson previous writing, “Hillary Clinton was a shoe-in. Not hardly, she just lied too much, got caught in many, and was very incompetent. Besides her illegal activities.” Not a whit of proof.

In the same piece Akerson assured us of a Trump win in 2020. No proof there either. For Akerson, Trump's lies are non-consequential by appearances.

Methinks Mr. Akerson is unacquainted with the chicanery of Trump, he of stolen national secrets... which is proven. A man who cheated his contractors repeatedly. This is the man Akerson admires.

I can only imagine his thrill at seeing church usher Roger Skraba elected, though the apparent dismissal of the commandment about bearing false witness ala 2000 Mules, promoted by our new State Representative, raises questions.

And then Pete Stauber calling for “our way of life,” which is currently economically depressed, seems like more of a damnation than an exit strategy.

Then there was the cutesy “common sense” campaign to which most grandfathers would retort that “common sense and common courtesy aren't ... common”. But that sloganeering works on some folks.

There's some indoctrination going on for sure. Unfortunately, what is apparent is the lack of critical thinking.

Thanks for the laughs, Mr. Akerson. I've been missing Barney Fife.

Jeff Wilfahrt
Ely

Appreciate the season

As we try to refresh our friendships and families this holiday season, let's draw in our horns and claws for the next month or so.

How about we turn off our televisions and internet chatter sites, and think for ourselves.

Without all the bullshit pouring into our brains from people we don't know, we could maybe get along a little better, look out for each other, and make this a better country to live in, eh?

Dave Porter
Minneapolis

The first and real story of Christmas

During this holiday season, we tell of The First Story, making it a celebration of pomp, an affair of gold-embroidered vestments and costly columns of marble, and choruses of choirs, of jeweled windows and incense, of the extreme abundance of gifting and getting.

Yet, we are unable to find and feel the simple spiritually edifying peace and pleasure in the formerly plain and humble stable in Bethlehem.

The brown haired, grave eyed peasant girl, with her little baby, was witness to the simple glorious beauty in the crumbling mud walls and the low ceiling of the stable, where the only incense was the sweet smell of the cow's breath.

The only vestments were the babe's swaddling clothes, rough, coarse, fibered from the hand looms of Nazareth.

The only pomp was the simple gifts of three wise men, who were led by a star in the night. The only chanting, the quiet crooning of a young mother holding her first born babe upon her breast.

A little child lay in the midst of the stable in a feed box for animals, with simple people, his mother and father, and three wise men, a little child who would come to

stand in the midst of wise men and the learned.

They would be gently taught by this little one, not to be of self conscience, and to be defined by their riches, but to explore the unplumbed depths of the human heart, to set aside their learning and their wisdom, and their earthly mammon, so that in the end, after all trial has been made and every expedient tested, they would discover that the simplest way is the best, and humblest means the surest.

It was the helpless child in the stable, who would become our most profound community organizer, whose only act of aggression was rightly turning over the tables of the money-changers in the Temple in Jerusalem, who change the heart of man by teaching the enduring loving spirit of justice, mercy and reciprocal altruism, for all mankind.

It was the helpless child in the stable, whose first bed was a feed box that would come to spark the mind of man, a spark that would kindle the world with the flame of enlightened and eternal light.

This little child who was to be the bread of life for human beings, who sacrificed his life at the age of 33, tenderly taught that each of us must always offer our gifts of loving kindness, warm hearts, and the outstretched hand of tolerance and love.

He showed mankind how love and altruism will always surpass individual greed and that justice for all was truly the moral test of our spirituality, the simple gifts that make peace on earth, our enduring transcendent duty, our forever Christmas story.

T.D. Duff
Ely and Tonka Bay

Your letters

The *Timberjay* encourages letters to the editor. You can submit letters by mail at PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790, or email letters to marshall@timberjay.com.

A quick detour in life, to discover wonder

Four years ago, on the night of Dec. 13 and on into the wee hours before dawn on Dec. 14, I was in northwest New Mexico at one of my favorite spots in the world, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, taking in the peak of the Geminids meteor shower.

I'd long wanted to do that since discovering Chaco back 2005. One of the most fascinating things to me about this ancestral Puebloan civilization



DAVID COLBURN

was their attention to the skies. From features of buildings that were designed to reveal winter and summer solstices to the Sun Dagger calendar high up on Fajada Butte, the great-houses of Chaco Canyon and those who lived there were in perfect sync with the skies.

Four years ago, I'd come back to my Kansas hometown

from Montana to pick up some things I had in storage there, and the trip to Chaco was quite impulsive. I realized the peak of the Geminids would be the next night and decided right then and there to take the “south route” back to Montana.

An unexpected and somewhat harrowing event on the 12-hour trek came as I was driving through the Oklahoma panhandle into New Mexico. I'd encountered random tumbleweeds over the years while driving, but never a full-blown tumbleweed storm, at night, no less. Think blinding blowing Minnesota

snow driven by 40 mph winds, except replace the snow with fine dirt and thrown in rolling tumbleweeds two to three feet in diameter rolling across your path in twos, threes, and fours about every 15-20 seconds. And do that for a little over 40 miles. Honestly, I'll take blizzards.

Chaco Canyon may be situated in a high desert area, but that doesn't mean it's warm in December. I got to the campground there about 4:30 p.m. on the 13th, and it was around 25 degrees with a sprinkling of snow. Had a topper on the pickup at the time, so I caught about

six hours of sleep and woke up for the show.

The main road through the park is closed at night, but the access road along the south is open, and there was a perfect spot to park with a view of Fajada Butte. By this time it was 14 degrees, so I alternated standing outside the cab of the truck to watch for awhile and then sitting inside looking up through the open sunroof with the heater cranked up.

I quit counting after 40 or so meteors. What an amazing light

See **DETOURS**...pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Transparency in Tower property taxes

The *Timberjay* Dec. 9 editorial: "Go big on housing" was quite an editorial by the *Timberjay* staff. It advocates for some of the \$17 billion dollar State budget surplus to be spent in Tower to develop housing. The *Timberjay* states that "Small towns have become increasingly attractive places to live. They're far safer than big cities, with a generally lower cost of living..."

Let's look at the cost of living as it pertains to property taxes in the city of Tower. I compared the actual property tax bills of similarly valued homes, one in Tower and

one in Greenwood Township. The home valued at \$469,200 in Tower paid \$9,424 for property taxes in 2022. The home valued at \$472,300 in Greenwood paid \$4,498 for property taxes in 2022. The reason for the huge difference is Tower's \$5,527.45 levy on this property to run the city government, as compared to the \$115.83 that Greenwood levied on a property of the same value.

I suspect that this very high city property tax levy is one of the reasons that the planned homes in the Harbor Shores project, advertised in the \$400,000 range, apparently never got any takers. The *Timberjay's* editorial reads like quite a sales job. For most folks, the crushing

high city property tax levy probably makes owning a new home in Tower a non-starter. And I also believe that since this was a *Timberjay* staff written Editorial, it should have been disclosed that the Publisher of the *Timberjay*, Marshall Helmberger, is the salaried Executive Director of City's "Tower Economic Development Agency." Transparency is a good policy, it just might help in avoiding future expensive blunders.

**Lee Peterson
Greenwood
Township**

Editor's Note:

Comparing Greenwood Township to Tower reflects a basic lack of understanding on a number of levels. For one, Green-

wood has a tax base that is many, many times that of Tower (due to the presence of Lake Vermilion frontage) which means that whatever its levy, its local tax rate will always be much lower than Tower's, or any other small city in northeastern Minnesota. One of the reasons the city of Tower has sought to bring economic development, including housing, to the city is to grow its tax base, which would help to lower the overall tax rate for every property owner in the city.

What's more, the city taxpayers pay for the infrastructure for a commercial district that provides important services to many residents of area townships, including Greenwood, for schools

that educate area children and for police protection while those students are in Tower. The city also built and manages an airport that serves primarily lake residents, including residents of Greenwood. It also manages and oversees an ambulance service that serves Greenwood, even though the township is no longer willing to help fund it.

Finally, Mr. Peterson is misleading readers by suggesting that Tower is an unaffordable place to live because its property taxes are comparatively high on one of the most expensive residential properties in city. If you compare the local taxes on the average home in Tower (which is not on lakeshore), both home

prices and taxes are actually quite affordable, and certainly much more so than in major cities, which was one of the points of the editorial. I would suggest Mr. Peterson go back and read the editorial once again (which didn't relate to Tower, specifically) with a somewhat more open mind. His relentless Tower-bashing does get a bit old.

Finally, the position of TEDA director is not salaried as claimed by Mr. Peterson and bringing new housing to Tower or any other community in this area benefits everyone and provides no financial gain to the *Timberjay's* editorial writer. That was a cheap shot by Mr. Peterson.

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

Northland Foundation awards five Maada'ookiing grants to Indigenous individuals for diverse projects

Creative, grassroots work approved for \$12,500 in funding by Maada'ookiing Board Members

REGIONAL- The Northland Foundation is pleased to announce the individuals and projects being awarded the most recent round of Maada'ookiing grants. The Maada'ookiing board reviewed and approved the following fall 2022 grant awards:

►Bonnie Fohrenkam: \$2,500 To hold weekly beadwork classes for community members on the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation, instructing participants on traditional and contemporary beadwork techniques.

►Nashel Bebeau: \$2,500 To hold women-led sewing classes for members of the Ball Club community on the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation, to learn how to create their own ribbon skirts.

►Natalie Smith: \$2,500 To hold activities to support the Native American recovery community in the Duluth and Cloquet areas as they strengthen connections in a good way.

►Moira Villiard: \$2,500 To support the implementation of Ojibwemowin signage and historical markers at the Chief Buffalo Memorial walls by Gichi-Ode Akiing in downtown Duluth.

►Ryan Drew Bajan: \$2,500 To hold a multi-day traditional hide tanning course for youth and adults on the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa's Nett Lake and Lake Vermilion Reservations.

"Our staff and Maada'ookiing board members are excited to see the array of projects and activities that individual grantees are providing for their communities," said Northland Foundation Program Officer, Cayla Bellanger DeGroat. "Sharing our gifts in service of our communities is integral to our traditional values, and it's an honor to be able to offer small grants to assist the grantees in this good work."

Maada'ookiing ("the distribution" in Ojibwe) is a Northland Foundation program designed to

strengthen relationships with the Indigenous community, build partnerships with Native nations, and offer support for Indigenous community members to expand capacity in northeast Minnesota.

Grant opportunities are being offered three times per year, awarding up to \$2,500 per grant for Tribal citizens, descendants, or those having kinship ties or affiliation to Indigenous communities within the Foundation's geographic service area.

Grant applications are accepted anytime on the online grant portal. The next application deadline is February 15, 2023. Those who are interested in applying for a grant are encouraged to visit the Northland Foundation's website <https://www.northlandfdn.org/> and contact Cayla Bellanger DeGroat by email at cayla@northlandfdn.org or phone at (218) 730-3387 with questions.

DETOURS...Continued from page 4

show. I wondered quite a bit about how those living there in the 800s-1100s would have viewed it. Like Voyageurs National Park, Chaco Canyon is an International Dark Skies Park, a perfect place to view even the faintest meteor showers.

I tell the story of my spontaneous trip to Chaco not so much to entertain you, our readers, as to remind myself of the importance being impulsive now and then. Some people do that more easily than others, and for me, it used to be rather easy.

