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The **TIMBERJAY**



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

VOL. 34, ISSUE 28

July 21, 2023

\$1⁵⁰

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Hwy. 169 resurfacing project to start Monday

Construction to continue through September; expect travel delays between Tower and Pike River bridge

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—Travelers along Hwy. 169 south of Tower will want to plan for extra time starting Monday, as work is set to begin on a mill and overlay project to repair the crumbling road surface along a roughly ten-mile stretch of the heavily-trafficked corridor.

The \$3.4 million project includes resurfacing the stretch, repairing culverts, converting existing street lighting to LED, and

clearing trees that cause too much shading in the winter months.

The work is being done by Angora-based KGM and is expected to continue through September.

Travelers can expect frequent lane closures throughout the project, which will cause delays. MnDOT spokesperson Margie Nelson said they hope to keep delays down to 10-15 minutes per trip during most of the construction period, but longer delays may occur.

While the work will be an

Right: A sign posted this week advises motorists of pending road construction on Hwy. 169.

photo by M. Helmberger

inconvenience for area drivers, its completion is likely to be welcomed by frequent users of the stretch of highway, which has been plagued by broken pavement, large potholes, and heaving culverts for the past few years.

See...**ROAD WORK** pg. 10



CITY OF ELY

Mayoral proclamation once again divides Ely over mining

by **CATIE CLARK**
Ely Editor

ELY- A proclamation honoring Twin Metals packed the city council chambers here on Tuesday, as area residents turned out to voice both support and opposition to the statement, issued by Mayor Heidi Omerza.

Omerza has declared July 28-30 to be "Twin Metals Minnesota Appreciation Days" in Ely, a prerogative of the mayor's office over which the city council has no authority to veto.

The proclamation states that "Twin Metals Minnesota is an important and valued member of the community, contributing to many charitable organizations," and provided a list of ten local beneficiaries like the Ely Food Shelf as examples of the mining firm's largesse. The proclamation also noted that: "Since 2010, Twin Metals Minnesota has donated more than \$550,000" to local "charitable organizations" and that the business had a "significant impact on job creation and economic development" in Minnesota.

Most of the attendees at the city council meeting were there to protest the mayor's action. They brought colorful signs with the names of businesses they considered far more worthy of being honored than Twin Metals. Three representatives of this group requested to address the council prior to the meeting: Becky Rom, well-known advocate for Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness; Jay Gustafson, Ely resident and manager of Piragis Northwoods Company; and Madelyn "Maddie" Fahnlne, who works for Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness.

"Honoring an international

See...**DIVIDED** pg. 9



BACK IN BUSINESS, SOON

New life for old cafe

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

TOWER—More than three years after it closed its doors in April 2020 at the start of the COVID pandemic, the Tower Café will soon be back in business. And probably no one is more surprised than Bob and Jen McDonough, who closed on the Main Street property this past Friday.

The couple, relatively new residents of Vermilion Lake Township, made the decision on a bit of a whim.

"We had driven past the café and the For Sale sign a hundred times," said Jen. "We had talked about all the things the new owner could do. Then, in the

spring, I turned to Bob one day as we drove past and asked if he'd like to take a look inside."

They did a few days later, and almost immediately felt it was the right thing to do. "The building kind of made my heart skip," said Bob.

Jen agreed. "We could see that this could be a piece of our lives and our mission of building stronger communities," said Jen. "Running a restaurant has always been Bob's dream so I left it to him to decide. He's made every one of my dreams come true, so when he said yes, we did it."

Since Jen announced the closing

See...**TOWER CAFE** pg. 9



A plethora of heavy equipment is deployed near the site of this week's derailment along the CN track near Gheen. photo by F. Schumacher

RAIL SAFETY

Another CN derailment near Gheen

No injuries or spills reported

by **DAVID COLBURN**
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK- Ten cars of a Canadian National train, two containing hazardous materials, derailed approximately six miles north of Cook on Monday, the second such incident in the past year along the remote stretch of railway.

At approximately 8:20 p.m. Saint Louis County Sheriff's deputies along with the Cook Fire Department responded to the derailment in Field Township.

Five of the ten cars had fallen over on their sides, including two containing liquefied petroleum gas – propane and butane – both considered to be hazardous. However, responders found no leaks or spills from the cars.

"This incident was at a remote location, not leaking any hazardous materials, and determined to be not a threat to the public," said St. Louis County Emergency Management Planner Josh Brinkman. "St. Louis County Emergency Management responded to the derailment to assist with public-private coordination.

See... **DERAILMENT** pg. 10



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Community notices

Top handbell ensemble to perform July 29

MT. IRON - Strikepoint, an internationally-claimed handbell ensemble from Duluth, will be performing at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 29 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Mt. Iron. Admission is free but an \$18 donation is suggested. Donations support local arts groups with 20 percent of the evening's donation being returned to Messiah Lutheran's music program. This performance is part of Strikepoint's 2023 summer tour.

Strikepoint was established in 1984 and has been touring annually since 1986. Their travels have taken them to England, Scotland, Japan, Hong Kong, Sweden, Canada, Hawaii and throughout the mainland U.S. They have performed at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Disney World in Florida, and both Disneyland and the Crystal Cathedral in California. In 2016, they were cultural exchange ambassadors to Växjö, Duluth's Swedish sister city. Locally, they have performed with the Arrowhead Chorale and the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra.

Strikepoint rings 6-plus octaves of bronze Schulerich handbells, 7 octaves of handchimes, 2 octaves of Silver Melody Bells, 3 octaves of Petit and Fritzen handbells and a variety of other instruments. The 11-member directorless ensemble is unique among touring handbell groups as a combination community/professional/church group and an adult/youth group. Bill Alexander, a nationally known handbell clinician and conductor, is the leader of the ensemble.

Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Championships set for July 22

MT. IRON-The 41st annual Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Championships, in their 11th year at Mt. Iron's Merritt School Auditorium, will take place Saturday, July 22. Walk-on registration for contestants starts at 10:30 a.m. with the show starting at 1 p.m. We are thrilled to be able to continue this tradition, which began over 40 years ago in Cotton. The contest is open to all U.S. and Canadian fiddlers as well as all other stringed instrumentalists. The National Old-time Fiddlers' Association certifies our championship division and each age division. We have \$2,000 in cash and prizes to give away. The non-fiddle and Twin Fiddle divisions are open to all ages and all bowed and plucked stringed instruments. Rules, online registration, and contact information can be found on our website www.mesabisymphonyorchestra.org/FiddleContest. For contestants who don't bring their own back-up accompanist, we are fortunate to have Tom Weisgerber on guitar.

At the show you'll hear first from each of our three judges: Mary LaPlant, Sara Alexander and John Wallace. Contestants will each play a waltz, a hoe-down, and a tune of choice, except for Twin Fiddlers who only need to play a tune of choice. We are excited that two former state champions will be returning to the stage this year. The show is open to the public for a modest fee of \$10.

These activities are made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, thanks to appropriations from the Minnesota State Legislature's general and arts and cultural heritage funds, and in part by a grant from Minnesota State Fiddlers Association.

FESTIVAL FUN

Blueberry/Art Festival runs July 28-30

ELY- Planning for the Blueberry/Art Festival began in January and will soon come to fruition with more than 200 art, craft, and food vendors in Ely's Whiteside Park. The festival begins on Friday, July 28 at 9 a.m. and ends Sunday, July 30 at 4 p.m.

Event Organizer Kristen Switajewski spent hundreds of hours planning the event layout featuring many of the favorite vendors, plus at least 40 new ones. The festival is a juried show, so each new applicant is reviewed by a panel of area artists and crafters before receiving an invitation to participate in the festival. On Friday, which is opening morning of the festival, jurors judge both artists and crafters and award the top three winners in both categories.

"We are excited to have a very diverse group of artists and crafters; there is something for everyone," said Kristen. "We have Shawn Bina of Guld of the Gilded Hilt, who does hand-crafted fantasy swords; Brian and Jill Siegel from Mystic Sparrow, who create wonderful gemstones, jewelry, and paintings; Katie Bromme with her wonderful watercolors inspired by the Minnesota landscape; Fredrick's Forest who features wood crafts, and many more. Wade Pharr from Pharr Thrown Pottery is offering pottery wheel demonstrations and



The Ely Chamber of Commerce Blueberry/Art Festival held at Whiteside Park offers something for everyone. File photo

selling his work in the park during the festival."

"Our food court is filled with many vendors offering tasty treats, including turkey legs, fresh seafood, corn dogs, brats, cheese curds, authentic Mexican food, BBQ, waffles, funnel cakes, oriental food, and frozen yogurt. The Ely Kiwanis are in the pavilion serving their delicious blueberry pies, ice cream, and sandwiches. The beer tent is back this year with proceeds going to support the Ely Fire Department. There is something for everyone."

Pengal's Basswood Trading will have the annual must-have

Blueberry/Art Festival t-shirts and sweatshirts.

The fourth annual "Operation Blueberry" event kicks off on Thursday, July 27. Fifteen businesses all around town are offering a variety of mini-events. A map and list of participating businesses will be available on the Ely Chamber of Commerce social media pages, the Ely.org website, at the Chamber office, as well as the Chamber festival booth. The Chamber booth will also have the coveted "Blueberry List" featuring blueberry art, crafts, food, and many other items offered by vendors at the festival.

SUPPORTING VETERANS

Upcoming concert benefits mural project

ELY - The public is invited to participate in a locally organized project to support the creation of a healing-themed mural at Veterans on the Lake Resort in Ely. Annie Humphrey, Story Portage, the 23rd Veteran, and White Pine Productions, have teamed up to create the mural. The theme for the mural is healing for veterans, their families, and anyone who visits the site on Fall Lake outside of Ely.

Local organizers and musicians are hosting the Veterans Healing Benefit Concert with a suggested donation of \$10-\$15. The concert is scheduled for Friday, July 28 from



Artist Annie Humphrey

6-9:30 p.m. Performers include: Annie Humphrey, Chickadee-dee-dee, Jef Cierniak + Andy Messerschmidt and features readings by Ely Street Poet Tim Stouffer and presentations by the 23rd Veteran

Organization. Area veterans and civilian allies are encouraged to attend the concert which is taking place outside at Hidden Valley Ski Chalet. In case of rain the event will be moved inside.

In addition to live music, poetry readings and presentations, there will be yard games, face painting for the kids, and the wood-fire pizza truck will be available to purchase dinner. Proceeds from the event go directly to support the artists developing the mural. "This is the first collaboration between three groups supporting healing programs for veterans and their families, and we hope it's not the last," says Jeanette Cox, founder of Story Portage.

For those who want to be more involved, the group is inviting the public to participate in the painting of the healing mural, scheduled for Saturday, August 19 from 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. There will be a potluck luncheon to honor veterans the same

day at noon. Participants will be included in a documentary produced by Jacob White of White Pine Productions.

Roughly 22 veterans per day commit suicide, and the work of the 23rd Veteran and this self-organized group of supporters is to raise awareness about the struggles of veterans and their families and to actively work to support veterans through the healing process.

Under the guidance of artist Annie Humphrey, this collaborative project is partially funded by The Minnesota State Arts Board, Essentia Health Foundation, and Lake Country Power. If interested in participating in future programs in 2024 or you would like to make a donation to ongoing veterans programs, please contact Story Portage, PO Box 286, Ely, MN 55731. To RSVP for the concert, visit us on Facebook by searching Veterans Mural Concert.



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MINING

Glencore a step closer to full ownership of PolyMet

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The international commodities trader Glencore may soon assume full ownership of PolyMet Mining, for about \$73 million in cash. The massive Swiss-based company, which has faced a raft of criminal charges in recent years for its aggressive tactics in acquiring mineral assets, had already controlled about 82 percent of PolyMet's stock.

Under their latest tender offer, Glencore will pay \$2.11 a share for the remaining 17.8 percent of PolyMet stock. A special committee of PolyMet's board of directors unan-

imously approved the offer, according to an announcement made Monday. Approval by the full board is expected at a later date.

The offer was well above the value pegged in recent market trading for PolyMet stock, which had been selling for a rock bottom 79-cents a share as of June 30. Glencore's offer sent the stock sharply higher. It was trading at \$2.08 per share as of Tuesday of this week.

Final approval of the acquisition won't happen immediately. According to a press statement issued by PolyMet, the agreement will be fully consummated upon satisfaction of board and shareholder approval, court approv-

al, and certain customary closing conditions. "The transaction is expected to close shortly after the shareholder meeting, which is expected to occur in the late third quarter or early fourth quarter, stated the announcement.

Glencore's decision to acquire PolyMet in its entirety comes as the proposed copper-nickel mining venture is facing major challenges, including the recent withdrawal of its Section 404 wetlands permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The company had appeared all but ready to go in 2018, with most of its major permits in hand, but successful legal challenges by environmental groups and the Fond du Lac Band

have left most of its permits, including its state-issued permit to mine, in legal limbo.

Among the criticisms leveled against state and

federal regulators is that the permits they issued did not name Glencore as a responsible party, despite the company's majority ownership of the mining

venture. That criticism is almost certain to intensify assuming PolyMet becomes a wholly-owned subsidiary of Glencore.

GREENWOOD

Greenwood to return Isle of Pines bridge fund to road association

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The Greenwood Town Board, at their July 11 meeting, voted to close out the Isle of Pines Bridge Fund, and return the \$31,166 to the Isle of Pines Road Association, a nonprofit that maintains the road that rings the island. The money came from an assessment on island residents back in 1984, and was part of the local match for the bridge replacement project, which was mostly funded with federal monies. The local assessment was used to pay for work on the road approaches to the bridge, and other items not covered by the federal grant. The unspent portion of the assessment has been sitting in a special township fund, reserved for future bridge maintenance.

Isle of Pines resident Lee Peterson said he had

been researching the issue, and discovered that St. Louis County owns the bridge, and that any future maintenance costs would be covered by the county. The county does regular inspections of the bridge, and has been doing any minor repairs as needed.

"I was told by county officials that the county

has no claim on the money in the bridge fund," he said.

The board approved terminating the bridge fund, pending review by the township attorney.

See BRIDGE...pg. 5

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OPINION

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

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

Editorial

Chickens in town

Tower's proposed new ordinance may be going a bit overboard

When it comes to ordinances, few communities seek to reinvent the wheel. Most adopt ordinances based on the work done by others, with only minor modifications. That could be how Tower's proposed new chicken ordinance came to include, among a number of humorous items, a prohibition on accumulated fecal matter in any chicken coop in the city.