But there is a certain rhythm of both small-town journalism and small towns that can lull one into a sense of routine. The towns and events that need to be covered set your schedule, not the other way around.

Still, this soul, at

least, needs to make a bit more effort to discover spontaneous, impulsive moments. They offer new discoveries, new adventures, and those are things that I enjoy. And one doesn't have to drive a thousand miles to find them, either.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Norman K. Corey

Norman Keith Corey, 93, of Lake Vermilion-Tower, died on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022, at Essentia Health-Virginia. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Norm was born on Feb. 3, 1929, in Blue Creek Township, Indiana, the son of Donald and Minnie (Fischer) Corey. Norm was born and raised in Indiana and owned and operated a bulk milk transport company. He and his first wife, Marilyn, moved to the Tower area in 1959 when Norm was hired by Erie Mining Company.

Marilyn died in 1979, and Norm was married to Sharon Besch in August 1980. He was employed as a production truck driver for 31 years, retiring in December 1990. Norm enjoyed traveling, fishing trips to Canada, maintaining his garden and yard, feeding wildlife, and his daily visits to the neighbors.

Norm is survived by his wife, Sharon; children, Cheryl (Lyle) Mattson of Virginia, Charlene (Tony) Raskovich of Babbitt and Ronald (Kirsty) Corey of Soudan; siblings, Cletus (Melinda) Corey, Karen Corey and Donna (Wayne) Doede; stepchildren, Pam (Jeff) Burgess of Virginia, David (Genny) Bjorgo of Soudan, David (Robin) Bjorgo of Soudan, Mark (Sheila) Bjorgo of Virginia and Brian (Jill) Besch of Cook; grandchildren, Brenda (Brenden) Moors, Bradley Bystrom, Shelby (Jason) Semo and Madison (Eric) Raskovich; step-grandchildren, Kara, Kada (Alex), Justin, Matt, Derik, Mike, Jamie, Nick, Kassie and Kalee; great-grandchildren, Ava, Max, Nathan,

Zoe, Eva and Ellie; 13 step-great-grandchildren; and extended family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; first wife, Marilyn; brother, John Corey; and step-grandchild, Erik.

Elizabeth J. Henderson

Elizabeth Jean "Liz" Udovich Skala Henderson, 79, of Soudan, passed away on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022, at Essentia Health-Virginia with her family by her side. Special thanks to St. Mary's Hospice East Range Team and all the nurses who cared for her at Essentia Health-Virginia. Family and friends are invited to join in her celebration of life at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 17 at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower with Rev. Fr. Beau Braun as celebrant. A gathering time for family and friends will begin one hour prior to the Mass at the church. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home of Virginia.

She is survived by her

husband, Craig Henderson of Soudan; children, Jeffrey (Angie) Redetzke, Patricia (Rodney) Martin and Barbara (Tim) Thomas; siblings, Mary Rose Gag, Kathleen Arasimowicz and Zeita Wikstrom; grandchildren, Chad Mattila, Sasha Stewart, Amber Burton, Tiffany Clemenson, Chelsea Zubke, Briana Tibbetts and Ava Redetzke; great-grandchildren, Morgan, Easton, Hayden, Kyler and Lyrik Dahl, Royce Stewart, Levi and Maddi Clemenson, Cohen and Ellis Rowland, Everleigh and Nakoa Burton, Nora and Lennon Zubke.

Get Informed!
Get the Timberjay!

Libraries providing acrylic painting Take & Create kits

REGIONAL - The Arrowhead Library System (ALS) is providing Acrylic Painting Take & Create Art Kits to member public libraries to distribute through the end of December.

This art experience was designed by 321 Art Studio in Chisholm and explores acrylic painting for beginners and more advanced participants. Take & Create Art Kits will include supplies to create two unique pictures – one for beginners and one for advanced painters, one 11x14 stretched canvas, one 9x12 canvas board, one sheet of mixed media paper, and one paint kit that contains a drawing pencil, two brushes, and 12 tubes of acrylic paint. Two follow-along instructional videos will be shared online for participants – one for beginners and one for intermediate painters. Both videos include simple instructions and tips on using paint, canvas, and brush-

es. Each kit will include enough supplies for three paintings, so participants have multiple options to practice and/or create something of their own. Kits will be distributed at the following public libraries and ALS outreach locations: Aurora, Babbitt, Cook, Ely, International Falls, Mt. Iron, Virginia, ALS Bookmobile, Arrowhead Library System Mail-A-Book (*patrons must qualify for Mail-A-Book services, kit may be modified in order to deliver by mail).

This program is geared towards tweens, teens, and adults.

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead Library System, was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, please see our calendar at www.alslib.info or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/alslibinfo.

**the
TIMBERJAY**

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St. Louis County: \$45/year Elsewhere: \$59/year. We accept VISA/Mastercard/Discover/AmEx. NOTE: Changes of address must be sent or called in to the Tower office. Out-of-state delivery may take 2-3 weeks. For prompt out-of-state delivery try the First Class Subscription: \$109/year or \$10 per month.

Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$29.95/year; details and payment at www.timberjay.com.

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

Week of Dec. 19

Monday

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

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:00 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Dec. 20.

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

Breitung Town Board- 12 noon on Dec. 20. Note change from regular meeting time due to the holidays.

Thursday

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

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

Grief support group at Immanuel

TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower has a grief support group on Wednesday, Dec. 21, from 6 – 7 p.m. Pastor Liz Cheney, a certified grief counselor, will be leading the group. Questions, call the church at 218-753-2378.

St. James Presbyterian Church of Tower Advent services underway

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower is holding Advent services through Christmas. The focus this year is about how “He Is Everything to Us”.

Sunday, Dec. 18: “If God Had Not Loved!”

Saturday, Christmas Eve 7 p.m.: “Sweet Little Jesus Boy!”

The church will not have worship on Christmas Day. Blessings to all this Christmas and during the New Year.

St. Paul's hosting special New Year's service and brunch

SOUDAN- St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church is hosting a special service on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023.

“When the Pastor's Away, St. Paul's Will Play” will feature live music by Deb Tuominen and Louise Wiermma, with the service led by the women of the church. The congregation invites the community to start the New Year out right. Worship begins at 10 a.m. and is open to all. There will be a free brunch following the service, catered by Marco. RSVPs appreciated but not required, please call 218-753-3047.

Get Results!



Advertise in the Timberjay!

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Tower Farmers Market planning indoor winter market on Friday, Dec. 16

TOWER- The Tower Farmers Market is planning monthly indoor markets once a month, starting on Friday, Dec. 16 from 4 - 6 p.m. The market will be located inside the Pike River Products building, 515 Main St., across from Vermilion Fuel & Food. Plans call for hosting indoor markets the third Friday of

the month.

Santa will be the special guest at Friday's event.

Vendor spots for the first indoor market are full. Popular farmers market vendors are expected to be selling their wares, including: Liz's Hook and Stone Creations, Denise Lindquist, Linda Wagoner, Karl's Bread,

Sugar and Son, Vi's Lily Pond Gardens, Shireen's Three Mares and an Old Woman, Eric of Phoenix Fire Ceramics, Colby wood-burned signs, Lloyd's cutting boards, Dani's Anishinaabe Tea, Greg's BBQ Ssauce, Alaspa Family baked goods, Steph Ukola's jellies and jams, Shining Salt Seasonings.

New vendors are being accepted for future indoor markets, space-permitting. Contact the Tower Farmers Market through Facebook for more information. Local foods and local artisans are welcome to rent a table for \$10.

Rotary Club donates dictionaries to TS third graders

REGIONAL- The Iron Range Rotary Club recently sent dictionaries to all the third graders in the Rock Ridge, Mt. Iron-Buhl, Mesabi East, Marquette, and Tower-Soudan schools. These dictionaries empower children to become active readers, excellent writers, creative thinkers, and ultimately good citizens. However, “The Student's Dictionary” is much more than a traditional dictionary. It contains information on weights and measures, science elements, the Constitution, sign language, the countries, the states, the presidents, the planets and more. The book is a very useful tool to feed any student's curiosity and imagination.

One might wonder why children still need to learn about dictionaries when we can find everything electronically. We simply Google a word to find the meaning or ask Siri how to spell it. We cook with an iPad on the kitchen counter. Whitepages.com will give us phone numbers and it's quicker to locate a business online than to look in a phone book for their telephone number.

However, students who have used only the internet for research are taken from one vir-



tual place to another by way of links and apps and have little experience or patience for step-by-step logic. Carefully crafted ads tempt us to substitute virtual programs for real experiences. It is difficult for students to listen and learn from a conversation or lecture.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends,

leaders, and problem-solvers that see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves. The Iron Range Rotary Club has 36 members who provide service to our communities like Dictionaries for Third Graders; the Kid's Fishing Contest on Silver Lake in Virginia each June;

the ODC Bowling event for disabled adults each fall; a meal at the Salvation Army Supper Club each month, and many more. The club is always seeking new projects and new members. For more information, call John Cochems at 218-749-4100.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

TS Historical Society Receives \$10,000 Mortenson Family Foundation Grant

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society received a \$10,000 grant from the Mortenson Family Foundation to support the restoration of the Historic Fire Hall located at 504 Main Street in Tower.

“We are pleased to receive this award to further the interior construction phases of the project,” said Nancy Larson, TSHS President. “Restoring the building, which housed not only the first fire hall constructed on the Iron Range, but also the city hall and jail, will bring a historic architectural gem back to active use and provide a benefit to the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion community.”

Built in 1895, the Historic Fire Hall is an important part of the story of how Tower-Soudan gave birth to iron mining in the Vermilion Range. “The Historical Society's mission is dedicated to community enrichment through education, preservation, and celebration of the rich history and heritage of the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermil-

ion community through people, artifacts and stories,” said Larson. “The Historic Fire Hall will be a focal point in our region to help tell the story about the development of the iron ore mining industry which helped to shape our cultural identity and has had a lasting impact on our region, our state and the country.”

The Mortenson Family Foundation was established in Minneapolis, as a means for the Mortenson family to join together as an independent entity governed by the family to express their common values. The initial contributions to the foundation were provided by individual family members and M.A. Mortenson Company, a national engineering and construction company. Its mission is to build partnerships to strengthen community-driven approaches that advance equity, opportunity, and sustainable systems.

“The Historic Fire Hall is the heart of our community in the center of our downtown,” said Linda Haugen, TSHS Board member. “The



Mortenson Family Foundation's interest in our community project affirms the TSHS direction, purpose and goals. We are grateful for their support.”

The Mortenson Family Foundation's mission coincides with the plans that the TSHS has for the future use of the building as a History Education Event Center. “It is serendipitous that our two organizations have come together,” said Louise Gately, TSHS Advisory Board member and Capital Campaign Chairperson. “The plans for utilizing the TSHS as a History Education Event Center continue

to evolve. Awareness of the building through our Charlemagne's Attic Sale and recognizing its unique features and abundant space has created a lot of interest for its future use.”

TSHS' intention is to transform the building and open it up for public use as a History Education Event Center it will be a year-round venue for educational events and workshops, history talks, space for pop-up vintage events, community receptions, fundraising and community events. An idea that is generating interest is to create opportunities within the building for

unique pop-up dining experiences. “We continue to work in collaboration with local chefs, caterers, pastry makers, bakers as well as traveling chefs to our area, and a proposed community commissary kitchen, to create exciting and diverse dining options for local and seasonal residents,” said Larson. “There's much more work to accomplish, but it's exciting work and a wonderful boost for our Lake Vermilion communities. The support of the Mortenson Family Foundation moves us another step forward in meeting our goals.”

COMMUNITY GIVING

Last minute Santa donations taken until Dec. 20

TOWER- This has been a huge year for the Operation Santa Toy Drive in Tower-Soudan, both in terms of the number of families in need, as well as the amount of donations that have come in.

While the number of families signed up this year is above even last year's number, donations are also up, and we are on track to receive all the donations we will need.

We can still accept last-minute donations of toys, cash, gifts cards and new warm winter clothing, which help with any last-minute requests we get from area families in need. Any extra toys or donations will be stored for next year's toy drive.

The effort is organized by the *Timberjay* and the Tower-Soudan Civic Club, with help from many area groups, churches, organizations, and individuals. Lake Country Power's Operation RoundUp® program has once again made a very generous donation to the Tower-Soudan Civic Club to help cover the cost of purchasing warm items for all the children.

Donations can be dropped off at the *Timberjay* in Tower, and will be distributed at the food shelf on Dec. 20. 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.



'TIS THE SEASON!

Holiday happenings hog the weekend in Ely

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – The Tuesday Group community educational lunch gathering meets every Tuesday at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch. For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141.

The Tuesday Group is now on its annual holiday hiatus and will be back after the first of the year.

2023 Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

- Jan. 3: Meet new Eyites.
- Jan 10: End of the Road Film Festival.
- Jan. 17 Ely Free Clinic.

Breathing Out



mild weather prevails
hard snow predicted this week
holiday welcome

Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays
Phone: 218-365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday 10 am-6 pm
Tuesday 10 am-6 pm
Wednesday 10 am-6 pm
Thursday 10 am-6 pm
Friday 10 am-6 pm
Phone: 218-827-3345

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 canceled.
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, 5:30 p.m. Thursdays, Wellbeing Development, 41 E Camp St. Ely.
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED
Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, or 1-800-662-5711.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS:
Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living.
Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital. Conference Room B.



Free dogsled rides were popular at the Ely Folk School holiday party at Semers Beach. Photo by C. Clark

Ely Folk School beach party

ELY- Semers Beach has four inches of snow already, but that didn't stop the Ely Folk School from throwing its second winter holiday party on the shores of Shagawa Lake. Around 200 people showed up for the event

One of the highlights of the party was the free dog sled rides, courtesy of the Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge. Other activities included a bonfire, figure skating, and hanging out while eating wild rice and

veggie pasties and sipping mulled wine and hot cocoa.

"This is our second winter bonfire and fourth overall," said Lacey Squier, a folk school board member and cooking instructor. The school held a holiday bonfire and a spring bonfire in both 2021 and 2022, all of which were at the beach. Squier made the pasties for the event, with either a lard or vegetarian butter lard crust.



Behind tables full of cookies, Elaine Hartleben (left) and Lori Dubbin (right) replenish the cookie supply at the First Lutheran Church cookie sale since the pandemic. Photo by C. Clark

Cookie sale

ELY-The First Lutheran Church of Ely held its first Christmas cookie sale since the COVID-19 pandemic on Saturday, Dec. 10. Turnout was large. Finding a parking spot in the church's parking lot was a challenge, and the line of customers spanned all four tables of cookies.

Already-made pastry boxes greeted cookie lovers at the door. A scale was setup at the end of the tables to weight the cookies. The church fundraiser sold the cookies for \$8 per pound.

Mrs. Claus throws a party

ELY- The Ely Chamber of Commerce held a free Christmas party for kids at the Grand Ely Lodge on Saturday, Dec. 10. The party was hosted by Mrs. Claus, who was played by Ely resident Morgan Sauls. The party space and goodies for attending children were donated by member business of the chamber.

Each child who attended received a bag full of goodies, a free root beer from the Dorothy Molter Museum, and a free book from the chamber. The

event also included the opportunity to talk with Mrs. Claus about desired gifts for Christmas.

Besides the event space, the Grand Ely Lodge also provided a no-cost hot cocoa bar for all comers. Other businesses donated items for the goodie bags. MIDCO provided toys. Potluck donated cookie cutters. Dairy Queen gave popsicle sticks which are redeemable for a free treat.

Some businesses sponsored activity tables. For example, the

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, the Ely Community Pharmacy, Zup's, and Northern Tier setup tables for kids to make a variety of different tree ornaments. Arrowhead Outdoors provided paper, pens and coloring tools to do some coloring and to write to Santa. Boy Scout Troop 170 organized an activity to help the children create Christmas card for residents of the Carefree Assisted Living Center and the Boundary Waters Care Center.



Church cookie sale Danielle DuBord (left) and her son Henry (center) talk with Mrs. Claus (Morgan Sauks, left) at Mrs. Claus' Christmas party at the Grand Ely Lodge. Photo by C. Clark

Ely Library Holiday Movie Kahoot: One weekend, three prizes and 76 movies

ELY- The Ely Library ran a holiday movie kahoot over the weekend, starting at 3 p.m. on Dec. 9 and ending at midnight on Dec. 11. The kahoot was a merger between a film marathon and a trivia contest. It was open to all ages and was held online. When the kahoot started on Friday, 20 people had signed up to participate.

The for the movie portion of the kahoot, the

library drew up a list of 76 holiday films, many of which were available on DVD from the library's collection. When the viewing of movies was over, the participants took a trivia quiz based on the films. The top three winners of the trivia competition received prizes. The event was sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

The 76 movies included some of the great-

est films ever made, including "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Miracle on 34th Street." Also on the list were the movie musicals of "Holiday Inn" and "White Christmas," both of which had Bing Crosby in the cast and featured the famous Irving Berlin song, "White Christmas."

The 1964 stop-action animated classic, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," was also on

the library's list, as were "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

Less elevated though still fun offerings included "A SpongeBob Christmas," and that perennial favorite cult classic, "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians."

Todd Crego took first place in the kahoot, while Jill Ellerbroek took second and Deanne Cook

took third.

The winning contestants chose one of three prizes in the order in which they placed in the trivia contest. The prizes were a bell ornament like the angel bell on the Christmas tree in "It's a Wonder Life," elf shoes like those from the movie "Elf," and a board game and ornament based on the movie "A Christmas Story."

Kids Christmas workshop

ELY- The Grace Lutheran Church held a kids' workshop on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 11, to give children the chance to make their own Christmas presents. The do-it-yourself style gifts included handcrafted tree ornaments, a snowstorm in a bottle and the assembly of ingredients for snickerdoodle cookies to bake at home. The gifts cost \$0.75 to make. Gift wrap was included in the price.



Making Christmas cards at the Grace Lutheran Church kids Christmas workshop. From left-to-right: Elya Perkins, Zoe MacKenzie, and Ellie Marshall. Photo by C. Clark



Creating star-shaped tree ornaments at the Grace Lutheran Church kids Christmas workshop. From left-to-right: Beck Sponholz, Rachel Brophy, and Subi Kari. Photo by C. Clark

Ely Area Food Shelf donation

ELY- The Ely Area Food Shelf received a \$500 donation from the Virginia & Ely office of Edina Realty one Dec. 5, though the realty's charitable arm, the non-profit Edina Realty foundation.

Created in 1996, the Edina Realty Foundation supports organizations that help homeless children, families and individuals in the communi-

ties where Edina Realty does business. To date, the foundation has donated nearly \$9 million. Over 97% of funds raised go directly to organizations that provide housing and other services to the homeless

Edina Realty is the largest real estate brokerage in Minnesota and also does business in Wisconsin and South Dakota.

Upcoming concert and deaccession sale

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association will hold its first annual Hometown Holiday Concert featuring local singers and audience-participation carols. Tickets support the NLAA and are \$10. The event will start at 7 p.m. at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater at the community college campus.

The Ely-Winton History Museum, which is

also on campus, will hold a deaccession sale before and during the NLAA concert starting a 6 p.m.

When asked to explain what a deaccession sale was, Paul Colwell, manager of the museum, replied: "Maybe you should change that to de-cluttering sale instead," said "People donate items to us that have no historic value and are taking up

space in our storage."

While decluttering is an apt word for the rescue of the museum's storage space, deaccession was the word used on the museum's announcement of the sale. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, deaccession is the process of removing an item from the collection of a library or museum in order to sell it.

Orr tax hike not as high as originally anticipated

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Property taxes in Orr won't be going up as much as originally projected for 2023, as the Orr City Council settled on a five-percent increase at Monday's regular council meeting.

Serving as acting mayor in the absence of Mayor Joel Astleford, council member Tom Kennebeck explained during the Truth in Taxation meeting that city staff were able to trim overall expenses to reduce the level from eight-percent to five-percent.

That five-percent increase will allow the city to offset some of the increased costs due to inflation and fuel prices, while still providing for a cost-of-living increase for full-time city employees of three-percent, Kennebeck said. The annual inflation rate has been hovering in the neighborhood of eight-percent in recent months.

The 2023 budget also contains a five-percent increase in water and sewer rates. The increase is necessary to deal with rising operating costs.

There were no comments from the public during the Truth and Taxation hearing, and the council adopted the general fund operating budget and tax levy without discussion during the regular meeting. The final levy was \$133,888.95.

The council took up the request of Dennis and Ericka Cote to purchase two city-owned parcels of land behind Carefree Living that borders on property they already own. Tabled from the November meeting, the council appeared no more ready to act on the request this month.

"The city isn't really ready to move on anything like that," Kennebeck said. "That's kind of where the city is right now."

After more discussion about the lots and development prospects, the council decided to table the proposal once again.

"I would say bring it back again next month when you have a whole new council," Kennebeck said. "I'm not trying to push it off because I'm all for you guys, I really am."

In other business, the council:

- Approved an ambulance

support services agreement with the City of Virginia regarding paramedic intercept calls.

- Agreed to apply on behalf of the Orr Lions Club to MnDOT for permission for the club to buy two cement planters to be placed in the corners of the CCC rock wall along Highway 53. The Lions Club will be responsible for any maintenance and upkeep.

- Accepted donations in the amount of \$763 for the fire department and \$500 for the ambulance service.

- Heard a preliminary proposal to increase the pay of ambulance personnel and requested that a formal proposal be brought to the council next month. City staff will research legal issues related to the proposal.

- Approved the 2022 Local Weed Inspector Annual City Report.

- Approved purchasing property, auto, and general liability insurance from the League of Minnesota Cities for \$37,435, a significant hike over last year's cost of \$29,595.

NORTH WOODS SPORTS



North Woods hosted an elementary girls basketball tournament last weekend. There were games at multiple grade levels from several area schools. High school Grizzlies volunteered as referees for the tournament. Above: Elizabeth Trip takes her shot.



Piper Bundy gets ready to make a shot.



Kinslee Hagadorn (front) and Jilliam LaFave try to block a shot. photos by D. Colburn

SCHOOL SPIRIT

Go Grizzlies!

The Grizzlettes had their last performance of the year at the opening boys home basketball game against South Ridge. Pictured at left is Kenzie Herdman, and below is Tyler Johnson and Hadley Bundy . photo by D. Colburn



COMMUNITY EVENTS

NWFA to host open house on Dec. 20

COOK- Northwoods Friends of the Arts invites the community to participate in two events at the NWFA Gallery on Tuesday, Dec. 20.

The arts organization will host an open house from 5-7 p.m. and will be serving refreshments.

Prior to that, beginning at 3:30 p.m. come join the discussion for input into plans for future classes and events during the NWFA business meeting. It's your opportunity to help shape and support the arts in the Cook area.