These are chickens, remember. For those who don't know, they poop over everything. It comes out wet and thick, in different colors, and in impressively large quantities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our best guess is, a loose definition of "accumulated" is in order or there will be violations in every chicken coop in town.

It's the same with the requirement that chickens be given access to clean water at all times. Yes, at all times. As previously noted, chickens poop everywhere, and their water dish seems to be one of their favorite destinations for said poop. We swear, chickens can turn a bowl of fresh water into a mudpie inside of ten minutes. How about an ordinance that requires providing chickens with clean water twice a day? After that, they're on their own to keep it clean? Seems like the chickens should have at least some responsibility for their own care. Otherwise, it would take a full-time chicken maid to meet the new rules in Tower. We thought chicken maids were pretty much limited to California.

The proposed new ordinance, at least at present, also prohibits the "harvesting or butchering" of chickens, which seems remarkably overly protective for a place like Tower. This isn't Santa Barbara, after all. People shoot and drag deer within the city limits of Tower during the annual special season and butchering of same takes place in half the garages in town come the regular firearms season. But as currently written, if you want to kill and butcher that rooster, you can't do it in Tower. You'll have to take it to Soudan to do the deed. They're rough and tumble over there and can handle the occasional headless chicken flopping in the street.

And, of course, if you're one of the latest residents to get chickens in Tower (we can't say "one of the first," since people have been keeping black market chickens in town for a while now), you'd better not bring them by the *Timberjay* office

to show them off, or get their mugs in the next edition. The city's new ordinance also prohibits anyone younger than five and older than 65 from coming in contact with chicks. Yep, didn't see that one coming, either. With the youngest editor at the *Timberjay* currently clocking in at age 62, it's probably best to keep any chickens well away from us. We're frail old folks, according to the city of Tower, who might be felled by one of those chicken flus.

And before you even think of getting chickens in Tower, it would be best to go back to school for that engineering degree you've always dreamed about. The description of the construction of a code-compliant chicken coop looks like it was written by SEH. The coop should be elevated but not too high — it must not exceed seven feet from ground to roof peak. And you must have a minimum of four-square feet per chicken within a maximum coop size of 30 square feet, or six square feet per chicken. The coop must have also at least one square foot of window space, covered with half-inch hardware cloth for each 15 feet of floor space. It's kind of like one of those word problems we all used to get in high school math.

The city is also naturally very concerned that their residents' coops appear well-designed and aesthetically pleasing. All walls of the coop shall be built of the same materials, in one color, preferably a fashionable hue. No coops built of wood scraps, please.

Windows and trim are to be made of the same material, in one color. Roofing should also be of one color and preferably shingles or perhaps cedar shakes, which could look absolutely fabulous with the right accents. If you want to go with metal roofing, you'll need special permission, which should go without saying.

And, finally, there is the city's concern about snakes, which comes up more than once in this remarkable ordinance. Here in the North Country, we have garter snakes and the tiny, rarely seen red-bellied snake, which max out at about 12 inches long and don't even have teeth. Neither poses a risk to chickens. If a garter snake ever found its way into a chicken coop, it would be the one in trouble. It would be lucky to escape the pecking hens and the accumulating fecal matter. Chickens can be a rough crowd, after all.



Letters from Readers

Stauber needs to go

Once again Pete Stauber showed his true colors. He was one of 70 Republicans to vote to abandon Ukraine and allow Putin to conquer a free European country for the first time since Hitler invaded Poland. He did so despite the unspeakable war crimes being perpetrated on Ukrainian women, children and the elderly. Then, he abandoned our military by voting for amendments that will kill funding for our soldiers and sailors, just so he and his radical buddies can control our private lives. He hurt the people who sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy so that he can take those freedoms away from us.

These are the damaging things he does and stands for. It is no wonder that he takes credit for road and building projects he voted against and tried to stop. Taking credit for the work of others and lying about delivering benefits he didn't deliver is the only way to cover for his shameless and extreme actions. Thank goodness that Jen Schultz is running for Congress with a record of actually supporting constituents and getting things done. It is past time for Pete to go.

Kelly Dahl Cook

Stauber aligning himself with radicals

Rep. Pete Stauber now supports a bill to withdraw all military aid from the Ukraine, despite previously ardently supporting vital U.S. and allied military assistance, claiming lack of transparency where none has been reported. He is in the process of aligning himself with two of the most outrageously corrupt and radical representatives in Congress, Ms. Greene and Mr. Gaetz. It seems Mr. Stauber is the one who lacks clarity. Sadly, I be-

lieve Mr. Stauber is once again acting without moral compass, failing to represent the present concerns or future interests of northern Minnesota.

**Dan Iverson
Jeanie Crawford
Winton**

What will visitors think of our community?

The 4th of July parade in Ely was to be a celebration of the passage of the Declaration of Independence. A celebration of our country and our democracy. Free speech is part of living in a democracy. Unfortunately, some residents exercised their right to free speech by depriving the rest of the community of their freedom to enjoy the day as it was intended. The "F*%\$ Biden" flag hung next to the city park was not only a disrespectful use of our nation's flag, it was also disrespectful to the office of the presidency of the United States, regardless of one's political affiliation.

Yet that was not the only ugliness displayed to families and to children. On Camp Street between 4th and 5th Avenues, near the Catholic Church no less, there was a huge black tarp with "F*%& Biden" written in large red letters hanging from trees in front of a residence. As I drove past, a man on a motorcycle coming from the opposite direction gave "the finger" to the sky and yelled "F*%& Biden." Those sitting at a table on the sign-owner's lawn laughed and cheered. All while families were walking to their vehicles with their children after the parade. Shocked and dismayed, I could only think about how families visiting our area would feel about Ely. Whether they would ever consider living here or visiting again after seeing such crude and bizarre displays?

**Carla Arneson
Ely**

The Old Settlers thank you for another great event

Thank you for the outpouring of support that made Saturday's 109th Old Settlers celebration a success. Our increased attendance and empty booyah pots were testaments to the interest to keep alive the rich history of the Vermilion Range. A few key thanks: To the Township of Breitung for their event sponsorship and dedicated staff at beautiful McKinley Park — the only location where Old Settlers has been held since 1914. To Zup's in Tower and Ely for their supplies and potato peeler! And to the *Timberjay* for continued publicity. Our dedicated board and volunteers plan the logistics, collect prizes, peel vegetables, cook the booyah, and cheerfully serve our grateful guests. Put the third Saturday in July 2024 on your calendars for the 110th annual Old Settlers.

**Eric Norberg
Tower**

Obscene flag wavers should be ashamed

This letter is not about politics. It is about respect, manners, preserving the innocence of children, and teaching them to be good citizens and decent human beings.

I would have been as disgusted with a sign saying "F*@K Trump" as I was with the sign that said "F*@K Biden" that was proudly displayed facing the park on July 4, when the park was full of children.

To the people at 26 S 8th Ave. E, your mothers should wash your mouths out with soap.

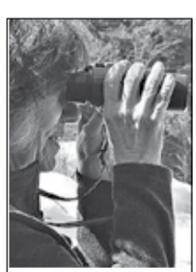
Shame on you.
**Kate Furness
Ely**

COLUMNIST

Are we ready to quit whistling past the graveyard?

Remember back a few weeks when we were living under gloomy skies for days in a row with itchy eyes, a runny nose, even some shortness of breath? If you had asthma or another lung condition, you might have had serious trouble breathing, perhaps wondering if you should visit a hospital. Well, many did!

We were wondering when those distressing conditions would end. And, as news reports continued to come in, we questioned whether this would be our "new normal". Happily, for the past



KATHLEEN MCQUILLAN

few weeks, it had seemed that our air quality had improved. I enjoyed working in my garden, catching up on some outdoor projects, and basking in what felt like a normal sunny summer day in July.

But that welcome break from thick smoke-filled air has been interrupted again by more air quality alerts! It's an especially "bad day" when our usual clear blue skies are instead a heavy grey with the scent of campfire smoke, mixed

with a hint of creepy chemicals. Canada remains on fire. By a recent account, there are over 900 fires burning, with 25 million acres already destroyed in the first six months of 2023.

We've been instructed to bring out the N95 masks again after storing them away when the worst threats from COVID-19 subsided. Now, whenever the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches PM 2.5, we're advised to stay indoors with air conditioning or an air purifier equipped with HEPA filters. These precautions are targeted for children, the elderly, and people with lung conditions and compromised immune systems — all of whom are especially vulnerable. Just

when we thought our days of hunkering indoors were behind us, here we go again. Only this time, the threat isn't a virus. It's toxic air-borne pollutants.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency just issued another AQI alert for the 27th time this year. PM 2.5 is the number indicating when air pollution has reached a level that endangers public health and triggers the alert. Breathing a "toxic soup" of chemicals, microscopic particles, and a low-level ozone that is emitted from our vehicles' tailpipes, is known to exacerbate existing health conditions and even create new ones. So, the alerts!

Air pollution enters our

lungs when we breathe and hitches a ride on oxygen molecules traveling throughout our bodies via our bloodstream. Blood flows, destined for all of our vital organs, providing oxygen and nutrients and, on "bad days", harmful fumes and particulates. The smoke from uncontrolled forest fires, some over 1,000 miles away, can cause an array of serious illnesses including cancers, heart attack and stroke.

The rapid rise in the number of AQI alerts has finally gotten the attention of mainstream news outlets. After decades of

See **FIRES...**pg. 5

Commentary



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.

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

Letters are subject to editing, primarily for length and clarity.

Letters are a great way to offer your input to the *Timberjay's* editorial page. We want to know what you think!

Expanding access to broadband for rural residents

In 2023, you can't fully participate in our economy if you can't get online. That's why I introduced a bill in 2020 to deliver high-speed internet to every zip code in America. It was ultimately included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and we just learned that Minnesota will be receiving a game-changing grant of more than \$650 million for broadband projects over the next five years.



U.S. SEN. AMY KLOBUCHAR

their cars at McDonald's to read x-rays because they don't have reliable internet at home.

While Minnesota ranks first in the country for internet access according to U.S. News and World Reports, data from the U.S.

Department of Commerce shows that nearly 136,000 homes and small businesses in Minnesota are still completely unserved. For example, in Murray County, more than 40 percent of households don't have dependable access, and in Pine County, more than half of households don't have broadband at high enough speeds.

Now, because of this law, we have new resources to deliver broadband to people in every corner of our state. Importantly, the legislation has a clawback provision in it, so if the providers don't use the money like they're supposed to, the state will be able to get it back to give to someone else who is ready to do the work.

Broadband expansion will have a huge impact, especially in our rural communities. There are younger Minnesotans who will be able to start their careers in their hometowns. There are small businesses that will be in a better position to compete with a full set of digital tools at their fingertips. There are farmers who will be able to use precision agriculture technology to increase their crop yields.

Now that we have se-

cured this federal investment, I am going to work every day to make sure it gets out the door and into the communities that need it most. This funding is for

all of the workers, farmers, and business owners who want the best possible shot at success in the 21st century economy.

Letters from Readers

Sober house would be a worthy addition

In response to the proposed sober house in Soudan, I am so proud to have been part of the Tower-Soudan community for 10 years. I witnessed such strong feelings of local pride and love in many of the residents, people who are willing to invest time and energy protecting and preserving local buildings, history and artifacts. Examples of that devotion are Mary Bati-

nich's efforts to save and honor St. Mary's Church by converting it to the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center and the old Soudan Hospital into a comfy inn. It sounds like the sale of the inn could be the development of a sober house. What a worthy addition this would be to the community. I am in awe of the ambition and adaptability of the Tower-Soudan community.

Feeling the pride.
Ann Flanagan
St. Paul

BRIDGE...Continued from page 3

Fire department

Fire Chief Jeff Maus reported that the department is still looking at options for replacing the leaking cistern inside the fire hall that is used to fill the tenders. The existing cistern is 43 years old and rusting. Many of the tanks available are too large to fit into the existing space, so they are looking at having a custom tank built, or possibly finding other options. The current tank holds 3,000 gallons and Maus said a new tank would need to hold at least 2,300 gallons.

The department responded to 14 fire pages and 18 EMS calls last month, and is continuing to do twice-monthly trainings, including some joint trainings with the Tower Fire Department. First Responders are doing addi-

tional training so they can administer some drugs on scene, such as aspirin, glucagon, and epi-pens.

The board agreed to purchase a new battery for the LUCAS automatic CPR device. The current battery is about 10 years old. A new battery will cost around \$850.

The fire department roster still stands at seven members. The department does have automatic mutual aid with both the Tower and Breitung departments.

Pickleball

The board discussed the growing popularity of pickleball in the township and the idea of privately raising funds to build a stand-alone pickleball court.

"There are sometimes as many as 20 people

playing," said Supervisor Barb Lofquist.

"Everyone wants to play in the mornings," said Supervisor Rick Stoehr.

Lee Anderson, one of the pickleball players, said he would talk to other players about the idea of raising funds for a second court, just for pickleball. Currently, players make use of the township tennis courts for pickleball.

"The list of players is phenomenal," Anderson said. "There aren't other places around to play, even in Cook."

Other business

In other business the board:

- Approved hiring A-Z Property Management to mow and trim at the town hall grounds, at a cost of \$250 per time.

Mowing will only occur if the grass is two inches or taller.

- Approved hiring TNT Sealers to do black-top crack sealing and pot-hole repair on Twp. Rd. 4136 (Birch Point Extension) at a cost of \$4,000. "This is basically just a band-aid until the road is redone," said Supervisor Paul Skubic. "There are not a lot of options. I think this estimate is more than fair." Supervisors Barb Lofquist and John Bassing both abstained since they own property on the road in question.

- Will advertise for propane and snowplowing at the town hall, and will also be looking for quotes for plowing of Rd. 4136 if the county will not agree to continue plowing.

- Will advertise for someone to do cleaning

at the town hall, approximately two hours per week.

- Passed a motion to send a letter to St. Louis County Public Works to see if they would continue to plow Rd. 4136 if the township signs a hold-harmless agreement for any damage the plow does to the aging pavement.

- Will ask residents on Rd. 4136 to brush roadsides along their property. Resident Lee Anderson said he could work with the township to help speak with property owners. "We can get together with those property owners and show what needs to be done," Anderson said.