The gallery is brimming with crafts and original works of pottery, carvings and wood turnings, greeting cards, quilts, aprons, sculptures and paintings by over 30 artists. The special exhibit for December features

the Judy Moline collection of unframed watercolor paintings donated to NWFA by Moline's family.

Also during December see "second hand rose" greatly admired and gently used items. Visit and browse during regular winter hours on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The gallery is located at 210 S River St.

Orr Center hosts a walk-through wonderland in December

ORR- "Wendyl's Wonderland," a life-sized discovery adventure based on a fanciful tale of long-time volunteers, is open on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 5-9 p.m. at the Orr Center

through Friday, Dec. 23.

Attendees who venture into the former Orr school cafeteria at the center will find themselves in an indoor forest, mostly looking for clues and hints based on the story, and perhaps a surprise or two as well.

"Wendyl's Wonderland" is accompanied by a gift shop featuring local artisan goods for holiday shoppers looking for creative gifts.

A festival of trees donated by area businesses will be auctioned off on Saturday, Dec. 17.

Other parts of the Orr Center, including the thrift shop, library, art gallery and more will open to visitors as the availability of volunteer staff allows.

For more information, go to www.wendylswonderland.com.



Grizzlies' Brenden Chiabotti receiving the game ball prior to the South Ridge game from Steve Kajala of Prudential in Cook. Kajala is sponsoring the game balls for both boys and girls games this season. photo by D. Colburn

AWARD...Continued from page 1

largest rural Gigabit networks in the country.”

Paul Bunyan Communications expects to develop the expansion plans over the next year and will contact locations along the upcoming expansion routes in spring of 2024. The entire project will be completed by June 30, 2025.

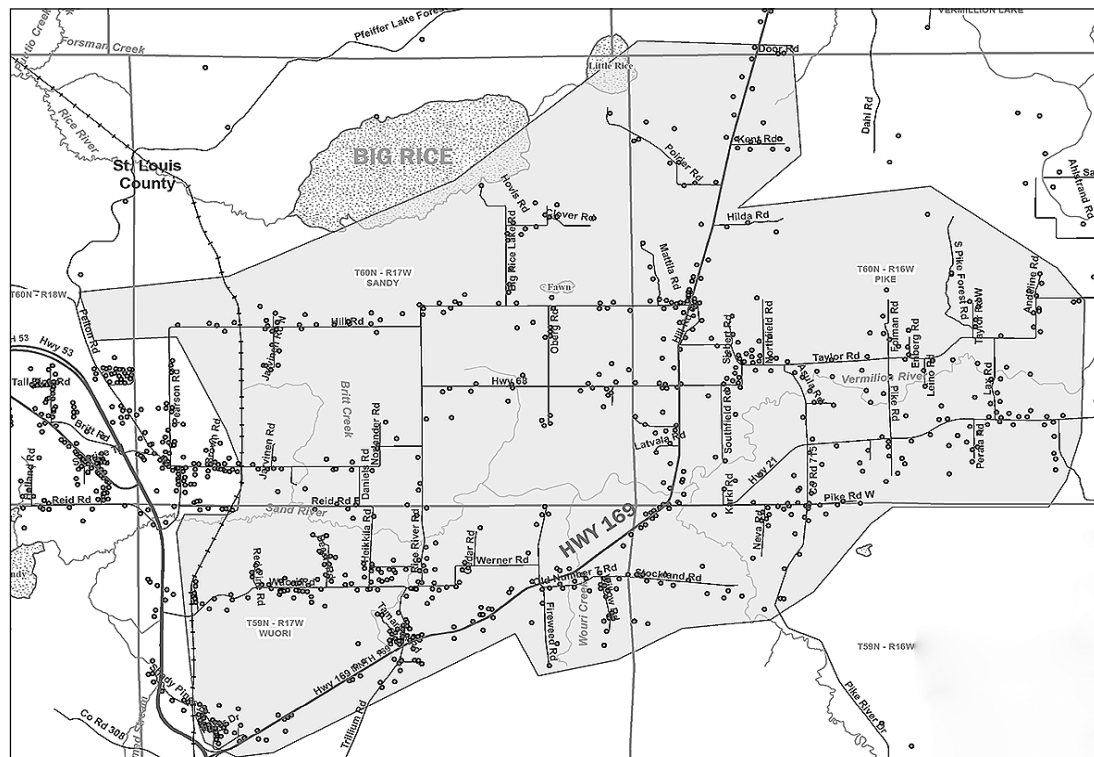
“This is going to bring symmetrical fiber-optic broadband to very rural locations that desperately need it. This will be a game changer for the residents in these areas,” added Steve Howard, PBC Information Technology and Development Manager.

PBC services that will become available once the network is operational include Broadband Internet speeds of up to 10 Gigabits per second and low cost unlimited local and long-distance voice service. Proposals for possible North Country locations from two

Right: A map of the areas to be served by the new broadband funding awarded recently to Paul Bunyan Communications. Residences in the area should soon see internet access speeds of up to 10 gigabytes per second.

other companies, Frontier Communications and Treehouse Broadband, were not funded in this round of Border-to-Border grants.

Treehouse Broadband, a local Ely company offering fixed wireless broadband services, had proposed a system which would have served much of the Eagles Nest and Armstrong lakes area. The *Timberjay* attempted to contact the company for comments but had not heard back as of press time on Wednesday.



SWAP...Continued from page 1

reach out to other school district staff for comment on the job change, but none were willing to speak on the record.

“I don’t make this decision lightly,” Engebritson said. “I feel that more growth can occur in each school with this change in leadership and as the superintendent, it is my job

to make sure that we are providing the best opportunities for our students in each of our five schools.”

Last April, concerned North Woods parents and teachers convened two community meetings in Cook to bring attention to problems including bullying, vaping, and disrespect from students toward

staff. The *Timberjay* asked Engebritson if this contributed to her decision. She did not address the question specifically but talked about the decision from the perspective of school culture.

“Having fresh ideas and different perspectives can be beneficial for the school culture and I see

this move as a positive one for both schools,” she said. Both principals will still be working under the umbrella of the district’s goals and missions but will be able to come into the buildings ready to listen and learn about what is working well and what might need some additional support. Then, they can work collabora-

tively with the staff to help support current programs or procedures and/or find new solutions to problems that might be occurring.”

Vukmanich has been principal at North Woods for seven years and Engman has been NER principal for ten, and they have already had conversations and have been planning for the tran-

sition, Engebritson said.

“Both principals have a growth mindset about this change and have shared with staff that they will be in good hands with the incoming principal,” Engebritson said.

COUNCIL...Continued from page 1

fiscal disparities shortfall but agreed with Norby that the city needs revenue to address key priorities that aren’t currently included in the 2023 budget. Among them are sewer repairs on S. Second and Third Streets, which could cost the city as much as \$100,000. Setterberg noted that St. Louis County is likely to be ready to sell its public works facility on Marina Drive by the fourth quarter of next year. The city has expressed interest for some time in acquiring the property once its available. The county is currently having the site appraised in anticipation of a possible sale to the city.

The city may have to provide gap funding of \$15,000 for the purchase of a new ambulance next year and has other planned sewer repairs in the works on Pine St. as well as N. Second and Third Streets.

The three-percent levy increase, which is expected to raise just under \$12,000, won’t go very far toward covering those priorities, but the extra funds could provide a bit of matching money if the city can find other funding sources, such as the IRRR and CDBG, to help pay for things like sewer repairs.

Setterberg suggested that the city could drop its \$5,000 levy for TEDA but Schultz said he wasn’t sure of the legality of making that change at this point. Council member Joe Morin, who also sits on the TEDA board, said he expected the board would be amenable to making a financial contribution to the city from the revenues it received this year from the sale of land on Mud Creek Rd. which TEDA sold at the peak of the recent real estate boom.

In related action, the council approved a 2023 city budget that includes \$2.58 million in anticipated revenue and total expenses of \$84,607 in expenditures. Schultz said anticipated income from the ambulance replacement fund and Gundersen Trust account for the apparent surplus because those funds likely won’t be expended until 2024.

Ambulance business plan

The council also gave approval to an ambulance service business plan that’s been on the shelf for well

over a year. Setterberg called it a “living document” and noted that it’s continually subject to change, but acknowledged that some area townships have been pushing the city to issue the plan to the ambulance commission since the city had agreed to do so as part of its contract with area townships that contribute to the ambulance replacement fund. “It was put in the contract for some reason that we have this done and it’s part of one reason why one of the communities has not signed off on the contract and been willing to donate,” said Setterberg.

While approval of the business plan for distribution to area townships resolves one issue, Setterberg noted that one township [Greenwood] has also been demanding an indemnity clause that would hold the township harmless if one of its First Responders who are not members of the Tower Ambulance Service, committed some kind of error during an ambulance call that led to litigation. Norby said he had relayed to Greenwood officials that the city was willing to include their requested indemnity clause but that the city would want similar language protecting itself.

“So basically, they want protections for their township,” said Setterberg. “We were asking for the same thing but it didn’t sound like that was acceptable. So, that’s what we’re trying to work through. Is that everybody should have the same protections. Not just them.”

“If it’s good for the goose, it should be good for the gander,” said Norby.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a resolution to move forward with a cartway petition presented to the city by developer Dave Rose, but only after he has deposited a total of \$19,050 to cover anticipated legal fees, survey costs, and compensation to the landowner whose land is impacted by Rose’s planned driveway. Rose is seeking to access a five-acre parcel he owns on Pike Bay, just west of the mouth of the East Two River.
- Gave an “exceeds expectations” rating to Schultz as part of his one-year performance review.

Morin said Schultz has done a “fabulous job” in a position with a steep learning curve. The council approved a three-percent pay increase for Schultz for next year.

- Approved a three-percent pay increase for Hoodoo Point Campground manager Randy Pratt. Councilors noted that Pratt has done an excellent job and hadn’t had a pay increase since 2017. “It’s one of our best assets and he runs it really well,” noted Norby.
- Approved the new agreement transferring assets from the Gundersen Trust to the Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation.

- Approved a 2023 police contract with Breitung Township for a total of \$76,992. The city is budgeting an additional \$3,007 in overtime for a total budget of \$80,000.
- Agreed to reopen the application period for a part-time city maintenance worker to allow the city to consider two applications and a letter of interest it received after the deadline. The new deadline is Jan. 4, 2023.
- Heard an update on the transfer of land encompassing the civic center and

mini-park from TEDA back to the city. The land had been unnecessarily transferred to TEDA last year as part of the finalization of the harbor plat. Schultz said city attorney Joel Lewicki has drafted a quit claim deed and legal descriptions to enable TEDA to transfer ownership back to the city. The city is still waiting on SEH to verify the legal description.

- Approved exploring the possibility of renaming the portion of Spruce St. in front of the Tower-Soudan School in honor of the late Carol Alstrom, a longtime physical education instructor at the school who had a major impact on the lives of

many students. The city is also advancing a proposal to install a Love Lock Post near the school. Schultz said he had walked the school area with council member Bob Anderson and maintenance supervisor Ben Velcheff looking for possible locations for the post, which would also commemorate Alstrom.

- A fundraising effort led by a former student would pay for the marker.
- Approved a revision in the city’s Code of Ethics which requires that city employees report violations of the code when they become aware of them.
- Agreed to look into possible increases in

airport hangar and cabin leases, which have not been updated since 2015.