- Passed a motion to retain the \$50 deposit on a town hall rental because the areas were not left in clean condition. They also

passed a motion to accept volunteer work done by Mary Bassing to clean up after aforesaid rental.

- Passed a motion to increase the deposit for use of the town hall or pavilion to \$200.

- A motion by Lofquist to purchase a lockbox for the key for the recreation shed, to allow for easier use of the equipment, failed for lack of a second. Supervisor Rick Stoehr said his number is posted on the shed, and people can call him to have the shed unlocked since he is only a few minutes away from the town hall. Keys are also available from the clerk if the office is open.

FIRES...Continued from page 4

living in ignorance or denial, mounting scientific data now irrefutably link this public health crisis (and a variety of other environmental catastrophes such as floods, excessive heat, drought and yes, wild fires) to human-induced climate change.

Researchers from around the world, representing various scientific fields, agree that recent record-breaking events prove beyond a doubt that global warming is real, accelerating, and likely to worsen unless we human earthlings make a radical shift in the way we are living!

Rising atmospheric temperatures and changing rain patterns have weakened North America's boreal forests, making them more susceptible to generalized drought stress, insect infestations, and die-off. This leads to

quicker ignitions from lightning strikes, acts of human carelessness, and accidental sources like railroad sparks. And these fires spread quickly, at rates beyond our capacity to put them out. A Canadian interagency fire center reported recently that over 3,056 fires had been counted so far this year — a ten-fold increase when compared to the average during the first half of the prior 10 years.

If that isn't worrisome enough, scientists predict a 150-percent increase in forest fires by 2050. The effect on Earth's atmosphere is staggering. Forest fires in the U.S. in 2021 alone, emitted nearly two billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) into the atmosphere — approximately 23 percent of all the carbon emissions that year from wildfires worldwide. And there are no

signs of it letting up.

Despite these foreboding reports, including our approaching what's known as the "tipping point" (when it will be too late to reverse these patterns), much of the science also states that we are not there yet. There are things we can do that could shift our current direction away from disaster. So, what are those things? Here are a few suggestions.

Start with the things you already know. Reuse, recycle, and conserve. Foster earth-friendly thinking with your kids. Caring about our planet can be fun and something to be proud of. We alone may not be able to save the entire planet, but we can help take care of our own neighborhood. And let's not forget that caring is contagious.

The earth's lakes, rivers, oceans, forests,

people, plants, animals, and its atmosphere are all struggling. Some are barely surviving. Some have already disappeared. It's hard for us to slow down and really notice. It takes courage to feel the fear and sorrow that hover just below the surface at times like this. But climate conditions are telling us our survival depends on our noticing.

We've been whistling past the graveyard for a long time. If we identify the things we've already lost, and realize how much those things really meant to us, our grief can be our motivator and our guide. To make it, we only need to agree that a livable future is worth our waking up and working together!



the TIMBERJAY

Copyright © 2023 by *The Timberjay*. *The Timberjay* (PN 16025) is published weekly on Fridays, 51 weeks per year, by *The Timberjay Inc.*, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Business/Editorial Office at 414 Main St., PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Call (218) 753-2950 to subscribe. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Periodicals postage paid at Tower, Minnesota.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Timberjay, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790.

This award-winning community newspaper published each week serves the communities of Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
General Manager	Jodi Summit
Cook/Orr Editor	David Colburn
Ely Editor	Catie Clark
Office Manager	Michelle Toutloff
Staff Writer	Rachel Brophy
Graphics/Ad Sales	Scarlet Lynn Stone
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Official Newspaper:
Townships of Bearville, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, Crane Lake, Kabetogama, Greenwood, ISD 707, City of Orr.

Member: Minnesota Newspaper Association, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Lake Vermilion Area Chamber of Commerce, Ely Chamber of Commerce.

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Week of July 24

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 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Aug. 15.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Training meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

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.

Citywide garage sales planned for July 29

TOWER-SOUDAN- Tower-Soudan Citywide Garage Sales will be held on Saturday, July 29 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Locations will be available on a flyer at Zup's Grocery. To get your address listed, please contact Sarah Peitso or Joyce Swanson on Facebook by Friday, July 21. Updates also are being posted in the "What's Up Tower" Facebook group.

Free community meal at Immanuel Lutheran on Wednesday, July 26

TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church is hosting their monthly free community meal on Wednesday, July 26 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., or until the food is all gone. The meal this month is tacos and all the fixings. Eat-in or take-outs are available. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Austin Landgren graduates from CLC

REGIONAL- Austin Landgren, of Tower, has graduated with honors from Central Lakes College, Brainerd and Staples, with a Diploma of Occupational Proficiency, Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance.

Honors students earned a 3.25-3.74 GPA.

Central Lakes College is a comprehensive community and technical college in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

Jackie Syver graduates with honors from St. Cloud State

ST. CLOUD- Jackie Syver, of Tower, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, Film Studies, Magna Cum Laude from St. Cloud State University this spring.

St. Cloud State University is Minnesota's second-largest university, with more than 10,000 students.

Pine Island summer resident to talk about summers at the lake on July 27

TOWER-The Tower-Soudan Historical Society is excited to announce their popular "History Talks on Main Street" series, featuring a captivating story about the cherished summers spent on Pine Island in Lake Vermilion. As an integral part of the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion community's history, the stories of the individuals who spent their summers on the lake's islands are essential to understanding the area's heritage.

Mary Rosenberger St. Onge, author of the memoir "The Forever Days—A Memoir About Healing and a Lifetime of Summers at the Lake", will be the presenter. She will discuss her book, engage in a Q&A session, and have book copies available for sale and to sign.

The History Talk will take place on Thursday, July 27 at 4 p.m. inside the Coach Car 81, located at the Tower Train Depot. To support the valuable work carried out by the Tower-Soudan Historical Society and facilitate the filming of the presentation, there will be an admission fee of \$5.

Minnesota owes much of its early tourism development and access to Lake Vermilion's



Mary St. Onge

unique resort identity to the convenient transport provided by the railway and the Tower Train Depot Passenger Station. Prior to the advent of the railroad, exploration of the lake's 1,200-plus miles of shoreline was primarily accomplished by boat, dating back to the era of the Native Americans. The building of the railroad for Minnesota's first iron ore mine in Soudan in 1884 brought the miners and lumberjacks, and later their families, to Tower. In the early 1900s, the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad began to promote travel and tourism to the area.

Upon arrival at the Tower

train depot, visitors embarked on a journey across Lake Vermilion. They boarded steamboats at the Tower Harbor, which transported them directly to numerous resort islands dotting the lake's pristine waters. Establishments such as the Vermilion Boat and Outing Company, known for its cabins and boat services on Gold Island and Isle of Pines, played a pivotal role in the area's popularity. The esteemed "Hotel Idlewild" emerged as a prominent attraction in the mid-teens.

Lake Vermilion's allure extended beyond Minnesota, drawing tourists from the upper Midwest. Including Iowa, Nebraska and Chicago. The area was celebrated for its abundant outdoor activities, including boating, fishing and hunting, while also offering respite from late summer allergies and other health benefits. It was unabashedly hailed as a wilderness utopia, prompting the construction of additional resorts and private properties along the lake's shores.

Mary Rosenberger St. Onge, a member of one of the families who acquired property on Pine Island during its early years, vividly recounts her experience in her memoir. Arriving in the

1950s, Mary shares the tale of her family's arrival at Gruben's, where they would stockpile supplies before making their way to the secluded east end of Pine Island. At that time, the island lacked basic amenities such as electricity, phones, and running water. With her father returning to work in Iowa, Mary and her brothers were granted the freedom to roam and engage in playful adventures with children from neighboring families who also spent their summers on the island. Mary's narrative is a delightful journey through the carefree joys of childhood, while also shedding light on the challenges her family encountered. Notably, she shares a touching account of her relationship with her son as he transitions into adulthood, showcasing the unifying power of trust and communal bonds.

Nancy Larson, President of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society, emphasizes that "The Forever Days" is not solely intended for summer residents but for all those who have cherished moments on Lake Vermilion.

LAKE VERMILION CULTURAL CENTER**LVCC hosting program with couple from Australia on Aug. 6**

TOWER- The LVCC is pleased to present a program featuring two gifted educators from Australia at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 6 followed by an ice cream and pie social hosted by Shelby Vaske and other LVCC board members.

When Janny King, from Grand Rapids, emigrated to Australia more than 50 years ago to teach, she vowed to return to Minnesota every year that she could to keep touch with her home state.

She met and married the delightful David Munzberg, as they were both

high school principals and worked together on many projects. Each year they have watched the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center (LVCC) grow and blossom, and have contributed money, art, gifts, and this year hosted several people from the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center who went Down Under for a lovely week hosted by the Munzbergs. Janny's work as a quilter, artist, and ecologist have kept her busy both in the Land of Oz and elsewhere. David has a thriving woodworking business in Aldinga Beach,

Australia and is involved in international woodworking organizations. The LVCC is happy to be the recipients of their philanthropy on many levels.

There is no charge for the event, but a freewill offering will be taken. Reservations are not necessary. However, if you plan on attending, a note on the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center website would be appreciated at vermilionculturalcenter.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS**Children's Day on Friday, July 21 at Tower Farmers Market**

TOWER-The Tower Farmers Market Annual Children's Day will be on Friday, July 21, from 4 - 6 p.m. at the Tower train depot area. Steve Solkela is performing with his accordion and more. Come in costume, then register to be eligible for a prize!

Art on the Lake set for July 28-29

TOWER- Local artists are sponsoring Art On The Lake. A preview party and sale of the artists' work is Friday, July 28, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center in Tower. Tickets are \$30 at the door. Appetizers and beverages will be served.

The public art show and sale is Saturday, July 29, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. An artist will be conducting a demonstration of a painting from the beginning at 10 a.m. Proceeds from the sale will go to the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center building project.

52 chances to win cash prizes with TSHS raffle

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society has raffle tickets for purchase at various outlets in town. Purchase them at UBetcha Antiques and at Pike River Products, both on Tower's Main Street. Tickets will be available to buy on Fridays in July at the Tower Farmers Mar-

ket from 4 to 6 p.m. You can call Nancy at 218-750-7514 to purchase tickets. Tickets are also available from Tower-Soudan Historical Society Board members: Kathy Siskar, Louise Gately, Dick Peyla, Linda Haugen, Dianna Sundahl, Nancy Larson and Steve Majerle. Tickets will be sold through July 31.

This is the first annual Charlemagne's 52 Club Raffle, an exciting fundraising event to support the Historic Fire Hall Restoration Project. By participating in this raffle, you not only stand a chance to win fantastic cash prizes, but also contribute to the preservation of our local history.

Only 300 raffle tickets will be available for sale, exclusively from July 1 to July 31. The price of each ticket is \$52, representing a nominal investment with significant winning potential.

On Aug. 1, all 52 winning raffle tickets will be drawn, one for each week of the year. Weekly winners will be notified, creating an air of suspense and anticipation as cash prizes are awarded throughout the year until the final week of July 2024. The lucky weekly winner will receive a prize of \$100 during 49 weeks of the year, while three fortunate winners will receive an even larger prize of \$250. Holders of raffle tickets have the opportunity to win multiple times, as the ticket drawn is returned to the ticket bin for subsequent drawings.

Participants must be 18 years

Good to the last drop...

Five-year-old Kira Harmelink enjoyed her booyah right from the ladle. It was her first-ever Old Settlers. Kira and her family moved from Arizona to Tower just a week ago. Her parents are Bob and Katrina (Berg) Harmelink. Katrina grew up in rural Tower and graduated in 2005 from Tower-Soudan High School, but moved to Arizona in 2006. Kira's grandparents are Jim and Jill Berg. More photos on page 12. submitted

of age or older to purchase tickets or to be eligible for a prize. Only cash or check are accepted as payment, no credit cards. Winners need not be present at the time of the drawing to claim

their prize. The purchase price of the raffle ticket is not tax-deductible.

Thank You

We would like to thank the Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board for making sure we had a Fourth of July parade this year. The details for this production seem insurmountable, but each year their dedicated volunteers get the job done. We also want to thank this board for naming us this year's Grand Marshals. It was an honor to be chosen. Special thanks go to Dennis Larson for driving us in his 1964 Olds.

MaryBeth and Al Reller

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MUSICAL THEATER

“Songs for a New World” opens in Ely

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The latest musical offering of the Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA), “Songs for a New World,” opened Thursday, July 20. The musical was the first work of the then-young Jason Robert Brown, who went on to win a Tony Award for his work on “Parade” and two Tony Awards for the musical version of the “The Bridges of Madison County.”

To split hairs, “Songs for a New World” is not technically a musical and should perhaps be classed as a “musical theater work” like Bernstein’s “Mass,” or a song cycle like “Carmina Burana.” The collection of musical numbers in “Songs for a New World” are connected and related to one another, but the work does not have the formal storyline expected of a musical.

The songs revolve around the decision turning points of life and death. Brown’s own description of the work was: “It’s about one moment. It’s about hitting the wall and having to make a choice, or take a stand, or turn around and go back.”

The original off-Broadway production of “Songs for a New World” had a cast of four. The Ely

production uses all ten members of the NLAA Broadway in the Boundary Waters theater troupe.

In every song, the audience meets someone who is at a turning point in life, at a moment where everything changes, like the woman in “Christmas Lullaby” who sings about discovering she is about to become a mother, or the soldier in “Flying Home” who has died on the battlefield, where his soul is going to heaven while his dead body is going home to his grieving mother.

“Songs for a New World” is popular with smaller theater groups because it doesn’t require a large cast or a fancy set. The score for “Songs for a New World” is considered technically difficult. Brown’s score mixes gospel, blues, jazz and pop styles, and demands a high bar of musicality from the performers.

The remaining performances of the Ely production of “Songs for a New World” will be on the evenings of July 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, and 30, at 7 p.m. Sunday matinee performances will be on July 23 and 30, at 2 p.m. The July 27 performance is on a “pay what you can” basis. Tickets are available at northernlakearts.org or by calling 218-235-9937.



The Timberjay visited rehearsal for “Songs for a New World” on July 10. Above: The Broadway in the Boundary Waters theater troupe rehearsing at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater. Below: Troupe member and Ely resident Karin Schmidt directing music during rehearsal. photos by C. Clark



New Northern Lights Clubhouse

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Northern Lights Clubhouse has a new home at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church at 715 S. Central Ave. The clubhouse is one of the programs of the nonprofit Well Being Development (WBD), providing a friendly, inclusive meeting place for Ely-area people challenged with mental health and addictions. The clubhouse works in concert with the WBD care facilitator in collaboration with the Ely Behavioral Health Network, providing mental and behavioral health resources and education for Ely-area residents.