- Agreed to pay for a full maintenance package for the city’s elevator, which Schultz said is not currently operating.
- Appointed council member Josh Zika to the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board and Orlyn Kringstad to the Gundersen Trust board.
- Approved a design and construction services proposal by SEH totaling \$19,900 for a crack sealing project at the airport. The city’s share of the cost will be \$950, with the bulk of the expense covered by the FAA.

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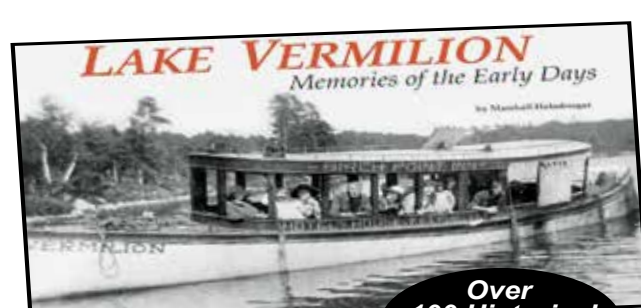
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ELY SCHOOLS

Hopes aired for new legislative session

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The prospects for the upcoming legislative session highlighted Monday night's meeting of the ISD 696 school board here. The meeting proceeded with a quorum of four as members Chad Davis and Rochelle Sjoberg were absent.

The meeting included the district's Truth in Taxation hearing, which attracted no taxpayer comment. At the end of the hearing, Jeff Anderson of the Costin Group Inc. summarized last year's disappointing legislative session and speculated on the prospects for more funding in 2023.

"So, 2022, I think we can safely say (it) was a disappointing year," said Anderson. "In St. Paul, very little was accomplished."

He said two items in particular were disappointments for the region after negotiations broke down at the end sending lawmakers home without a final resolution.

First, he said, was the extension of the nickel production tax that has been funding the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation's school consolidation and collaboration account. That is the account that helped send \$7 million to the Ely district for its most recent facilities project. "That extension was in (the bill) for another 20 years, which would allow the fund to stay in the black and then also allow for future school projects to tap into that."

The other item was a form a relief for school districts like Ely with construction projects either in progress or ready to start. "The other part of that bill that would have been a benefit to the Ely district as well as several other school districts in northeastern Minnesota was an exemption on sales tax for construction materials for projects like the one here in Ely," Anderson said. Depending on the scale of the project, the tax exemption could save districts hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars, he said.

Legislative outlook

The incoming legislature tilts toward the DFL, Anderson said. "The House is 70 to 64 in terms of (DFL) party control and the Senate 34 to 33. You should also note that there's 47 new House members and 23 new senators, (which is) the highest turnover in 50 years."

Anderson noted that the former chair of the DFL-led House Education Finance Committee, Jim Dabney, and his counterpart in the Senate, Republican Roger Chamberlain, didn't exactly agree on how to fund education.

"These two gentlemen (were) ideologically very far apart and did not get along," Anderson explained. "It caused for some very interesting conference committees towards the end of session. And ultimately, the DFL was pushing for an increase in the general education formula, and spending in a number of areas in education didn't go anywhere. The Republicans wouldn't agree.

So that was one of the sticking points at the end, I think led to the fact that the tax bill and bonding bill did not make it over the finish line."

Dabney has since retired from the Legislature and Chamberlain lost his reelection bid, so their personal differences shouldn't stand in the way of agreement this year, according to Anderson. With the DFL now in full control of the Legislature, and a DFL governor, Anderson said he anticipates that education will receive the funding it should have gotten from last session's failed tax bill.

"This particular session," Anderson added, "and with a \$17.6 billion budget surplus, there are funds, especially one-time funds, to be used as the Legislature prepares for next year. I would say that the top two things that we hear in education circles is an increase of the formula, five percent (for) general education increase. The second is the state fully funding the special education subsidy. Talking to other districts, I know those two things alone would really improve financial stability and health in most school districts in the state of Minnesota."

Anderson added a caution about funding education in the upcoming session: "We still have challenges, no doubt, because - I don't know if you've noticed - but ever since the budget surplus has continued to rise, I think along the lines of people seeking dollars for their programs or projects is growing deeper and deeper."

EPA paperwork burdens

In other business, board member Tony Colarich asked about the status of the one-time grant for work on the waterline at the district's schools. "(There was a one-time) Environmental Protection Agency grant for all the extra blasting and everything we had to do to replace the waterline and if I'm not mistaken, there was \$245,000 that was granted, but there was some additional paperwork that needed to be see completed. Do you have an update?"

Anderson said the grant was awarded, and the work was done before the EPA finalized the rules for the grant program. "It has to be administered through the agency and it took them actually a year to develop the rules in terms of which and how it will be administered. Now we have to go through that process. And for this project in particular it's very detailed because the work has been done already. So, you have to be able to go back and make sure everything fits into the boxes that the federal government dictates they do."

Anderson stated that he and Harold Langowski, representing the city of Ely, and a representative from the engineering firm of Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. will be attending an upcoming seminar on how to complete the EPA's paperwork requirements for the grant. Anderson also remarked that the paperwork requirements would be completed within the next 90 days.

Routine business

In other action, the board:

► Approved November 2022 receipts in the amount of \$550,277.17 and disbursements in the amount of \$1,534,719.84.

► Approved the 21st Century Facility Project overrun cost of \$598,303 for additional rock removal and expenditures.

► Adopted the maximum federal allowable per diem rates for meals and lodging for all district employee travel in 2023.

► Approved the hire of Paige Falt for the at-will Indigenous Support Interventionist position at \$17 per hour for approximately six hours per day, five days per week, effective Nov. 30, 2022.

► Approved positions for the 2022-2023 season for Sarah Dunnom, assistant dance coach (stipend paid by High Kick Club) and Emmett Penke, volunteer assistant coach for girls basketball.

► Approved an agreement with the Costin Group Inc. for consulting services from Jan. 1, 2023 to Dec. 31, 2023, for \$2,000 per month.

► Approved the donation of \$3,000 from the Ely Jaycees for the Early Childhood Family Education program.

► Certified the Payable 2023 Levy of \$2,224,762. This is a \$138,851 or 6.7-percent increase from 2022. The increase was mostly due to adjustments based on the actual amounts of the previous year's levy plus increases in health benefit costs.

COMMUNITY JOINT POWERS

New area lawmakers get hefty to-do list

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY— Two northeastern Minnesota legislators-elect were offered a lengthy to-do list at the Community Economic Development Joint Powers

Board's annual meeting held here on Monday.

It's a yearly event that's traditionally been an opportunity for Ely area elected officials to discuss their needs and the upcoming legislative session with

area lawmakers.

Unlike last year's meeting with its controversial resolution in support of the proposed Twin Metals Minnesota copper nickel mining project, this year's meeting included an airing of local issues and concerns for the ears of Rep.-elect Roger Skraba and Sen.-elect Grant Hauschild, the two new rookie legislators who will be sworn in after the first of the year.

The agenda for the meeting covered the issues of concern for Ely, Morse, Winton and ISD 696.

Bob Berrini, representing Morse Township, offered his thoughts on the failure of the Legislature last year to eliminate the state's tax on Social Security benefits. "I'm talking about the surplus," Berrini remarked, "We're gonna have around \$18 billion, so I think we should get a break on our Social Security tax and I don't think we should get two percent this year and five percent next year."

Berrini also raised con-

cerns over the decline in the deer population, handing out a copy of a newspaper article listing deer harvest statistics from the last five seasons. He was not shy in his opinion on the cause of the decline of local deer: wolves. "It's a big deal for this year's (deer) harvests here, in the six different (DPA) areas where you have too many wolves," he said. "It's killing us."

Berrini also said he's worried the region does not have enough ambulances to respond to emergency calls in more remote areas and he'd like to see the Legislature do something about it. His remarks spurred a discussion about the challenges for improving funding for EMS services in northeast Minnesota.

Speaking for the school district, Tom Omerza discussed how the pandemic and its impact on the economy contributed to the cost overruns on the district's 21st century facilities project. "We started the school facility project

prior to what happened with the economy and material costs," Omerza explained. "We ended up getting not enough funding for what we told the community we're going to do."

Omerza added that the increase in the cost of materials brought on by the pandemic was not a problem exclusive to the Ely School, but that it affected several different school districts around the state.

Marlene Zorman, the mayor-elect for Winton, spoke about the city's water tower project. "Two years ago, our water tower froze, and consequently, things froze up all the way down the line, water lines broke and we were without water for a week and a half. (That's when) we all realized that nothing's been done here for a long time."

Zorman explained that Winton received a community development block grant to help fix the problems that Winton faces in updating their water system and said that they will need more funding. She also

discussed one of Winton's largest impediments to paying for the needed work. "We have 95 paying water customers in Winton ... we're talking big bucks (to fix the water system) but very few people. We do need help."

Skraba and Hauschild both remarked that they would pursue actions in the upcoming session of the legislature to address the joint powers board members' concerns. The joint powers board consists of dues-paying members, city of Ely, city of Winton, Morse Township, Fall Lake Township, and ISD 696. Non-voting members include Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, Vermilion Community College and the Ely Chamber of Commerce. Private citizens as well as representatives from Senator Klobuchar's office, other taxing districts and community organizations were also present.

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(No service on December 25)

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On the corner of Church and Main, Soudan

STORM...Continued from page 1



Weather models had been pointing to a major event for more than a week and as the models came into agreement on the storm's track and its potential impacts, it appeared that northeastern Minnesota

would be among those areas in the bullseye.

As of midday on Wednesday, the National Weather Service was forecasting as much as two-and-a-half feet of snow for the North Shore's higher

Left: Traffic on Hwy. 169 was light and drivers found slick conditions on Wednesday with much more snow to come.
photo by M. Helmberger

terrain, with seven-to-11 inches forecast through Thursday for much of central and northern St. Louis County.

Much of Lake County was expecting anywhere from 12-24 inches.

The low was also forecasted to move slowly across the Upper Midwest, with predictions it could bring almost continuous snowfall from late Tuesday night through midday on Saturday. Weather forecasters were not offering entire storm totals although forecasts through Saturday pointed to as much as a foot

across much of northern St. Louis County by the time the storm moves out this weekend.

With relatively mild temperatures accompanying the storm, the weather service is predicting heavy wet snow that's likely to accumulate on trees and powerlines. The powerful low pressure system was expected to bring considerable wind along with the snow and the weather service warned residents to anticipate power outages due to downed lines.

The snow will eventually be followed by much colder temperatures, with highs forecasted in the low single digits for all of next week, with lows around minus 10.

MINING AND THE COURTS

Judge rejects Twin Metals plea to hear lease case

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — A Twin Metals legal gambit proved a dry hole this past week with the ruling by a federal judge rejecting the company's plea that he hear their case challenging the Biden administration's decision to cancel its mineral leases.

Judge Trevor McFadden, a conservative Trump appointee, had ruled in favor of Twin Metals back in 2020, when he found that the Trump administration had acted within its authority when it restored two federal minerals critical for the company's hopes to build a copper-nickel mine near Ely. That case had been filed by a coalition of Ely area businesses and environmental groups.

McFadden might have had a sympathetic ear for Twin Metals' arguments then, but in a Dec. 9 ruling, McFadden soundly reject-

ed the company's request that he hear their new case challenging the Biden administration's reinstatement of a previous cancellation of the leases instituted under the Obama administration.

As McFadden noted in his three-page order, cases filed with the court are supposed to be randomly assigned to judges within the district in which they're filed. "The rule guarantees fair and equal distribution of cases to all judges, avoids public perception or appearance of favoritism in assignments, and reduces opportunities for judge-shopping," the judge wrote.

McFadden noted that under certain rare circumstances, such as when all the parties to a case are identical to one previously heard and relate to the same subject matter, a new case can be assigned to the same judge who heard the case before. But as McFadden pointed out, the parties

and the subject matter of Twin Metals' lawsuit are substantially different. "The mere presence of overlapping parties is not among the bases for a related-case designation," he concluded.

Instead, the case has now been assigned to Judge Christopher Cooper, an Obama appointee who has sat on the D.C. circuit court since 2014. Cooper will now hear Twin Metals' claim that the Biden administration acted improperly when it canceled its two federal mineral leases. "The lawsuit seeks to restore the leases and other rights, which will restart the environmental review process as required by law for the company's mine plan," stated the company in a press statement issued in August when it filed its case. "We are standing up for our right to a fair and consistent environmental review of our proposed mining project," said Dean DeBeltz, Twin Metals' Director

of Operations.

The Twin Metals' suit alleges that the Biden administration engaged in arbitrary and unauthorized decision-making when Interior Department Deputy Solicitor Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes overturned a Trump-era legal opinion issued by then-Interior Solicitor Daniel Jorjani. Jorjani had determined that Twin Metals had an absolute right to three ten-year renewals under the original lease. Twin Metals was seeking the third and final of those permit renewals when the Obama administration canceled the leases in 2016. Jorjani's opinion, issued in 2017, overturned previous opinions issued by Interior legal counsel from the Reagan, Bush, and Obama administrations, which had all determined that any lease renewal was discretionary on the part of the Interior Department. Based on Jorjani's opinion, the

Trump administration argued it had no choice but to reinstate the leases that the Obama administration had canceled. In reversing Jorjani, the Biden administration was largely consistent with the view of previous administrations, based on the language in the original 1966 leases, which appeared to condition any right of renewal on the start of mining operations within the first 20-year term of the leases. Yet no mining operation has gotten underway in the more than 50 years since the leases were originally issued.

While the Dec. 9 McFadden decision wasn't a surprise given the federal rules at issue, it was a blow to Twin Metals' efforts to have their case heard by a potentially more sympathetic judge.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

County levy to increase 4.39 percent for next year

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — St. Louis County will levy \$163.4 million next year, a 4.39-percent increase over 2022. How that will impact taxpayer's property assessments will vary

depending on changes on valuation and increases in the county's tax base.

At the same time, the St. Louis County Board has unanimously approved a 2023 budget totaling \$452,751,620. The budget, approved

Tuesday, funds employee salary and benefit commitments, sustains investments in mental health and substance use disorder services, and invests in enhanced medical services in the jail. It also directs funding toward economic

development and in technology, including security.

"With the economy recovering (albeit still unevenly) as the pandemic persists, new issues have emerged that needed to be addressed," according to county administration in

a letter to commissioners. "These include a shrinking labor market and more difficulty in keeping budgeted staff positions filled, rapidly escalating costs and supply disruptions for materials that affect capital construction proj-

ects and increasing focus on recognizing and serving mental health needs within the community."

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EACF finalizes acquisition of former Revenue building

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY — The long-awaited acquisition of the former Minnesota Department of Revenue Building by the non-profit Ely Area Community Foundation finally happened on Dec. 8. The building became surplus property when the Dept. of Revenue staff members who used to occupy the building transitioned to working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EACF will lease space in the building to house both for-profit businesses and non-profit entities which promote the health and well-being of Ely area residents.

Jeff Sundell, Chair of the EACF board confirmed

that the nonprofit has four potential tenants for the building. One of those is a childcare provider with a potential capacity of 40 children according to Eve Sebesta, executive director of the Ely Chamber of Commerce.

Another tenant is Heavy Metal Sports, which announced on Dec. 9, that it would relocate its gym facility to the former revenue building. With the move, the business will also change its name to Functional Fitness.

"It is with great excitement and appreciation that we announce the move of our gym into the new EACF building," said Michelle Moore, founder and co-owner of the gym.

"We have been looking for a location to move our

gym for a few years now and cannot be more excited about joining the EACF to create a community center based around health and wellness," said Moore. "The opportunity to jump in on such a community endeavor is beyond the goals we had set for our future, and we see this as an opportunity to grow stronger roots here in Ely."

The identity of the other two tenants is not yet known and Sundell was not at liberty at this time to discuss who they might be.

Over the next six to nine months, the building will be remodeled to accommodate the needs of the potential tenants of the facility. "We've already started the design process with our architect and potential tenants,"

said Dave Marshall, the EACF Board Vice Chair. "We expect this process to produce construction documents for remodeling the building."

EACF would like to open the facilities in the summer of 2023. Before

that can happen, the nonprofit intends to remodel the building, including replacing the roof. EACF will also study the feasibility of adding a pool to the facility. The EACF is examining the costs of not only building the pool but

more importantly operating it. Sundell remarked in a statement that, "We know we'll have to raise additional money to make the pool a reality. We're looking at it as a potential second phase of the project."

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Slow start sinks Grizzlies

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods girls basketball team couldn't overcome a slow start against Two Harbors on Dec. 9, falling to the Agates 83-67 at North Woods.

Despite some early turnovers, the Grizzlies went up 9-8 on a triple by Helen Koch and a basket by Hannah Kinsey. The Agates retook the lead and Koch kept North Woods close with another trey, making the score 19-15, but an 18-7 run by Two Harbors gave them a 15-point

cushion at 37-22 with five minutes remaining in the half.

Talise Goodsky dropped in a trey and a double for the Grizzlies, and baskets in the last minute of the half by Brynn Chosa and River Cheney made the score 48-34 at the half.

The Grizzlies' sluggish start proved to be the difference in this one, as in the second half they got on track and played the Agates toe-to-toe, 35-33. However, North Woods could not make any significant cuts in the Two Harbors lead.

"We had a very slow start on offensive the first half, and

we had a hard time picking up momentum," said North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney. "In the locker room at halftime we talked about what was working and what we needed to do, and they really capitalized on that in the second half."

The Grizzlies did a better job of taking care of the ball in the second half, due in part to the Agates taking off some of the pressure with a comfortable lead.

Cheney said she was pleased with the way the Grizzlies continued to work hard to the final buzzer.

Right: North Woods junior River Cheney tangles for the ball with a Two Harbors player during their Friday night hoops contest played at North Woods. The Agates went on to win 83-67.



BOYS BASKETBALL

North Woods tops Spartans, improve to 3-1

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

NASHWAUK- The North Woods boys basketball team moved to 3-1 on the season early this week, bouncing back from a 70-60 loss at Moose Lake on Monday with a convincing 99-70 win over Nashwauk-Keewatin on Tuesday.

The Grizzlies led Moose Lake in the second half, but Head Coach Andrew Jugovich said that the Rebels dictated the pace toward the end to pull this one out.

"Their game plan was to slow us down, spread us out and force us to make a few mistakes on defense, and they did," Jugovich said.

"And when we made those mistakes, they were able to hit an open three or layup. It was tough for our boys to adjust, and then we felt rushed at the end. Even for how fast we normally go, it was definitely rushed."

Back on the road on Tuesday, the Grizzlies found themselves down quickly to N-K and had trouble containing Spartans senior guard Marcus Moore in the first half.

"He was unstoppable," Jugovich said. "He scored 25 of their 45 points in the first half."

But the second half was a different story. With some defensive adjustments, the Grizzlies took Moore and the crowd out of the game, while North Woods geared up their game on both ends of the floor. They held Moore and the other Spartans to only 25 second-half points while piling up 56 points of their own to breeze to the 99-70 win.

Jonah Burnett continued to be a force for the Grizzlies' offense, hitting a team leading 23 against Moose Lake and piling up 32 against N-K. Jared Chiabotti edged Burnett out for top scorer against N-K with 34 points.

The Grizzlies had a home contest scheduled for Friday against Northland, and will play Wrenshall in Babbitt in the Northeast Range gym on Monday.

“Their game plan was to slow us down, spread us out and force us to make a few mistakes, and they did.”

North Woods Head Coach Andrew Jugovich



BOYS BASKETBALL

Mixed week for Wolves

Ely red hot in 101-23 win over I-Falls, sluggish in 70-43 loss at Two Harbors

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TWO HARBORS—A tough Agates' defense in the paint and ice-cold outside shooting put the Timberwolves behind the eight ball here on Saturday as they suffered their first loss of the young season, 70-43.

Two days earlier, the Wolves were red hot from beyond the arc as they racked up 101 points against International Falls. They should have saved some of the juice for Saturday as they went just two-for-twenty from three-point range in the first half and struggled inside thanks to the Agates' aggressive defense and height advantage.

"I thought we played okay against a very good and physical team," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. "We just dug too deep of a hole with that poor shooting in the first half."

The Wolves trailed 43-21 early into the break and they only lost ground in the

Top: Ely senior Erron Anderson tries to get a shot off under intense pressure by a trio of Broncos' defenders.

Right: Ely freshman point guard Jack Davies drives the ball down the court. Davies scored a career-high 39 points last Thursday to lead Ely to a rout over International Falls.

photos by J. Greeney

second half.

Senior guard Joey Bianco was Ely's top scorer with 17 points, below his average game output. Freshman Jack Davies added 12 points to the mix.

Just two days earlier, on Ely's home hardwood, Davies hit the bullseye on eight straight treys on his way to a career high 39 points as he helped the Wolves devour the Broncos 101-23. "We played very well from the start," said McDonald, as Ely scored at will, racking up a 66-11 lead by the half on route to their second straight rout of the season.

While Davies led the way,



Bianco had a strong night as well, racking up 26 points and tallying nine rebounds and eight assists. Sophomore Caid Chittum and senior Jason Kerntz added 11 points apiece.

The Wolves were set to host Northeast Range on

Friday with a 7 p.m. start and no B-squad beforehand. They head to Mesabi East on Monday and host Cook County next Thursday, with a 6:30 p.m. start.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wolves nip the Broncos in border battle

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

INTERNATIONAL FALLS—The Timberwolves snowed the Broncos 57-42 here

on Friday, Dec. 9.

"We played a little sloppy until about eight minutes to go and then we buried them," said Head Coach Max Gantt. "We finally started moving the ball

around and knocking down some open shots. Grace LaTourell led the way on offense, pouring in 20 points, while Madeline Perry was right behind with 16 points.

"Maizy Sundblad and Claire

Thomas gave us great minutes off the bench, too," said Gantt.

"We're proud of the win," Gantt added. "It's tough to win in International Falls. We grinded out a tough game and did whatever

it took to get that win."

The Wolves' Dec. 13 game at Silver Bay was canceled due to weather. The Wolves head to Chisholm on Monday, Dec. 19.



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Christmas bird counts set across the North Country



by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—Birders around the area will be pulling out their binoculars and warm winter gear over the next couple weeks to take part in the 123rd annual Christmas Bird Count, sponsored and organized by the Audubon Society.

The annual count is one of the most effective

ways for birders of all skill levels to take part in a valuable citizen science project that has helped researchers better document the population trends and shifting ranges of North American birds, and that information isn't just available to scientists. Audubon has compiled decades worth of summarized data from the annual counts and makes it available on its website,

where anyone can look up the population trends of their favorite, or least favorite, birds over time.