The clubhouse formerly used the lower floor of the old bowling alley building on Camp St. “We had to move,” said Kap Wilkes, executive director of WBD. “We had a three-year lease (at the bowling alley) but it was not renewed at the end of July.” Wilkes explained that they needed to vacate because the building is going into renovation. The WBD offices are moving

to the Ely Area Community Foundation building on Miners Drive.

“We were at St. Mary’s before ... It’s really a lovely spot,” Wilkes told the *Timberjay*. WBD is renting the space at the church during the week. In addition to the clubhouse activities, Wilkes stated that “we can also use the space to meet with clients and other groups.”

The clubhouse is a friendly non-judgmental place where its members can “gather for shared meals, learn together with activities like book club and presentations, make things together like cooking, art, and gardening, and develop friendships, hang-out in nature, and participate in mindfulness activities together,” WBD said in a statement about the move.

“We welcome people to join us,” Wilkes stated, pointing out that people can reach out to a care facilitator at pathwaystowellnessmn.org. More information on WBD programs and how to donate to the nonprofit is available at wellbeingdevelopment.org or by calling 218-235-6104.

Fatal Ely accident

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- An Ely man died on Monday, July 17, in a single-vehicle collision on the 2100 block of Grant McMahan Blvd./County Rd. 88, in Morse Township. The St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office, assisted by Morse Fire and First Responders, the Ely Police Department, and the Lake County Sheriff’s Office responded to the accident at approximately 5:40 p.m.

The driver and sole occupant of the vehicle was 27-year-old William Orion Lloyd Fearn. He was driving a 2004 Ford F150 pick-up truck traveling eastbound. His vehicle went off the road into a side ditch and struck a power pole. The deceased was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident.

Fearn was a firefighter for the Morse-Fall Lake Fire Department. Ely Fire Chief David Marshall spoke during the July 18 Ely City Council meeting about the loss of Fearn and the impact it has had on the Morse-Fall Lake FD. “It’s a nightmare when a public safety organization must respond to a fatality involving one of their own,” the Chief said. “The Ely and Babbitt Fire Departments have stepped up and agreed to take on calls while the (Morse-Fall Lake Fire) Department deals with (Fearn’s death).”

Elyite college honors

MANKATO- Minnesota State University-Mankato announced its 2023 spring academic honors on July 17, naming Trevor Mattson of Ely to its high honors list. To earn high honors, students must achieve a straight “A” average of 4.0 while enrolled for 12 or more credit hours.

RIVER FALLS, Wis.- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls announced its list of those who graduated at the end of spring semester 2023. Among those was Elyite Josie Benko, who graduated with a B.S. in criminology.

As of July 18, the final numbers for the 2023 Blueberry/Art Festival are: 210 booths, 195 vendors, and 16 food and beverage sellers in the food and beer tent.

Clarification

After feedback from our readers, the *Timberjay* wishes to clarify a statement in last week’s article on the plea bargain for Casey Meadows, who ran down three deer near the Ely Golf Course on March 21.

According to Assistant Police Chief Mick Lorenz, retired Ely Police Chief John Saw dispatched

the three deer at the scene. Saw found the deer still alive though grievously wounded along the side of the road. An Ely PD officer arrived at the scene immediately after Saw’s efforts to euthanize the deer. That officer found one deer still alive and finished its euthanasia.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Upcoming Events

Ely Public Library

ELY- The spice for July is mustard. The spice for August is celery seed.

The library will host the Bubble Wonders event for all ages on Monday, July 24, 3:30-4:30 p.m. See the July 7 edition of the *Timberjay* for more details on the program.

The library scientists group, for grades 5-7, will meet on Thursday, July 27, 11 a.m.-noon. Participants will study mechanics and trajectories by making a working model of a catapult. Preregister for this program so the library can order enough supplies.

On Thursday, July 27, attorney Kelly Klun will give a free class on estate planning, from 5-6 p.m.

Preregistration is not required but it is encouraged so the library can have the appropriate number of handouts made in advance of the class.

The library will celebrate Uncommon Instrument Awareness Day on Monday, July 31, from 2-3 p.m., in a program for all ages. Ukuleles and autoharps are just some of the strange instruments that might show up. Participants will also create their own instrument to take home. Space is limited for this program so preregistration is required.

The Get Crafty with Tricia program for all ages will make tie-dye bags. The event will be on Tuesday, Aug. 1, starting at 11 a.m. This event will take place outside on the library grounds, so it will be weather dependent. Preregister in advance so the library has your contact information and can

order enough materials for class participants.

The monthly Library Board meeting for August will be on Wednesday, Aug. 2, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Preschool Storytime is held every Friday from 10:30-11 a.m.

All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St.

Farmers market and Arts in the Park

ELY- Ely’s farmers market and the Northern Lakes Arts Association Arts in the Park program are every Tuesday evening, from 5-7 p.m. The evening music presentation starts at 5 p.m. The Ely Community Band will play at 6 p.m. through the end of July.

Museum open house

ELY- The museum will hold its “Donuts at

Dorothy’s” open house on Sunday, July 30, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring coffee from Ely’s Gene Hicks Coffee and nosh from Brainstorm Bakery. The event is free.

Ely walking tours

ELY- Guided historic walking tours are given by local historian Celia Domich every Tuesday at 4 p.m. and every Saturday at 9 a.m., though Aug. 8. The tours leave from the front of City Hall.

Northern Lakes Arts Association

ELY- The Greenstone Art-A-Palooza art show and sale will be July 28-30, at the Miners Dry Building, 401 N. Pioneer Rd., from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

The Local Only Group Art Show will be in the lobby at Ely’s Historic

State Theater from now until July 30. Viewing the artworks is during the open hours for the theater.

Ely Watercolor Club

ELY- The club’s annual show and sale will be July 19-23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Ely Arts and Heritage Center, 100 Miner’s Lake Landing.

Racial Justice Group

ELY- The Racial Justice Group will be meeting next on Sunday, June 25 at noon at the First Presbyterian Church of Ely, 226 E. Harvey St. We will have special guest speaker Kes Ebbs sharing highlights from his experience bringing BIPOC urban youth up to the boundary waters. All are welcome. The group will meet in the study, which is straight in from the front door. ADA access to the elevator is through the rear entrance on the alley.

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – The Tuesday Group community educational lunch gathering meets every Tuesday at noon 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.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

► July 25: Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters Updates with Becky Rom and Ingrid Lyons

► Aug. 1: Quantum Human Design with Jaime Brennan

► Aug. 8: Meet New Elyites

► Aug. 15: TBA

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2023



days of drought then rain
more of heat with summer sun
weather change prevails

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.

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.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tausk receives EMS award for helicopter landing zone

LAKEVERMILION- A Lake Vermilion lodge owner was recognized recently for his efforts to make emergency medical helicopter flights more accessible by creating a dedicated landing zone on his property.

Ed Tausk is the owner of Vermilion Dam Lodge, and he's been a trained first responder for several years.

Over the past two years there have been ATV, snowmobile, water recreation and auto accidents on his end of the lake, with one resulting in a fatality. Tausk decided something should be done to decrease the response time when someone was in need of critical emergency care, said Cook Ambulance Director Roland Shoen.

"Knowing that it takes several minutes for EMS to navigate the 22-mile road out to the resort and then the same to get back to the hospital, he felt he needed to help make it possible for those patients to get higher quality care, faster," Shoen said. "Ed started meeting with representatives from LifeLink III over a year ago and found out what he needed to do to create a safe space for the helicopter and EMS to transfer a patient and he went to work building it."

Responders with Cook Ambulance, Cook Fire, and Buyck Fire Departments got to check out

the new helicopter landing zone on Tuesday, July 11 when Tausk hosted a training event at the lodge and provided a pre-training meal. After LifeLink III specialists Ty Wiegman and Josh Howell conducted an hour-long training, everyone went out to the landing zone for the arrival and landing of the helicopter and met one of the many LifeLink crews.

"Attendees were instructed on safety while assisting the crew when loading patients into the running helicopter, a process called hot loading," Shoen said. "If the condition of the patient allows more time for loading they will shut down for more safety during patient transfer."

Shoen noted that transport time to Duluth in a helicopter flying 160 miles per hour takes about 35 minutes, as opposed to almost two hours for ground transportation.

Attendees also had time to look at all the equipment carried by the chopper, inspect the cockpit and ask questions of the pilot and crew.

For his creation of the emergency landing zone, Tausk received the Friends of EMS Award. Representatives of local, regional, and state EMS agencies were on hand to present Tausk with the award.



Above: Vermilion Dam Lodge owner Ed Tausk received a Friends of EMS Award on July 11 for developing and procuring a Landing Zone for Emergency Services to use when an Air Medical Helicopter is requested for the transport of ill or injured patients in the Vermilion Dam Lodge area. On hand to present the award were, from right to left, Dylan Ferguson, Executive Director and Charles Southery, Specialist, Minnesota Emergency Medical Service Regulatory Board, Ed Tausk, award recipient, Tyler Wiegman, Partner Engagement Manager LLIII, Adam Shadiow, Executive Director, Arrowhead EMS Association-Duluth, and Roland Shoen, Director, Cook Ambulance.



A helicopter pilot answers questions from Cook and Buyck EMS personnel after landing at the new emergency landing zone at Vermilion Dam Lodge. submitted photos

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Orr hires new city clerk

ORR- The Orr City Council took a big step toward shoring up its day-to-day business operations at its July 10 meeting by hiring Angela Lindgren as the new City Clerk, effective July 11.

Lindgren replaces former clerk Cheri Carter, who retired from the position earlier this summer, and brings a needed presence to an office that has lacked an official presence since relatively new deputy city clerk Jennifer Whittemore resigned following a disagreement with the city council over mileage reimbursement. Both Carter and Whittemore's predecessor, Laura Manai, now manager of the Orr

Muni, have worked extra hours to see that essential city functions such as billing, payroll, and more have been completed.

Councilors had discussed at their May meeting the possibility of contracting with Carter to assist in orienting a new city clerk, but no specific arrangement was developed at that time.

It is possible a recommendation to fill the deputy clerk vacancy will be presented at the next regular council meeting.

In another personnel move, the council hired Ethan Olsen for the assistant maintenance/airport manager position.

Ambulance director

Donna Hoffer noted that there were issues with the ambulance service credit cards not working and presented an alternative proposal of using the state of Minnesota's fleet card system. Council members approved making an application to the system.

In other business, the council:

- Approved replacing two toilets at the airport for a cost of \$420 each.

- Accepted a \$300 donation from Boling Engineering to be used for July 3rd Fun Day.

- Approved the purchase of three pagers for the ambulance service at a cost of \$2,254.

TOURNEY RUNNERS-UP



Cook Youth Baseball's Pony Gray team took home second place in a tournament hosted in Cherry last Saturday. Team members include, back row, Assistant Coach Paul Koch, Head Coach Kylee Lange and Assistant Coach Jarrett Crain; middle row, Emma Nuthak, Cameron Rose, Kallen Williams, Kensie Herdman, Everett Crain, Christopher Koch and Ladd Pretti; and front row, Sebastian Larson, Daniel Hartline, Elizabeth Nuthak, Charlie Franks and Maverick Nurmi.

submitted photo

COMMUNITY NEWS

Trinity hosts free community meal next Thursday

COOK- Sloppy Joes are the featured menu item for the Trinity Lutheran Church free community meal on Thursday, July 27 from 4-5:30 p.m. at 231 2nd St E. in Cook. Additional items will include corn on the cob, chips and dessert. Drive-through and dine-in options will be available. This meal is free and open to the public.

Smith gets MSU-M academic honors

COOK- Neiva Smith, of Cook, was among almost 2,400 Minnesota State University-Mankato students named to the Spring 2023 honors list recently announced by Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs David Hood.

To qualify for the honors list, students needed to have a GPA of 3.5 to 3.99 while being enrolled in 12 credit hours.

Dionysian Dithyramb Band headlines park music series

COOK- The beat goes on for Cook's Music in the Park summer series on Wednesday, July 26 at 6 p.m. when the Dionysian Dithyramb Band takes to the gazebo stage to perform their special collection of B-side favorites, Beatles tunes and jam band classics.

Concert-goers will have the option of getting dinner from the St. Paul (Alango) Lutheran Church stand. In the event of rain, the concert will move to the Cook VFW.

Music in the Park is sponsored by Northwoods Friends of the Arts, Cook Lions Club, VFW Post 1757 and Auxiliary, and free will donations

Archers to host Sunday car wash fundraiser

COOK- North Woods Archery Club will hold a car wash on Sunday, July 23 from 10 a.m. - 3

p.m. at the Cook Fire Department located on 2nd Street E.

Youth archers and their coaches will scrub vehicles with high quality supplies from Cook's Auto Value in this new fundraiser.

The club is raising money for the upcoming season.

"Our program relies on donations, both monetary and in-kind, to help offset expenses for equipment and tournaments," said Emily Nelson, club president. "We provide funds for archers so that all who want to experience archery can participate." The club is building on its success from the 2023 season and numerous archers who have their sights set on the national tournament in April 2024.

"Our program is growing, and kids are hitting bullseyes," Nelson said. "They don't mind getting their hands dirty to make sure our program is a success."

North Woods Archery

Club is part of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). More information is available online at www.nasp-schools.org.

Cook High School classes of 1964 and 1965 to meet on Aug. 5 at The Landing

COOK- The Cook High School Classes of 1964 and 1965 will meet at The Landing at 11 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 5 for their annual luncheon get together. Hope to see you there.

Heiam Foundation benefit tickets on sale

COOK- Tickets are available now for the Heiam Foundation benefit set for Saturday, Aug. 12 from 5-9 p.m. This year's event features a Hawaiian Luau theme. Don't forget your Hawaiian shirt or grass skirt! To purchase tickets, sponsorships or

to preview the virtual auction, please visit heiam.cbo.io.

Please purchase tickets by July 29 so the food, catered by Boomtown Woodfire, can be ordered. The event will be held at the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade building at 8025 Oak Narrows Rd., Cook.

This marks the 30th annual benefit for the Heiam Foundation, which raises money to support health care needs in the Cook area. The foundation's mission, through continued growth of the endowment, is to support programs, services and facilities that serve the medical needs of Cook health care area residents. Since its founding thirty years ago, the foundation has been able to donate over \$813,000 towards these needs.

The Blue Water Big Band Returns to NWFA on Aug. 11

COOK- On Friday, Aug. 11, from 5 to 9 p.m., NWFA will present its

annual concert and fundraiser featuring The Blue Water Big Band from Duluth. This is a concert with room to dance from 6:30 to 9 p.m. The fundraiser will be held at the Cook Community Center at Doug Johnson Park, 510 Gopher Dr., Cook.

The doors open at 5 p.m. with Cook's own Beefeater Brothers performing at 5:30 p.m. along with basket raffles and silent auctions and a drawing. Concert tickets purchased in advance for \$25 include a Zup's bratwurst prepared by the Cook Lions Club, chips, water and other refreshments. Tickets are \$30 at the door.

**Read It
HERE
and
ONLINE**

DIVIDED...Continued from page 1

mining company that has no place in the future of Ely is just wrong and makes no sense," said Rom, pointing out that the 20-year ban on federal mineral leases effectively kills the proposed mining project. In addition, Rom argued that the Twin Metals mine, if built, would be a danger to the community and the regional ecosystem because of the environmental disaster it would create.

"It will lead to depopulation," Rom claimed. "I haven't met anyone who would like to live next door or downstream from a sulfide copper ore mine. It would lead to the loss of long standing and valued businesses. It will lead to the loss of jobs and it will lead to environmental destruction at a scale we have not experienced."

Rom argued that the Chilean mining giant Antofagasta, with a questionable environmental record, set up Twin Metals as a limited liability corporation (LLC) in order to shield itself from liability for irresponsible mining. The end result, she argued would be the legal ploy of bankrupting the LLC with clean-up costs, thus sticking American and Minnesotan taxpayers with a ruined Boundary Waters and an unaffordable remediation, while "giant Antofagasta sits in Santiago, Chile,



Above: Ely area residents hold signs suggesting other local businesses the mayor could have honored.

Left: Madelyn Fahnl addressed the council urging a focus on workforce housing.

photos by F. Schumacher

counting its money ... amused that for a tiny amount of pocket change for ... charitable giving, a handful of local jobs, and a stable of well-heeled lobbyists, it makes riches for its owners, leaving our community impoverished in a myriad of ways." Gustafson focused on the

harm the proclamation is causing in the community. "I'm struck by how this proclamation continues to drive a wedge into the heart of this community, further dividing us." He said that division was unnecessary since the project is effectively dead. Gustafson considered the 20-year ban on

the mineral leases to have killed the project, implying that the community needed to move on.

"When I asked what the goal of ... this proclamation is, it's because I see no benefit to anybody in this room tonight. Now even (for) those who may be here in support of this decision, no new jobs will be created due to this proclamation. Our local economy will not grow because of this proclamation. People will not relocate to Ely because of this proclamation; and the local businesses, (which are) the actual backbone of this economy are underappreciated because of this proclamation."

Gustafson pointed out that there is no lack of job opportunities in Ely, so the community doesn't need mining jobs that will go away in 20 or 30 years.

What the community really needs is affordable workforce housing, he argued.

Fahnl echoed Gustafson's comments on housing, speaking from her experience and education in the tourism sector, noting that affordable housing is one of the barriers for local business to hire employees at a wage that they can afford to pay.

Gerald Tyler, a regular advocate for mining in the Ely area, commented that the proclamation and Twin Metals' donations to the community were not about "whether the Twin Metals mine is ever going to happen." He remarked that the point of the proclamation was summed up in its third paragraph, listing all the local groups that have benefitted from the firm's contributions. The point was to acknowledge what Twin Metals had given to Ely.

"The people that are here in (opposition) should consider doing something for the city," Tyler said. "I hear (their) negative comments about what Twin Metals should be doing, but never once contributing to any of the local organizations in this city that have done so much."

Overall, the agenda, tactics, and comments were familiar, reflecting the views expressed on numerous similar occasions when

Twin Metals has been on the council agenda.

In other matters, the city council:

► Heard the report of Erik Simonson, local government lobbyist for the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, on his organization's efforts to advocate for rural local government and on the overall progress of the 2023 legislative session for non-metropolitan-area cities.

► Received a report from the nonprofit Ely Community Resources on their efforts for local children.

► Approved the note and mortgage for the residential rehab loan for Alex Povhe at 403 E James St. for \$10,000 for a new propane furnace and new windows.

► Approved the City and Ely Utilities Commission payment claims for July 18, for \$73,236.

► Approved an invoice for SEH for the Prospector ATV Trail for \$2,992.

► Approved an invoice for Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services LLC. of Grand Forks, N.D., for the Waste Water Treatment Facility Improvement Project for \$19,574.

TOWER CAFE...Continued from page 1

on her Facebook page, she said the feedback has been enthusiastic and positive. "We've been so overwhelmed at how welcoming everyone has been," she said. "We have gotten the nicest notes from people. You can tell there's real excitement about it."

Indeed, the closure of the café three years ago was a blow to the community. The café was the only restaurant in town without a bar, so it provided a different atmosphere and served traditional café-style breakfast and lunch. It was known for good coffee, huge caramel rolls, and pancakes.

That's a tradition that the McDonoughs now hope to bring back to Tower, although they say it will likely be a few months more before they can get the doors reopened. After being closed for three years, there's some work to be done and they're trying to respectfully go through all the personal effects that were left behind when the former owner of the café died suddenly due to the effects of COVID. Those belongings include tens of thousands of dollars worth of restaurant equipment and supplies, along with furnishings for the upstairs, which the former

owner was in the process of renovating. The upstairs includes at least eight bedrooms or potential bedrooms, all but two with private bathrooms. They're in varying stages of completion, but most are close to finished; some appear virtually ready to rent with a cleaning.

"We set a goal to be open by the first of next year but both Bob and I are competitive so maybe it will be sooner," said Jen.

She said they're looking initially at being open for breakfast Friday-Sunday, but would like to expand to five days a week after that, possibly adding a light lunch menu as well. The café, of course, is only part of the building. The upstairs includes multiple rooms that they plan to rent out on a bed and breakfast arrangement, but it will take some time to make that happen as well.

Both Bob and Jen currently work full-time, although Jen is pushing Bob, who has been with 3M for 39 years, to retire within the next few months to make way for his new gig as the host of a restaurant and inn.

Jen's schedule is a bit more flexible and her background is impressive, as Bob will happily tell

you. She's a very successful book author, focusing on inspirational themes and personal finance, including three titles that all made Amazon's Top 100 books. She's written about her transition from a self-described "couch potato" to a top competitor in Iron Woman triathlons. She's also an eight time Olympic-level weightlifting champion and likely would have made it to the Atlanta Olympics but blew out a hamstring at the wrong time. In her early years of weight-lifting, she used to compete against the men because there was no women's division, and she still regularly medaled, including winning two national Olympic Festival medals. She also signed to play women's professional football under coaches from the Minnesota Vikings, but had to give it up when she got pregnant with their first child.

Her most successful book, which hit Amazon's number one slot for a time in the home budgeting category, describes how her family was able to erase \$212,000 in medical debt in just four years.

She is also a regular public speaker on resiliency and is in demand at health care conferences around the country.

A winding road to Lake Vermilion

A child's lifelong illness and a strong focus on family led the McDonoughs to the Tower area. Their second-oldest son, Rob, developed diabetes early in life and it was the medical bills stemming from his illness that left the family drowning in debt. That experience not only formed the basis for Jen's most successful book, it brought the family north when Rob decided he wanted to attend Vermilion Community College.

The family decided to help Rob get established so they started searching for a fixer-upper in Ely with the intent of making it a home for Rob while he attended school. His stay at Vermilion ended up delayed by COVID so he spent a couple years

working and saving money before starting at Vermilion. Meanwhile, the family had found a place near Pike Bay that felt right to both Jen and Bob, so they decided to buy it as a vacation home.

The family was well-established and happy in their longtime home on a lake in Lindstrom, north of the Twin Cities, and they had no intention of leaving their home there. But over the next couple years their new Up North house came to seem more and more like home.

"We love it here," said Bob. "Lake Vermilion is the most beautiful place I've ever seen."

When Bob, one day, suggested they think of moving to the area permanently, Jen didn't hesitate. They sold their home in Lindstrom and the home of Jen's mother, who lived nearby, and now the entire

family, including Jen's 84-year-old mother Marge is living here. Three of the couple's four boys, 23-year-old Ryan, 22-year-old Rob, and 13-year-old Remy, are also living here, while their third child, 20-year-old Max, is doing an accounting internship in the Twin Cities.

"It's really lovely to be able to blend the generations," said Jen, who said her mother is as happy as they are with the new home.

Meanwhile, Rob recently graduated from Vermilion and now works full-time for the DNR in Gilbert.

As the McDonoughs see it, family is the most important part of their life— and it's supposed to be an adventure. The next iteration of the Tower Café could well be their latest and greatest.

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Tickets:
 \$25 General Admission
 \$20 NLAA Member
 \$15 Youth (16 and under)

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DERAIL...Continued from page 1

Pre-evacuation planning was conducted immediately as is protocol and the situation was monitored through the night into the morning for any potential changes.”

An initial release from the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office indicated that there were nine cars that went off the tracks, but CN told the *Timberjay* on Tuesday morning that ten cars were involved.

“We would like to apologize for the inconvenience this may cause to local residents. The cause of the incident is under investigation.” The CN communication did not

indicate when regular rail traffic would resume.

On July 30, 2022, 14 rail cars of a northbound CN freight train derailed about seven miles north of Cook. Multiple cars reportedly contained hazardous materials, but no spills or leakage was discovered, and the public was never in danger.

Monday’s incident comes almost four months after the March derailment of a Canadian Pacific freight train in rural North Dakota. According to an Associated Press report, four cars filled with liquid asphalt and two railcars filled with ethylene glycol

spilled some of those chemicals in the derailment. The chemical spills were contained at the site of the derailment.

Train derailments are more common than generally known. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics, there are on average about 1,700 derailments per year in the U.S., a little over four per day.

Right: CN workers wait for a lift by rail to the derailment site, located in a remote area not accessible by road.

photo by F. Schumacher



ROAD WORK...Continued from page 1

The project will include repairs around culverts, but no planned replacements. A heaving culvert near Karjala Rd., which has created a slowdown particularly in winter, will get some attention to hopefully smooth it out.

Some tree clearing, mostly spot treatments between the Y Store and Tower, will be undertaken in order to reduce road shading in winter. That work won’t be done until late fall, however, since tree clearing is currently

restricted in the summer months to protect the habitat of the endangered northern long-eared bat. The locations of the planned tree clearing were not immediately available.

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“The Blue Water Big Band” Returns to NWFA
Friday, August 11 • 5 to 9 PM
NWFA annual concert and fundraiser
Sashay in at 5 PM...for refreshments, basket raffles, silent auctions and annual 50/50 Raffle • Dance from 6:30 to 9 PM.

“Beefeater Brothers” performing at 5:30 PM
Purchase \$25 tickets at Music in the Park on Wed Evenings or Wed, Thurs, Fri from 10 AM to 4 PM; Sat 9 AM to 1 PM at the NWFA Gallery, 210 S River Street / \$30 at the concert door
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WORKFORCE

State grant to bring broadband to parts of rural Cook

Paul Bunyan project will serve parts of five townships

REGIONAL- Paul Bunyan Communications has been awarded a \$5.5 million Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband low-density pilot grant to expand its all fiber-optic GigaZone network into areas of Angora, Alango, Balkan, Beatty, and Owens townships in St. Louis County.

The overall project is estimated to cost \$7.5 million, with the Border-to-Border grant covering \$5.57 million of the cost and Paul Bunyan Communications investing about \$1.9 million. Financial contributions from Angora and Balkan townships will be \$33,104 and \$42,157, respectively.

The Angora, Alango, Beatty, and Owens township areas are primarily between Cook and Britt along U.S. Hwy. 53.

The Balkan Township project will reach nearly every home in the township, located north of Chisholm. It also includes several locations in the unorganized township west of Balkan, including those around Dewey and McCormack lakes.

“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 as this project demonstrates,” said Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications CEO/General Manager. “These are very rural areas and that makes the cost of construction challenging. Even for our not-for-profit cooperative, without this low-density program these areas would be too costly to expand to. Thanks to this program these areas will get broadband access with internet speeds up to a 10 gigabits per second and become part of one

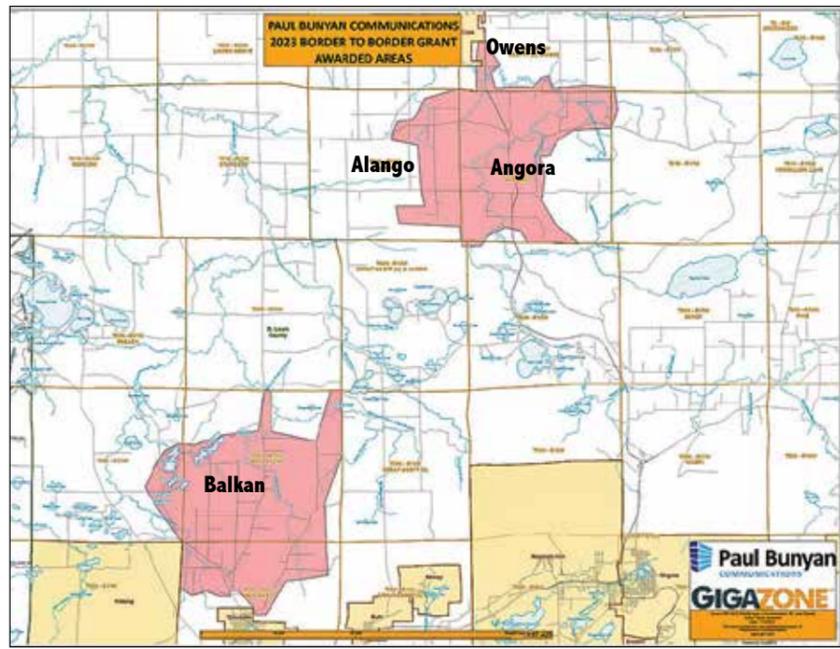
of the largest rural gigabit networks in the country.”

Paul Bunyan Communications expects to develop the expansion plan over the next 1-2 years and will contact locations along the upcoming expansion routes once those plans are finalized.