Did you know that the red crossbill population in Minnesota has jumped sharply over the past ten years, while the gray jay population has fallen by nearly two-thirds? This is just some of the information

See **BIRDS...pg. 3B**

Local Christmas bird counts

- ▶ **ELY**—Was held early this year on Thursday, Dec. 15.
- ▶ **COOK**—Saturday, Dec. 31. Contact Julie Grahn at 218-666-2450 or jg.grahn@gmail.com.
- ▶ **AURORA**—Thursday, Dec. 29. Contact Steve Falkowski at debfolk@gmail.com.
- ▶ **ISABELLA**—Sunday, Jan. 1. Contact Steve Wilson at 218-753-6110 or clevergrayjay@gmail.com.

A boreal chickadee



WILDLIFE RESEARCH

Study sends fisher biologists back to the drawing board

Findings show the species is resistant to nesting in artificial boxes

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Three years ago, biologist Michael Joyce installed over 100 “nest” boxes designed to meet the specific needs of the fisher, Minnesota’s largest member of the weasel family. Joyce had hoped his project would reveal a potential solution to what appears to be a significant decline in the fisher population in Minnesota.

However, it’s now back to the drawing board after three years of monitoring the boxes revealed that while fishers, and many other forest critters, occasionally sat on them, climbed on them, and even crawled inside them, it appears no fisher ever used one of the boxes for nesting purposes.

Regardless, give Joyce an “A” for effort. As basic science goes, it was a near-Herculean task to build, haul, hang, and monitor all of the boxes, each of which weighed 55 pounds and had to be hauled a considerable distance into the forest before being hung in a tree. Joyce, who works for the Natural Resources Research Institute, or NRRRI, had help along the way from various field technicians along with some students from Vermilion Community College. And given that science is about expanding knowledge, even a negative result on an experiment is valuable.

In this case, it means wildlife managers will need to look to other solutions for help in

Above: A pair of rambunctious fisher kits find a nest box a fun place to play, but researchers found no evidence that adult females used the boxes for nesting with young.

Right: A couple cinnamon phase black bears check out one of the boxes.

Lower right: A bobcat looks for a way into another one of the boxes.

photos courtesy of M. Joyce/NRRRI

recovering the fisher population. Studies from elsewhere in North America had shown that fishers will use nest boxes for reproduction, a finding that Joyce wanted to confirm here in Minnesota. “To me, that’s the first step, to see if they will use them,” said Joyce in an interview with the *Timberjay* back in 2019. “Then we need to figure out where they will use them.”

Joyce’s study, funded by a \$190,000 grant from the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources, used a variety of methods to monitor use of the boxes, including trail cams and sticky tape that was applied near the entrance to the boxes, designed to collect hair samples. Each box also had a thermometer, which tracked the temperatures inside the boxes. The cameras used by Joyce captured more than three million images, more than Joyce has been able to review so far.

The boxes are heavy duty, built from a double layer of



plywood sandwiching foam insulation, which would offer more thermal protection for the animals that utilize them. The nest box entrances were designed specifically to accommodate female fishers, which are significantly smaller than males, while excluding males. That was supposed to offer the females and their young protection from the males, which can be aggressive during breeding periods. The researchers have

reinforced the entrance holes with a third layer of dense hardwood to discourage red squirrels from enlarging the entrances.

Female fishers typically give birth to their young in March, and they often breed again within days of giving birth, said Joyce. “Female fishers are effectively pregnant year-round,” said Joyce. But the

See **FISHER...pg. 3B**

SOLUTIONS



Just a few of the more than two dozen blue jays that descend on our yard for breakfast every morning. By feeding them away from the rest of the bird feeders, it allows other birds to feed as well.

Diversionsary feeding proves an effective strategy for jays

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

If you enjoy feeding birds this time of year but don’t like to see dozens of aggressive blue jays keep other birds from getting their share, consider this rather simple solution. When it comes to blue jays, my own feeders were overrun with them this fall and early winter. We have a flock of at least 25 of them that come every morning and typically don’t leave until they had vacuumed up almost every seed.

I’ve been feeding cracked corn for several years to try to distract the jays from the more expensive sunflower seeds, but the combination of sunflower seeds and cracked corn just seemed to bring ever more blue jays to our yard. They’ve made it difficult for less aggressive birds, like pine grosbeaks and chickadees to get anywhere near the feeders.

Recently, I found a way to keep the blue jays in check enough to allow other birds a chance. I started putting the foods that blue jays like— cracked corn with a few sunflower seeds and peanuts mixed in— in another part of the yard, scattered on the ground at least 40 feet from the feeders that hang near our picture windows.

We have just as many blue jays in the yard as before, but now they spend most of their seed-gobbling time over at the alternative site and my chickadees, nuthatches, and grosbeaks are able to find their place at the feeder without being overwhelmed by all the jays. We still get jays at the regular feeders, but now they come in ones and twos, not dozens at a time. It’s an example of diversionsary feeding and I’ve found it to be an excellent solution to my daily blue jay invasion. They’ve gone from being totally out of control to manageable, with just one simple change.

READ
the *Timberjay!*

BIRDS...Continued from page 2B

that can be easily retrieved on Audubon's interactive online data base, available at www.audubon.org/conservation/where-have-all-birds-gone.

As the name suggests, the bird counts are held in a two-week window right around Christmas each year, and this year the counts in northern St. Louis and Lake counties, other than Ely are all scheduled for after Christmas. The Ely area count was held early this year on Dec. 15, while the Aurora count is set for Thursday, Dec. 29. The Cook count will be held Saturday, Dec. 31, while the long-running Isabella count is set for Sunday, Jan. 1. (See contact information for all the counts on the accompanying chart on previous page).

Each of the Christmas counts is held within a 15-mile-wide count circle, centered on a specific point. CBC participants count all

the birds they see on that day within the count circle. Some birders spend the day skiing or snowshoeing through the woods. Others drive the backroads, and still others count the birds at their feeders from the comfort of their living room.

New or prospective birders are always welcome to take part in the Christmas count, which is free of charge, but you'll want to reach out to the count coordinator beforehand. Don't worry if you're just a novice. You could well be teamed up with an experienced birder, which is the best way to learn about bird species in the area and the habitats where you're likely to find them. It's a fun way to spend a day, but it's also important scientific work that has been critically important in documenting changes in bird populations over the decades.

Outdoors briefly

Snowmobile trail work now underway

REGIONAL— Trail crews have been packing area snowmobile trails in recent days, getting set for the upcoming snowmobile season.

DNR trails staff reports that there is considerable water in area swamps and that the lack of extended sub-zero temperatures have slowed freeze-up.

"We are trying to strike the balance between packing what we can and not sinking our sleds in the swamps," said DNR assistant area supervisor

Brad Dekkers.

Dekkers said most area snowmobile clubs are in a similar position in terms of readiness.

With the major snowfall that was underway as the *Timberjay* went to press, upland trail work is likely to begin in earnest by next week. Much colder weather forecast for next week should help area swamps begin to stiffen as well. We have been talking back and forth with the snowmobile clubs in our area, and most everyone is in about the same place. Most have just begun packing, or they are planning to begin this weekend or next week.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
31 19				23 7				13 -5				5 -10				3 -10			
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.
12/05	24	2	0.00	12/05	25	1	0.00	12/05	26	1	0.00	12/05	19	-6	0.01 1.0"	12/05	25	-1	0.00
12/06	18	-5	0.00	12/06	19	-7	0.00	12/06	17	-8	0.01	12/06	9	-13	0.00	12/06	15	-10	0.00
12/07	18	-5	0.01 1.0"	12/07	10	-2	0.12 1.6"	12/07	9	-3	0.09 1.0"	12/07	3	-17	0.11 2.5"	12/07	10	-3	0.10 1.2"
12/08	5	-13	0.00	12/08	5	-19	0.00	12/08	3	-17	0.00	12/08	25	-6	0.00	12/08	5	-19	0.00
12/09	25	7	0.00	12/09	25	1	0.00	12/09	22	3	0.00	12/09	34	18	0.00	12/09	26	-1	0.00
12/10	34	10	0.11 1.0"	12/10	33	16	0.10 1.0"	12/10	33	10	0.02 1.0"	12/10	28	27	0.00	12/10	34	18	0.00
12/11	29	25	0.09 0.8"	12/11	30	28	0.00	12/11	29	25	0.10 0.8"	12/11	32	27	0.00	12/11	29	25	0.12 1.2"
YTD Total			25.54 17.9"	YTD Total			28.29 17.6"	YTD Total			25.76 22.4"	YTD Total			NA NA	YTD Total			35.40 17.2"

WILDLIFE

DNR receives moose habitat grant

REGIONAL—A new federal grant award will fund collaborative planning by the Minnesota DNR to further large-scale moose habitat restoration in northeast Minnesota.

The award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, through the new America the Beautiful Challenge, will provide \$443,600 to the DNR for the planning effort, with a goal of an implementation plan for moose habitat restoration on three areas of 10,000 to 50,000 contiguous acres each.

Tribal, federal, county and non-governmental partner organizations helped develop the planning approach and signed letters of support for the DNR's grant application, which was one of 55 chosen nationwide from more than 500 applications.

The patchwork of tribal, federal, state, county and private land in northeast Minnesota makes large-scale habitat restoration particularly challenging. The grant will fund a series of workshops with tribal,

federal, state, county and non-governmental partner organizations in 2023 and 2024 to identify the challenges facing large-scale moose habitat restoration, find strategies to address the challenges, identify areas for large-scale habitat restoration and create an implementation plan for the restoration. The implementation plan will also identify potential sources of funding to complete the agreed upon large-scale habitat restoration.

FISHER...Continued from page 2B

fertilized embryos are maintained in a kind of suspended animation for months, and only implant and begin to grow during the following winter. This unusual process, known as delayed implantation, is typical of members of the weasel family as well as bears.

While thoughtfully designed, the boxes didn't attract much interest from female fisher. Fishers, of either sex, were detected at less than half of the boxes, and Joyce didn't see any indication of females giving birth nor raising kits in the boxes. He speculates that several factors may have deterred them.

"Maybe the box location wasn't where the fishers wanted them, or they had better natural cavities available," Joyce said. "We put the boxes in areas with recent presence

of fishers, but with their population decline they might not have been there anymore."

Another outcome of the study will improve data gathering for this species going forward. The thermometers picked up a unique temperature fingerprint for fishers in the boxes. That means researchers can determine if fishers are using the boxes by visiting the sites just once a year and collect data that is much easier to analyze than millions of photos.

Bobcats a possible challenge

Another theory for the recent fisher decline is that their number one predator, the bobcat, might be winning. Research by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has shown that this wild feline population has increased to about

7,000 from a low of 2,000 some-40 years ago.

To date, the suggestion that bobcats are preying on fisher is mostly anecdotal. Trapping data does suggest that fisher numbers tend to be low when bobcat numbers are high.

Joyce received additional funding to capture both bobcats and fishers to outfit them with GPS collars and track their overlapping movements for further study.

"Bobcats tend to do well in young forests, while fishers prefer old forests—but there are forest conditions that they both use, especially where they are hunting for shared prey," said Joyce. This project to gain more insight into fisher and bobcat interactions is underway and the project will continue through 2024.

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Program Accountant (2 Positions)
Closes: December 22, 2022

Position Purpose: The Program Accountant is responsible for setting up, maintaining, and monitoring all general ledger accounts, funds, and budgets in the accounting system relative to State, Federal and Tribal contract/programs including preparing adjusting journal entries under the direction of the Program Accounting Supervisor. Also monitors contracts/programs by providing requests, reporting and documentation under the direction of the Program Accounting Supervisor (Supervisory Program Accountant).