“We are very excited about this project,” said Steve Howard, PBC Information Technology and Development Manager. “This is going to bring symmetrical fiber-optic broadband to very rural locations that desperately need it. This will be very impactful for many of the

residents in these areas who will now be able to work from home, access virtual education, leverage telehealth, and enjoy the many other benefits of quality broadband internet services that weren’t available.”

The cooperative’s services will become available once the network is operational including GigaZone™, service options like broadband internet speeds of up to 10 Gigabits per second and low cost unlimited local and long-distance voice service.



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This year's Old Settlers Picnic was held on July 15. Pictured (clockwise from top left) Head booyah chef Steve Tektautz. Stirring the steamy soup. Josiah Jonas was one of the youngest volunteers. Steve Solkela entertained the crowd. Al Horvat, Gwen Lilya, and Margie Zupancich, who was the oldest settler at the picnic this year. The Kitto and Peil families, who all have long-time ties to the area. Helena and Amelia McNeil enjoy their meal. Grace Holden enjoys her booyah.

photos by S. Ukkola, Solkela photo by M. Helmberger



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UPCOMING EATERY

Delectables and more

Friends to reopen Mantel House as outpost for great coffee and baked goods

by JEN SHUSTER-DAHLIN
Contributing Writer

ELY— Those who miss being served by their favorite baristas from the Front Porch will be glad to know that the duo is going into business together. Jen Flermoen and Michelle Timmins will be opening a new cafe in the historic Mantel House at 323 E. Sheridan Street, scheduled to open on Aug 1.

Built by Joseph Mantel in 1923, the building has been home to a bed and breakfast and two different restaurants, but has been vacant in more recent years.

The new business will feature Flermoen's baking talents, which have already become known in the Ely area through her celiac-friendly bakery, Jen's Cakery, which has been highly successful since its debut last July.

A self-taught baker, Flermoen displays a natural talent and draws much of her decorating inspiration from nature. She utilizes organic ingredients in both her baking and diet and said she and Timmins plan to do the same with the food they prepare in their cafe.

"My intention is just what my gut is telling me. I love using organic ingredients because I think it's better for the body, it feels

Right: Jen Flermoen and Michelle Timmins are best friends and now business partners. They hope to have their new coffee shop and bakery open early next month.

better and tastes better most of the time, and that's why I've always stuck to using

See **FRIENDS...** pg. 2B



WORKFORCE

Northshore workers vote to unionize

To become latest members of United Steelworkers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Facing uncertainty over the future of their mine and processing facility, workers at Northshore Mining have voted to join the United Steelworkers (USW). It was the sixth time that the union had sought a vote of workers at the facility, currently owned and operated by Cleveland Cliffs.

The mining operation includes the Peter Mitchell ore pit near Babbitt and the processing facility at Silver Bay and its future has been in doubt in recent years. Cliffs' CEO Lourenco Goncalves has begun referring to the facility as a "swing plant" that will operate only when Cliffs has a need for the additional product. The plant's 400 workers returned to the job earlier this year after a nearly year-long layoff. Workers at the facility have told the *Timberjay* that morale at the facility has suffered as a result of the uncertainty over their future employment.

The latest union vote suggests workers there are ready for a new approach.

The workers elected to join the Steelworkers through card check, a process that can lead to unionization once a majority of workers approve the move. The union had 90 days to get the support of a majority of workers at the facility, but had exceeded a majority in less than a month. The signatures were verified by an independent arbitrator this week, making the union vote official.

"It's very exciting for us," said USW district staff representative John Arbogast. "It's been 34 years of trying."

Arbogast said the union vote wasn't fought by Cliffs, which made the union's work easier. Arbogast said Goncalves respects the partnership the company has with the USW, which represents approximately 2,000 Cliffs employees at four other locations on the Iron Range and in northern Michigan. "We're very fortunate we didn't have

See **UNION...** pg. 2B



BEING FIREWISE

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH FIRE

Area residents learn steps to take to reduce the risk from wildfire

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

VERMILIONLAKETWP— Living with and managing the risk of wildfire was the focus of an event held here earlier this month. "I've learned that there is risk here," said Gloria Erickson, Fire Adapted Communities Project Coordinator for St. Louis County.

While fire brings hazards, it plays an important role in the forests of the North Country, Erickson noted during the event, held July 8 at the home of Aaron Kania and Roxanne Tea on Lake Vermilion's Pike Bay. "Fire is a good thing," said Gloria Erickson, "The land here is dependent on fire."

Those living in these forests do need to understand the risks of uncontrolled forest fires, said Erickson. "As a landowner, we need to have a responsibility to forest stewardship," she said. "We need to be more resilient."

That idea has been catching on in recent years, as wildfire in the region has become more common and often more devastating than in the past. When homeowners take steps to better adapt their property to the risks posed by wildfire, it improves their odds of saving their lives and property and makes the job of firefighters easier at the same time. Erickson noted that when conditions are bad, firefighters are often battling fires at multiple scenes.

"Wildland fires are weather-related events," said Vermilion



Top: Several participants in the recent program, mostly from Ely, took a break.

Above: Gloria Erickson talks to those attending the Firewise program held July 8 in Vermilion Lake Township.

Right: Vermilion Lake Fire Chief Steve Lotz offers his thoughts on what homeowners can do to help themselves and firefighters.

photos by J. Summit

Lake Fire Chief Steve Lotz. "A bad fire day here is also a bad fire day all around our region."

The danger posed by a wildfire is determined by three main factors, Erickson explained—weather, topography, and fuel.

"While we don't have control over drought and wind, or the general topography of the area, we do have control over the fuel

See **FIREWISE...** pg. 2B



FRIENDS..Continued from page 1B

organic ingredients most of the time. If that's what I want for myself, I should practice what I preach."

Gluten-free and organic ingredients such as flour are almost always more expensive than their counterparts that are non-organic or contain wheat. This makes running a celiac-friendly, healthy bakery and café somewhat of a challenge when inflation is already driving up the cost of food. Flermoen and Timmins plan to "pick and choose" when it comes to choosing organic ingredients while sticking to the original gluten-free baked items and keeping the food menu as clean as possible.

"We're going to try to do as much organic as we can, but realistically that requires us right now to pick and choose where we spend that money. Our goal starting out is for our meat and eggs to be organic and ethically sourced, and if we can expand beyond that down the road, that's something we will be constantly trying to improve on," said Timmins. "We want this to be an affordable place where a family can come, or a Boy Scout troop or Forest Service team can come on their way out of town."

Close friends

Flermoen and Timmins met at the Front Porch in 2016, where they both



worked as baristas. Their connection was immediately apparent, and they became best friends. Flermoen developed an interest in baking around twenty years ago, and during her employment at the coffee shop, she used her free time to hone her craft. She used her family and friends as testers, including Timmins. In early 2022, she got a decorating kit and began learning the art of cake decorating. Flermoen, inspired by her mother and boyfriend who both maintain gluten-free diets, does all of her baking without using wheat or other grains that contain gluten.

Flermoen and Timmins left the Front Porch in May 2022. Timmins took the summer off to work on her house and think about her future. Flermoen sold her baked goods at the Ely Farmers Market and perfected her cake decorating. The two friends stayed in touch and discussed opening a business together that would combine Flermoen's baking with coffee and a more robust menu.

With the closure of the Front Porch, the two women thought that Ely needed a new place to get breakfast and coffee and that Flermoen's bakery should have a brick-and-



Some of Flermoen's incredibly enticing bakery goods, that will soon be available in the new shop in the Mantel House building.

mortar location. They decided to open and blend a new business with the existing bakery. Once open, the café will absorb Jen's Cakery, and the friends will be equal partners in their business.

When scouting locations for their business, Timmins said they planned to look at one place only before the Mantel House fell into their laps. Everything about the historic property "feels right," though, and the duo chose this location for many reasons.

2023 is the house's centennial year, making it the perfect year to reopen to the public. The home also had a fully-equipped commercial kitchen from its previous run as a French

fine-dining restaurant when Chefs Pam Freeman and Bernard Herman ran it.

"The kitchen is amazing and surpasses our immediate plans," said Timmins. "It's extra icing on the cake if you will," said Flermoen.

The new eatery is unnamed as of this writing, and Flermoen and Timmins have been taking suggestions. They're also still taking donations to help with the start-up costs. Their GoFundMe page can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/we-need-your-help-to-open-the-doors> or by Googling GoFundMe and Jen Flermoen. They also have a fund at Frandsen Bank in Ely for those who

want to avoid donating online. At Frandsen, donations can be made to 323 E. Sheridan LLC, or checks can be made to Flermoen or Timmins directly and added to the fund.

When its doors finally open next month, Ely's locals and tourists will surely welcome a new place to get breakfast, coffee, and a gourmet treat or two. On opening day, the eatery will work with a simple breakfast and lunch menu, drip and cold-brew coffee, and of course, a selection of Flermoen's famous desserts. The service will be counter and takeaway only with hours of operation from 7 a.m. to noon, at least to start.

"We want to wait until things slow down a little bit before we can get our espresso machine," said Flermoen.

"And we want to get open for the summer and do a more limited and focused menu, then once things quiet down, we can close for a couple of days to build out our ideal service area," Timmins said.

The initial opening date for the new business was July 1, but a few setbacks have pushed that timetable back a month. The biggest challenge has been bringing the building up to code and making it accessible to everyone.

UNION..Continued from page 1B

to get in the kind of fights that sometimes happen," he added.

Arbogast said the union will soon send out bargaining surveys to Northshore workers to

better understand the issues that they want addressed through collective bargaining. Workers will then elect a bargaining committee to begin negotiations with the company. When

asked, he acknowledged that Northshore workers may be feeling uneasy about the operation's status as a swing plant. "That's scary stuff when the CEO announces you might

be going up and down based on the market," said Arbogast. He noted that the union has helped to keep mineworkers on the job on the Range through a variety of methods, oppor-

tunities which he hopes will become available to Northshore workers in the near future.

"I think the big thing is that they will finally have someone to negotiate for

them on the issues. I'm happy for the workers up there."

Northshore was the final mine on the Iron Range to operate without a union contract.

FIREWISE..Continued from page 1B

around your home," she said.

The first issue addressed was access, as in making your driveway fire truck friendly. That starts with making your fire sign readily visible from the road. The driveway at the Kania-Tea home was wide enough to easily fit the Vermilion Lake Fire Department's main fire engine, and the driveway ended in a loop, meaning emergency vehicles could easily get in and out. Fire trucks and ambulances need a driveway at least 12 feet wide and need top clearance of 14 feet. Longer driveways, over 150 feet, should be widened to 20 feet.

Lotz explained that area fire departments are not eager to drive their trucks up driveways where the truck can get stuck or damaged, and often will park on the main road and scout out the driveway first, meaning it will take longer for the firefighters to be on scene actually fighting the fire. And longer driveways should have an area where emergency vehicles can safely turn around.

Embers

Wildfires spread mostly through airborne embers.

"It was a real aha moment when I realized it wasn't a wall of fire to be scared of," said Erickson, "but it was the embers."

Surface fires travel along the ground and then can travel upwards into the canopy of trees.

But a bigger danger can be embers, which can travel over a mile ahead of a fire front, and if they fall onto combustible items, they'll start new fires.

There are many no-cost things homeowners can do to reduce the risk of wildland fires damaging their property. These are as simple as cleaning roofs



Vermilion Lake supervisor Roxanne Tea with a display she produced about work she and Aaron Kania did around their Lake Vermilion home to reduce fire danger.

and gutters of dead pine needles and leaves, stacking firewood away from the home (and not on the deck or below the deck), pruning branches of nearby trees up to six feet in height (may help stop surface fires from traveling up into the tree canopy), reducing the density of brush in nearby woods, and keeping grass around the home short and watered.

Erickson talked about using fire-resistant building materials whenever possible, making sure wood exteriors are smooth and well-caulked, so that embers can't start splintered wood on fire or get sucked into a home around vents or windows. Vents should be covered with 1/8-inch metal screens.

Embers can start fires not only in pine needles in gutters or on the roof, but they can also light on window boxes, plastic porch furniture or porch cushions and reignite.

"In case a fire is near, quickly move these away from the house," Erickson said.

Decks, if possible, should have metal flashing between the deck boards and the wall of the house. Thicker deck boards are more fire-resistant.

Large picture windows

will conduct the heat of a fire inside a house and can actually start fires indoors. Tempered glass, and double- or triple-pane windows are safest, she said.

If your drapes are not flame-resistant, remove them in case a fire is near and you are told to evacuate your home (if there is time).

Reducing fuel loads

Pruning and trimming brush and lower branches in a 30 to 100 ft. radius around your home reduces the risk of your home catching fire, and makes your property easier for firefighters to defend in case of a fire. There should be a 10-foot-wide space around any propane tanks, and tanks should be at least 10 feet from buildings.

Any firewood stored close to a home should be moved away from the structure at the end of winter.

Neighbors helping neighbors

Kania and Tea are part of a group of friends whose properties range from five to 20 acres. They work together to reduce fuel loads on their properties. The group includes four couples, and two teenagers, who work to assess the properties for wildfire

resiliency, create a management plan for each property, and then work together to clear brush, burn piles (in the winter), and haul brush away as needed. The group's goal for this year to help others form their own cooperative groups, and to share the practical knowledge they have gained. To learn more about the "One More Tree Fire Coop" contact Thea Sheldon at thea@theasheldon.com or call 218-235-7699.

Northland Alert system

St. Louis County Emergency Manager Planner Josh Brinkman talked about the importance of signing up for the Northland Alert system, which can alert county residents in case of emergencies, such as wildland fire.

The easiest way

to access it is through northlandalert.com. Signing up through northlandalert.com will forward the user to a webpage hosted by the city of Duluth. Hitting the subscribe button on this webpage will take you to the sign-up forms for the entire county and the partner cities. The subscription process sends you to three forms: one for your identity, so the system knows where you are located for regional alerts; one for your email, text and phone contact information, and how you want your alerts delivered; and one for which alerts you wish to receive. The last form also allows you to set a quiet time of your own choosing for those who want alerts muted during sleeping hours. All the information on the site is confidential and not

shared outside of public safety agencies sending alerts. Once a user sets up an account, it is easy to sign back in to change alert choices or delete an account. There is no charge for the alert system. The alerts will also include weather-related advisories.

More information

For more information on the Firewise program, contact Gloria Erickson at 218-365-0878 or gloria@dovetailinc.org.

More resources are also available at www.firewise.org.

Josh Hasbrook, from Vermilion Tree Service, was also part of the event. His company can help with planning and removal of brush and trees to make a property safer from wildfire. He can be contacted at 218-780-1572.

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Obituaries and Death Notices

**Lucille B. Svatos**

Lucille Betty Svatos, 94, of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital. Services will be held at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely on Tuesday, July 25, with visitation at 10 a.m. and the funeral service at 11 a.m. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Lucille was born on May 21, 1929, to William and Mary Wencil in Owatonna. She grew up on a farm in Blooming Prairie and attended the country school. On April 9, 1947, Lucille married Charles Svatos in Litomysl. They lived in Owatonna before moving to Hoyt Lakes in 1957. In 1963 they moved to Soudan. After being widowed, Lucille moved to Tower in 1990. She resided there until moving to Ely Carefree Assisted Living in 2022.

Lucille was a member of St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower. For many years she was a lunch lady in the Tower-Soudan schools. She enjoyed cooking, baking, bowling, reading, dancing, puzzles, and watching the Twins, but most of all spending time with her family.

Lucille is survived by her children, Ray (Shelley) Svatos, Ron (Sharon) Svatos, Mary (Kent) Jacobson and Steve (Jennifer) Svatos; grandchildren, Chris, Amy, Anthony and Nathan Bush, Jon Svatos, Sarah Barrientos (Nico), Matt (Julie) Svatos, Willy (Bria) Vosburgh, Ben (Paulina) Jacobson, Dr. Edward Jacobson, Nolan and Bryn Svatos; great-grandchildren, Bella Bush and Stella Svatos; special family members, Toon, Ashley and Adin; sister, Joan Pirkil; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Charles; daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Keith Bush; infant grandson, Bradley Svatos; and sisters, Marlene Hansen and Regina Wacek.

David S. Akerson

David Scott Akerson, 73, of Tower, formerly of Floodwood and Ely, passed away after a difficult battle with COPD, on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at his home. Visitation will be from 1 p.m. until the 2 p.m. memorial service on Friday, July 21 at the Bauman-Cron Funeral Home Chapel in Virginia. Mr. Bill Bauman will officiate.

He is survived by his children, Jason (Mandy) Akerson of Britt and Jarin (Nathan) Houdek

of Eveleth; grandchildren, Kaden, Beau and Ethan Akerson, Livia and Grayson Houdek; half-sister, Tanya Akerson of Watkins; sister-in-law, Kristin (Brian) Schlegel of Blomkest; father-in-law, Roland Leaf of Willmar; nephews, Shane (Lisa) Akerson, Kyle (Cassie) Akerson and Chad Akerson; and niece, Kaitlin (Jason) Budish.

**Davin T. Branwall**

Davin Tor Branwall, 50, of Minneapolis, passed away unexpectedly due to health issues at his home on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 25 at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in White Bear Lake, with visitation one hour prior. Lunch and fellowship will follow at 12 p.m. Interment will be in the family plot at Lakeview Cemetery in Tower at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations are preferred to his son Tristan Tor Branwall's 529 College Fund. Arrangements are with Honsa Family Funeral Home in White Bear Lake.

Davin graduated from White Bear Lake High School in 1991 near the top of his class. He was nominated to West Point by three Minnesota Congressmen, as well as to the Naval Academy. Unfortunately, while at Mt. Hood in Oregon with the high school ski team, he fell and was injured and was disqualified. He was also active in other student activities, was inducted into the National Honor Society, was on the Student Council and earned an academic letter for all three years. Davin decided to attend the University of Minnesota and graduated with honors in 1996 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He took a job in Silicon Valley with Komag Corporation, followed by HP in California, HP in Boise, Idaho, Micron in Boise and Seagate in Minnesota.

Davin married Flavia Polignone on Oct. 15, 2004, and the joy of his life, Tristan Tor Branwall, was born on Nov. 18, 2007. Davin loved the outdoors, downhill skiing, hiking, camping, all types of fishing, and hunting. He excelled at all of them. His favorite place

was his family's cabin in Northern Minnesota. He also was proficient in all of the trades including rough carpentry, finish carpentry, furniture, electrical and plumbing, and he enjoyed doing all of them. Davin continued to play soccer and ice hockey as an adult while living in California and Idaho. He became interested in cooking as a little boy helping his mother in the kitchen. Davin maintained that interest and became a gourmet chef. He worked as a chef in several different high-end restaurants in the Twin Cities.

Davin was introduced to art when he was five-years old and attended school in Italy, where his family lived for three years; he became hooked. Davin took an art class in middle school taught by a very talented and accomplished teacher, Frank Zeller, and created wonderful art in charcoal, watercolor, acrylic and oil. He continued painting later in life and people who viewed his works offered to buy them. Davin was very spiritual, and well liked by everyone who knew him. He cared about and was passionate toward people who were down and out. Davin volunteered for a religious organization, Breakthrough Ministries, and cooked meals for homeless people, helped serve communion, and helped many individuals who were in need.

Davin will be missed by his family and many friends. Unfortunately, due to medical issues, he struggled later in life and was unable to work full-time but continued to have a positive attitude about life and his future. He was currently working at Walgreens where he was much appreciated.

Davin is survived by his father, Lee; son, Tristan Tor; brother, Eric (Jill); sister-in-law, Michelle Branwall Harty; cousins, Lindsey, Lane, Nathan and Tyra; and ex-wife, Flavia Polignone.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Arlene Espland Branwall; brother, Lee Jr.; and grandparnts, Ernest and Mary Branwall, Carl and Esther Espland.

Lois A. Trygg

Lois Ann Wattunen Trygg, 98, of Cook, peacefully passed away on Tuesday, July 11, 2023. A celebration of life was held on Monday, July 17 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

She is survived by her daughters, Karen (Lee Pontinen) McCue of Eveleth and Harriet (John) Martinez of Surprise, Ariz.; grandchildren, Fred (Melissa) McCue, Tedd (Kelly) McCue, Scott Trygg and Tracy (Greg) LaPatka; several great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews and cousins.

**Joy A. Raudio**

Love is stronger than Death.

Joy Arlene Sjoberg Raudio, 91, of Mound, originally of Tower, died on Wednesday, July 5, 2023. A graveside service will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 17 at Lakeview Cemetery in Tower.

Joy was born on May 19, 1932, in Tower, the daughter of Roy and Irene Mickelson Sjoberg. She grew up and attended Tower-Soudan schools, graduating in June 1950. She played clarinet in the band and was chosen to be drum majorette for the marching band. Joy met her future husband, Roger J. Raudio, at a dance and they became engaged the day she graduated from high school. She was employed as a dental receptionist in Tower and worked at Mitchell Lake Resort in Ely on weekends. Joy and Roger were united in marriage at St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower on Jan. 6, 1951. They made their home in Ely, moving to Duluth after the birth of their first child, Sheryl. The marriage was blessed with two more girls, Gerry and Terry, while living in Duluth. The family then moved to Virginia, where their son, Roger David, was born in 1960. Joy was a loving wife and mother, raising four children, volunteering at school and in church activities as well as in the community. Joy was a great cook and made delicious baked goods for the growing family. She also worked in the hospitality industry in the food and beverage sector.

Joy and Roger relocated many times as Roger advanced in his career. Joy made many friends as the family moved from Minnesota to Michigan, back to Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, back to Iowa, then to Long Lake in Minnesota where they lived until 1981. She enjoyed country western music, playing bingo, watching Minnesota Twins games, and spending time with family. She especially enjoyed having her grandchildren visit and taking them to the park or the pool. Joy continued to live in Long Lake until moving to Golden Valley and later to St. Louis Park. In 2019, she became a resident of Harrison Bay Senior Living of Mound, where she lived until her death.

Joy is survived by her daughters, Sheryl Sorenson, Gerry Neddermeyer (Gilbert) and Terry Tegels (Thomas); son, Roger D. Raudio; grandsons, Brent Sorenson,

Anthony Tegels, Zachary Tegels, Luke Tegels, Andrew Neddermeyer and Wesley Neddermeyer; granddaughter, Alexandra Tegels Paulson; eight great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Roy and Irene Sjoberg; former husband, Roger J. Raudio; brothers, Roy Sjoberg Jr. and Terry Sjoberg; sister, Gayle Lilya; and grandson, Brian Sorenson.

The idea is not to live forever but to create something that will. - Andy Warhol

Merlin C. Solberg

Merlin Clayton Solberg, 88, passed away peacefully on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at Carefree Living in Babbitt surrounded by his family. A celebration of life will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 22 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Babbitt, with Pastor Christina Forsythe officiating. Visitation will be one hour prior to service. A private burial service will be held at Lakeview Cemetery in Tower for Merlin and his wife Maxine Anderson Solberg. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his children, Jane (Thomas), Dave (Delaine) and Terry (Diane); grandchildren, Mike (Kelsey), Scott (Cheyenne), Courtney and Joshua; great-grandson, Archer; brother-in-law, Doug (Cathy); sister-in-law, Julie; and several nieces and nephews.

Richard K. Brownlee

Richard Keith "Rick" Brownlee, 68, of Roseville, originally of Embarrass, passed away unexpectedly but surrounded by family on Friday, Nov. 25, 2022. A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Friday, July 21 at the State Veterans Cemetery, Hwy. 53 in Duluth, followed by a small gathering at the Cast Iron, Old Miller Trunk Hwy. in Duluth. Arrangements are with Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Duluth.

He is survived by his wife, Janice Hemann Brownlee; children, Dominic (Jennifer) Brownlee, Kira (Nathan) Grotelueschen, Aaron (Timothy) Brownstone, Sean (Allie) Brownlee and Logan Brownlee; grandchildren, Sophie and Kylie Grotelueschen, Beau, William and Zaydann Brownlee; brothers, Thomas Brownlee, Bradley (Denise) Brownlee and Mathew Brownlee; nieces and nephews; and several aunts.

Anerva F. Pylka

Anerva France-lia "Ann" Maki Pylka, 99, originally of Waasa and Embarrass, died on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at Carefree Assisted Living in Babbitt, surrounded by her loved ones. A family memorial will be held

at a later date. The family would like to thank Carefree Living in Babbitt for their loving care during her less than two-year stay and East Range Hospice for their compassionate care during her end days. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Spiritwood Foundation or a charity of your choice. Arrangements have been entrusted to Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by children, Rodney (Claudia) Pylka, Pam (Roger) Penttila and Kevin (Terri) Pylka; thirteen grandchildren and step-grandchildren; and numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Helen F. Kochevar

Helen Frances Perushek Kochevar, 99, of Ely, peacefully passed away on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at Waterview Pines in Virginia, where she lived briefly after suffering a broken hip in May. Services will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, July 31 at Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely with interment at the Ely Cemetery following the service. A celebration of life will follow at 12:30 p.m. at Grand Ely Lodge. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to East Range Hospice in Virginia.

She is survived by her grandchildren, Bruce Kochevar (Mary), Lynn Perrey (Ed), Fred Kochevar and Brenda Erjavec; several nieces, nephews, cousins and great-grandchildren.

Joann Olson

Joann Colt Olson, 84, of Babbitt, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at Boundary Waters Care Center. A celebration of life was held on Tuesday, July 18 at Grand Ely Lodge. Interment was at the Argo Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely. The family wishes to thank the staff at Boundary Waters Care Center who showed kindness, compassion and love to JoAnn over seven and a half-years. The family also wishes to thank the staff of Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital, Dr. Joseph Bianco and a special thanks to Dr. James Montana. Family arrangements were entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her daughter, Kathleen (Jim) Crawford of Brookhaven, Miss.; son, Robert (Glenda) Lewis of Booneville, Miss.; brothers, Williams (Phyllis) Colt of Proctor and Joseph (Carol) Colt of Scanlon; grandsons, Brandon (Lynn) Crawford, Travis Olson and Bethany (Jay) Ballard; and five great-grandchildren.

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Outdoors

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THE WEATHER

Dry conditions continue to worsen

Parts of St. Louis County and most of Lake County now in moderate drought

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Drought conditions continue to build across Minnesota, including here in the North Country, despite some recent rains. That's according to the National Weather Service Office in Duluth as well as the U.S. Drought Monitor. The latest

weekly drought monitor shows all of Minnesota and the vast majority of the Upper Midwest in varying levels of drought.

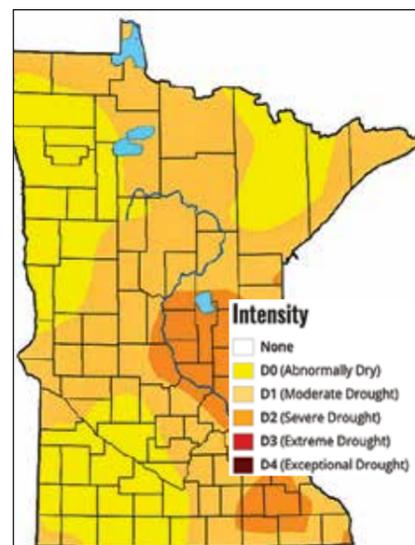
Most of northern Minnesota is now in moderate drought, although most of the northern two-thirds of St. Louis County are listed as abnormally dry, which is the lowest level of drought status. Only far western and far southern St. Louis County are currently

listed in moderate drought, along with most of Lake and Cook counties.

Despite a very wet winter and early spring, the region's weather pattern flipped to a dry one in May and much of June - which would normally be one of the wettest periods of the year. While the region received significant rains at the end of June and some modest rains since then, the area continues

to fall behind during a period of the year when average rainfall typically runs between 1 and 1.5-inches per month. Cooler weather in July has likely helped reduce the effects of the more limited rainfall.

Right: The drought map issued July 13 by the U.S. Drought Monitor. See DROUGHT...pg. 5B



WILD HARVEST

BERRY ABUNDANT

Despite dry conditions, blueberry, juneberry, and raspberry crops are robust

For the second year in a row, the wild fruit crops around the area are bordering on abundant to exceptional, at least in many places. And this year, June's early heat has left most berry crops ripening ahead of schedule, which means you should get out now if you're hoping for a few blueberry pies, or raspberry jam, this summer.

The relative berry abundance is likely the result of last winter's heavy snow, which provided enough soil moisture for most berry bushes to weather June's remarkably hot and dry conditions.

The only exception appears to be the blueberry crop in areas with shallow soils, which were left parched by June's weather. That means the bedrock outcrops that can provide excellent picking in an average-to-wet year, aren't likely to yield many berries this summer.