Website: <https://boisforte.com/jobs/>

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 9 & 16, 2022



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Position Purpose: The Nurse Practitioner provides diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic health services to patients and family members at the Bois Forte and Vermilion Clinics; with the ability to function as an independent practitioner. The Bois Forte Health & Human Services and IHS goal is to raise Indian Health status to the highest possible level.

Website: <https://boisforte.com/jobs/>

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 9, 16, 23 & 30 2022



Current Openings LICENSED TEACHER

Vermilion Country School is seeking to hire a full-time licensed teacher for the 2022-2023 school year. Position open until filled. Salary per established pay scale (available by request). Due to growing enrollment, we have openings in science, social studies and language arts. In our school's teaching model, teachers can teach across the curriculum.

The Vermilion Country School is a grades 7-12 charter school in Tower. The school serves a multicultural student body of approx. 45 students, with an innovative learning model that is uniquely-adapted to this rural community. For more information, visit our website at www.vermilioncountry.org.

For more information, full job description, or an application, please email jsummit@vermilioncountry.org, or call 218-753-1246 (ext. 2 for office) or call Jodi Summit at 218-753-2950

PT PARAPROFESSIONAL (afternoons)

Vermilion Country School is seeking to hire a part-time paraprofessional to work afternoons (M,Tu,Th, Fr 12:30-3:30 p.m., and 12:30-1:30 p.m. on Wed.) Please call the school office at 218-753-1246 ext. 2 for details.



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Hospital/ER
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PT Unit Clerk/HUC (Wage starting at \$17.36/hr. EMT and/or NA cert. required)

Environmental Services
FT (Environmental Tech I) Housekeeping and Laundry Aide (Wage starting at \$14.68/hr, \$1,500 sign-on bonus)
Casual Laundry Aide (Wage starting at \$14.68/hr)

Laboratory
FT Medical Lab Tech (Wage starting at \$23.38/hr., \$4,000 sign-on bonus)

Radiology
FT Radiologic Technologist (Wage starting at \$26.14/hr., \$4,000 sign-on bonus)
Casual Ultrasound Tech (Independent Contractor)
Casual Radiologic Tech (Independent Contractor)

Dietary
PT Dietary Aide/Cook (Wage starting at \$14.18/hr.)

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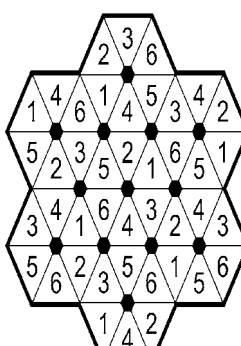
Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 16 & 23, 2022

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Winter hours are afternoons and evenings, and work encompasses maintaining the ice arena. \$16 an hour, 32 hours per week.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Embarrass Notice
Township Board Supervisor to be Appointed to fill Vacant Seat 2.

The Embarrass Town Board will be accepting letters of interest for anyone wishing to serve on the Embarrass Township Board until a special election is held. Date of special election is to be determined.

Jennifer Boase, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 16, 2022

PUBLIC NOTICES

KABETOGAMA 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 14th day of March, 2023.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be Tuesday, January 3, 2023. The last day will be Tuesday, the 17th day of January, 2023, 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. You may file without appointment by coming into the Town Hall on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The following terms will be expiring:

Supervisor Seat #1 for the term of one year
Supervisor Seat #2 for the term of two years
Supervisor Seat #3 for the term of three years

Treasurer for the term of two years

Filing fee is \$2.00.

December 5, 2022
Clerk, Mary Manninen

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 9 & 16, 2022

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF ELECTION
MN 205.16, subd. 4

THE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP ANNUAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 14, 2023

Polls will be open 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Greenwood Town Hall

Offices to be elected:
Supervisor Position 1: 3-year term
Supervisor Position 2: 3-year term
Clerk Position: 1-year term
Treasurer Position: 2-year term

Filings will open Tuesday, January 3, 2023 and close on Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Applicants, please file affidavit of candidacy at the town hall. Town hall offices will be open on Tuesday, January 17 until 5:00 p.m. to accept affidavits.

THE GREENWOOD TOWN BOARD WILL MEET IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING ON MARCH 14, 2023 TO PAY BILLS AND CANVASS ELECTION RESULTS.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meetings will be held the following Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at the same times listed. MS365.51, subd. 1.

JoAnn Bassing, Interim Town Clerk.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 9 & 16, 2022

Vermilion Lake Township
Notice of Filings

Filings for the following offices will open on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 and close on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Supervisor 3-year term
Treasurer. . . . 2-year term

Filing fee: \$2.00

Candidates: File Affidavit of Candidacy by appointment only at the CLERK'S OFFICE, 6703 Wahlsten Rd. The clerk's office will be open the last day of filing from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Call 218-749-2902 and leave a message.

Election will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Crystal Alaspa, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 16 & 30, 2022

LEIDING TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF FILINGS

Filings for the following offices open on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, through Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 5 p.m. for the offices of:

1 Supervisor: 3-year term
1 Clerk/Treasurer

Filing fee is \$2.

File the Affidavit of Candidacy at Clerk's Office. Please call 218-355-0163 (cell) for the clerk's office hours.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 16 & 30, 2022

Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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

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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PET CREMATION

VISIT VermilionPetCremation.com or call 218-780-8069 for pet cremation details and rates.

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.

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 MEETING IN COOK- Sunday Night Big Book Group meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, 231 2nd St. NE, Cook, at 7:00 pm Sunday. For information call 218-666-2820 or 218-780-7670.

AL-ANON MEETING IN COOK - Ashawa Al-Anon Family Group meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, 231 2nd St. NE, Cook, at 7:00 pm Sunday. This meeting is for families and friends of alcoholics.

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.

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SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦♦
♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦♦ Difficult

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Super Crossword THAT '70s SHOW

ACROSS

1 Motion detector, e.g.
7 Portion out
13 Person sleeping next to you, often
20 Like many nuclei
21 Surprise attacker
22 Nero or Napoleon
23 "Hello, Dolly!" star
25 Capital of the country Georgia
26 Doe's dear?
27 Alley-
28 Sousing sort
29 TV's Cheers, for one
30 Top pilot
31 Ice sheets
33 1960s-'70s talk show host
37 She played Bree on "Desperate Housewives"
42 Al Bundy portrayer Ed
43 Nebraska city
44 Jekyll's bad side
45 She played the mother on "Lassie"
49 Football's Joe
51 Country next to Georgia

53 — a soul singer
54 "Like — not!"
55 Suffix of beliefs
58 Ending for serpent
59 Microscope component
62 Her first Vogue cover was in 1986
66 Green and Gore
67 — matter of fact
68 Japanese dog
69 Video game pioneer
72 — glance
75 Music genre for brooders
76 Co-author of the 2006 bestseller "Three Cups of Tea"
81 Like low-fat mozzarella
86 Eggs, in labs
87 Pro's vote
88 Dot in the sea, to Jorge
89 Actor Baldwin
90 Tunneling rodents
93 What to do after hiding, in a kids' game
95 "M" star
98 Big snakes
101 — Gras

102 Perfectly
103 "Blue Velvet" singer
105 "The Color Purple" novelist
109 In — (irritated)
110 Habited sister
111 Slip- (some shoes)
112 Links peg
114 Boatload
115 Pod veggies
119 Affluent Rio neighborhood
122 Sitcom associated with nine featured first names in this puzzle
125 Hand-held filming equipment
126 Soviet statesman Gromyko
127 Lost lady in "The Raven"
128 Stinging-tentacle reef dweller
129 "Already?"
130 Got lippy with

DOWN

1 Pouches
2 Coup d'—
3 Comic Dunn
4 Air pollution
5 Iraq export

6 32-Down brand since the early 1900s
7 Curtain
8 Actor Holm
9 French wines
10 Linguistic expressions
11 Teeth: Prefix
12 Work unit
13 Process by which an electron is emitted
14 Involve in contention
15 Print resolution abbr.
16 Baseball's Ott
17 Popular font type
18 Puccini opera
19 Iroquois tribe members
24 Liquor, slangily
29 Elton John's "— and the Jets"
31 Italian car
32 Soft drink
34 Zen master's question
35 Suffix with form
36 Tony-winning actress Johns
37 Tennis' Seles
38 Very valuable violins

39 "Pest" of kiddie lit
40 Beet variety
41 Letter stroke
45 Scoff
46 — kwon do (martial art)
47 Tolkien brute
48 TV "Science Guy" Bill
50 Frontiersman Wild Bill —
52 L-P linkup
56 — Lankan
57 Tumbler's surface
60 Wildlife-tracking ID
61 Balletic bend
63 Thanksgiving side servings
64 Joking type
65 Water barrier
70 Tot amuser
71 Add up to
72 State as fact
73 City in Ohio
74 Luke and Leia's father
75 "And on and on": Abbr.
77 Architect Ludwig Mies van der —
78 Eden dweller
79 Actress Greta
80 Jewish month after Adar
81 Baby food
82 Malted quaff
83 No longer in the mil., e.g.

84 1973 Jim Croce hit
85 Gourmet mushrooms
91 Class for tots, for short
92 Buckwheat noodle of Japan
94 Fail to put in
96 Caviar source
97 The Doors song with a Calif. city in its title
99 Refrain from imbibing
100 "Holy" council
103 Gives rise to
104 Shiny plastics
105 Jungian inner personality
106 Fictional sleuth Arsène
107 Pointless
108 Prefix meaning "people"
113 Spanish river
115 Bits of wit
116 Baseball's Slaughter
117 Farmland unit
118 Shanty
120 Pick-up-sticks math game
121 Prefix with car
122 Classroom aides: Abbr.
123 Antique Olds
124 Actress Arthur

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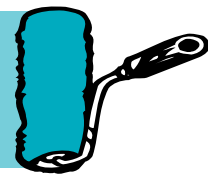
Answer

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
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119					120	121				122			123			124			
125										126							127		
128										129									



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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Dame Dench
5 Witty one
8 Leer at
12 Western tribe
13 TV pioneer
14 Eye part
15 Dressing ingredient
17 Sugar unit
18 Fill in — blank
19 Conclude
20 Monk's home
21 Droop
22 Bikini top
23 Wan
26 Germ
30 God, in
31 Joke
32 Spoken
33 "You wish!"
35 Pesky insects
36 Chairman of China
37 Greyhound vehicle
38 Hoopster
41 Dict. info
42 Chi follower
45 Sandwich cookie
46 Fuel-producing area
48 Hindu royal
49 Parisian pal
50 Advertising award
51 Genesis

DOWN

1 Equitable
2 Beehive State
3 Take out of context?
4 "This — recording"
5 Incorrect
6 Battery fluid
7 Lass
8 Getty and Rockefeller, e.g.
9 Vittles
10 Margarita garnish
11 Glimpse
16 Campus VIP
20 Lob's path
21 Staple in some Asian recipes
22 Ginormous
23 Do sums
24 Polite address
25 Weed whacker
26 Chess piece
27 — pro nobis
28 Cudgel
29 Overhead trains
31 Sticky stuff
34 Scratch
35 Nonsense
37 Prove untrue
38 Comics' Mrs. Dithers
39 Bedouin
40 Hereditary unit
41 Exemplar of thinness
42 Soccer leg-end
43 Faux pas
44 Nuptial vows
46 Klutz
47 Glacial

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