If you're having a hard time finding blueberries, be on the lookout for juneberries, which are the blueberry's meatier and often sweeter cousin. This year, many juneberry bushes are loaded with big, juicy, and sweet berries, more than I've seen in several years. Walking and biking paths in places like Ely, Tower, and Soudan are good places to look for juneberries. In case you're not familiar with juneberries, these are tall bushes, often growing ten feet high or more, so they can be easier to pick for those who have a hard time bending down for blueberries. Even if the berries are above your head, you can usually bend the branches down quite a bit without breaking them.

Wild raspberries are also beginning to ripen and also appear to be abundant. And, while they're far from ripe this early, the wild plum crop looks exceptionally strong as well for those who like to make plum jelly.



MARSHALL HELMBERGER



Top: Blueberries, of varying ripeness, glisten after a recent rain shower.

Above: Juneberries are surprisingly plump and sweet this year, despite the dry and hot June. Get them now, however, because they'll be past peak soon.

Right: The raspberry crop is quickly ripening and appears better than average.



photos by M. HelMBERGER

Wildflower Watch

This week's featured flower
BLUE VERVAIN



Look for **Blue Vervain**, *Verbena hastata*, in sunny wet meadows or lakeshores, where it stands well above most grasses and other wildflowers.

Its tiny five-petaled flowers bloom along a tightly packed spike and are a unique shade of bluish-purple. Each plant typically grows several flower spikes and they bloom from bottom to top over a period of weeks.

Its leaves are narrow and coarsely toothed and grow opposite each other. The plant's stems are square and are often reddish in color. It's a native wildflower and is widely distributed in Minnesota.

RECREATION

Forest Service proposes hike in public camping fees

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The Superior National Forest is proposing to change fees at several national forest campgrounds in the region and the public is invited to submit comments on the proposed change.

For those campgrounds that currently assess camping fees, the proposed change would increase the nightly site fee from the current \$12 to \$18. That would include the following campgrounds: Echo Lake, Lake Jeanette, and Pfeiffer Lake. The Echo Lake Group Campground fee would increase from \$20 a night to \$30. Campgrounds on the Tofte District, which currently charge \$15 per night, would increase to \$18. That includes the following campgrounds: Little Isabella River, McDougal Lake, Ninemile Lake, and Divide Lake.

"We recognize how important these sites are to our local communities and to those who use the sites," said Tim Engrav, Acting Recreation Manager for the Superior National Forest. "These

See FEES...pg. 5B

Fishing reports

Ely area

The best walleye bite continues to be in shallow water, with 7-9 feet seeming to offer the most success. Anglers catching walleyes here are either trolling crankbaits at about 2 mph, jigging leeches, crawlers and even minnows, or pulling spinner rigs. Shallow rocky points, shallow sunken islands and shallow rocky flats have been the areas to target. Hot colors have been Firetiger, purple and gold.

Topwater smallmouth bass fishing has cooled off some this last week, as cooler than normal

temperatures settled in the area. Best bite has been subsurface and on spinners and Ned rigs.

This cool snap has only improved the local pike bite on area lakes. Pike continue to be found in shallow weedbeds, while river mouths, entrances to shallow bays and main lake point are other areas to look for active pike. Spoons, spinnerbaits, and sucker minnows, fished under a bobber, continue to work well.

Courtesy of Arrowhead Outdoors. See more at Arrowhead OutdoorsElyMN.com.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
76 53					77 54					78 54					79 55					79 56				
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.
07/10	79	54	0.18		07/10	81	52	0.52		07/10	82	50	0.10		07/10	70	52	0.47		07/10	80	52	0.32	
07/11	69	47	0.00		07/11	69	39	0.00		07/11	70	44	0.00		07/11	70	43	0.00		07/11	69	39	0.00	
07/12	70	49	0.00		07/12	70	41	0.00		07/12	71	46	0.00		07/12	73	43	0.00		07/12	69	43	0.00	
07/13	71	51	0.00		07/13	72	41	0.00		07/13	75	47	0.00		07/13	73	52	0.00		07/13	72	43	0.00	
07/14	73	55	0.02		07/14	75	43	0.02		07/14	75	52	0.05		07/14	75	50	0.00		07/14	73	48	0.04	
07/15	76	57	0.00		07/15	77	48	0.03		07/15	78	55	0.00		07/15	66	54	0.00		07/15	76	48	0.00	
07/16	69	49	0.04		07/16	69	43	0.00		07/16	68	52	0.00		07/16	63	50	0.00		07/16	68	42	0.03	
YTD Total	11.63				YTD Total	13.21				YTD Total	8.54				YTD Total	NA				YTD Total	11.26			

LIFE ON THE LAKE

My Stuntz Bay boathouse

Living on an island takes a great deal of planning and consideration. I certainly wish I had done that and not gone on the seat of my pants method. Still, four years later, I'm still here and happy about my decision. I've learned a lot and still have a long way to go. But there is one thing I fell into and certainly did not appreciate near enough at the time. The Stuntz Bay boathouse.

According to Wikipedia, there are 143 boathouses in Stuntz Bay, mostly built in the first half of the 20th century. The lots were given to the Soudan Iron Mine employees as a reward for years of service and the miners built the structures out of tamarack poles and scrap metal from the mine. Resourceful, huh? Apparently the mining company promoted outdoor recreation as an employment perk and I can imagine hunting and fishing were popular pastimes.

At any rate, I have one that has been in the family for quite a few years now. Because the houses are now part of the Soudan Underground Mine National Park and are listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places, I am subject to the rules of that organization. As it stands currently, I will be the last generation in my family to use the boathouse and ownership will eventually revert back to the park. I can never sell it or give it to a next generation. I am it!

But, man oh man, I'm gonna use it now and appreciate it every day! My boathouse is a rather medium-



April's black lab Nibs looks ahead as they prepare to enter their boathouse on Stuntz Bay, one of nearly 150 historic boathouses located there.

photo by A. Wamhoff



APRIL WAMHOFF

size one compared to some of the other houses. It fits my runabout just nicely. When my dad purchased the house, it came with a retired mailboat. I'm sure it was a large boat for the day. There are larger boathouses and even doubles, and doubles that have been remodeled to house larger boats. And there are smaller ones. Much smaller ones. I don't imagine, back in the day, there was much call for a house large enough for a huge runabout or a houseboat.

And though the worth and ownership of the boathouse ends with me, she is priceless. Truly! I use it nearly every day. And as such, we maintain her whenever she needs some TLC. She was originally sitting on posts pounded into the bay. Egads! We've since had cribs put in. Tilt up doors have been replaced and a roll up installed. The year of the flood, I had to have my three big dogs sit in the front of the boat for enough weight to get under the tilted-up door. It needed replacing anyway. The barn swallows are messy part-time residents in the boathouse. I have three plastic

owls doing sentinel duty. They are marginally helpful. One has blinking lights for eyes and hoots when it is activated by motion. I think it was inspired by a horror movie and, if I were a tiny bird, I think I would be scared. But they are brave. And they don't pay rent!

I see other improvements made to the boathouses. Some have solar panels. More roll-up doors and new cribs have been installed. But some have fallen into extreme disrepair and even collapsed into the lake. Such a shame. I imagine they have already reverted back to government ownership for one reason or another.

Those of us who have the true privilege of the use of one of these structures are so incredibly fortunate. I do wish the rules would change to allow more years of ownership to more generations. Then maybe the decay of these truly priceless buildings would stop. But for now, we live with the rules and hope for a change. This humble little structure, my Stuntz Bay boathouse, rich in history, allows me the ability to live on my island.

DROUGHT...Continued from page 2B

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), long term outlooks for the rest of the summer suggest above-average temperatures and average-to-below-average precipitation, which is expected to further exacerbate drought conditions.

Water levels dropping

The effects of the drought are showing up in river levels in the region, as rivers across the region have been dropping to close to Q90 levels, which indicates a river that's in the bottom 10th percentile or lower for flow. The Little Fork River was at 115 cubic feet per second, or cfs, as of Monday, down from 156

cfs the previous Monday. This week's reading was just above the river's Q90 of 90 cfs. The Vermilion River was experiencing a flow of 271 cfs, a significant drop from the reading of 364 cfs one week earlier, but still well above its Q90 of 122 cfs.

The St. Louis River has already dropped below its Q90 of 630 cfs with a flow of 509 cfs.

You can find the latest information concerning drought conditions, including a number of drought-related graphics, on the NWS local drought page at https://www.weather.gov/dlh/drought_page.

FEES...Continued from page 4B

fee increases will help us maintain the sites to the level and quality people have come to expect in addition to making the fees more consistent throughout the forest," he added.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), which allows the Forest Service to retain funds collected at certain recreation sites and use these funds locally to operate, maintain, and improve the sites. At least 80 percent of the revenue from recreation fees remains on the forests to operate, maintain, and improve facilities.

According to a Forest Service statement, raising the revenue collected through recreation fees would help the forest improve infrastructure within the campgrounds and maintain a steady level of staffing during the season of operation.

The comment period on the proposed changes is set to end on Sept. 12, 2023. To ensure that your comments are considered, please send your comments by that date to:

MAIL:
Superior National Forest, Attention: Tim Engrav, 8901 Grand Avenue Place, Duluth, MN 55808.
EMAIL:
SM.FS.Superior_NF@

usda.gov with Subject: Rec Fees

IN PERSON:

Oral comments must be provided in person at the Superior National Forest during normal business hours (Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.) or by calling 218-626-4300 and indicating you would like to provide comments on the 'proposed recreation fee changes'.

ON-LINE:

Comments can also be provided online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r9feeproposals>.

For more information on the proposed project, visit our website www.fs.usda.gov/superior.

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- Remove drain plug and open all water draining devices
- Trash unused bait

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- (Or) Decontaminate with high pressure water (120°F or warmer)

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EMPLOYMENT

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools High School Paraprofessionals

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for Paraprofessionals for the 2023-2024 school year; background check required.

- Qualifications include:
- Associate's Degree/equivalent or complete a Para Pro exam with a passing score (www.ets.org/parapro)
 - Preferred experience working with school age children
 - Evidence of ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively in a collaborative setting
 - Ability to perform job description duties

- Benefits include:
- Paid sick leave, personal days and vacation
 - Health and life insurance
 - Flexible spending account
 - PERA retirement

Application available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us

- A complete application must include the following:
- District Application
 - Resume
 - College Transcripts
 - 2 letters of recommendation

Return materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email lwestrick@ely.k12.mn.us. Contact the District Office for a complete job description.

Starting Rate of Pay: \$17.23/hour
Hours: 6.5 hours/day

Deadline to apply: July 26, 2023; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, July 21, 2023

Legacy Project Manager Closes: 07/28/2023

Position Purpose: The Legacy Project Manager coordinates and serves as liaison between content producers and other independent contractors engaged by KBFT radio, to oversee and document Legacy Amendment projects, including photographer(s), videographer(s) and/or engineer(s) for recording live broadcasts. The incumbent is responsible for executing the purpose of the 2013 Legacy amendment, which supports arts, art education and access to the arts, preserves Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Attention HAY HARVESTING

The City of Babbitt PUC department is looking for someone interested in harvesting hay. The field is approximately 50 acres. Harvesters must supply all their own equipment, and all hay harvested becomes property of the harvester. If interested, please contact Chuck Schanlaub at 218-235-0232.

7/21

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP SEEKING CLEANING SERVICE/ CLEANING PERSON

Greenwood Township is seeking a part time cleaning service/cleaning person for Greenwood Town Hall, 3000 Hwy 77, Tower, MN 55790. Contact JoAnn Bassing, Township Clerk, at the above address or clerk@greenwoodtownshipmn.com or 218-753-2231.

Published in the Timberjay, July 21, 2023

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP REQUEST FOR SEALED QUOTES FOR TREE REMOVAL AT GREENWOOD TOWN HALL COMPLEX

The Greenwood Township Board is accepting sealed quotes for the removal of the marked trees at the Town Hall, 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790.

The contractor must provide a certificate of insurance as to general liability insurance coverage. Successful quotes must carry vehicle and general liability insurance for no less than \$1,000,000.00 for personal injury and property damage.

Sealed quotes are to be sent or delivered by Aug. 7, 2023 to JoAnn Bassing, Greenwood Township Clerk at 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790. E-mail: clerk@greenwoodtownshipmn.com

The township reserves the right to reject any or all quotes, to waive any irregularities and to accept any quote deemed most advantageous to the Township.

Published in the Timberjay, July 21, 2023

Legal notices are online each week
at timberjay.com and at
<https://www.mnpublicnotice.com/>



STAFF OPENINGS

Vermilion Country School (VCS) is an innovative educational program that provides project-based environmental education as a Minnesota public school. We seek adults who want to work for a positive education and impact in this community. We serve students across the Iron Range in Tower. Contact VCS if you are interested in being a positive influence in the community and supporting our young people in learning.

All roles listed below are full time 1.0 and provide benefits, including PTO

We recently received grant funding to increase our staffing and have several new roles we are hiring for:

- SpEd Teacher (Licensed)
- SpEd Social Worker (Licensed)
- Science Interdisciplinary Teacher (Licensed)

- Unlicensed Positions:
- Paraprofessional (SpEd)
- Check and Connect Coordinator (2142 partnership)
- Student Success Specialist

VCS can support candidates with a B.A. to attain licensure in teaching - if you have interest and appropriate experience, but don't yet have a teaching license, please apply!

All applications and questions can be sent to info@vermillioncountry.org or by calling 218-248-2485



COME JOIN OUR TEAM!

Waschke Family Chevrolet is currently seeking an Auto Body Technician and an Automotive Detailer. Stop in and apply in person at 126 N Hwy. 53, Cook, or inquire by phone at 218-666-5901, or send resume to Dgrecinger@waschke.com.

WANTED!

Waschke Family Chevrolet is currently seeking an A/B technician. Prefer GM Certified but will train. Base pay plus incentives! Stop in and apply in person at 126 N Hwy. 53, Cook, or inquire by phone at 218-666-5901, or send resume to Dgrecinger@waschke.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE

City of Tower OPENING

**Tower Economic Development Authority
Secretary
(non-Board Member, monthly stipend)**

See <https://cityoftower.com/positions-available-or-City-Hall-to-apply>
Deadline Monday, July 31

Published in the Timberjay, July 21 & 28, 2023

City of Tower OPENING

**Tower Economic Development Authority
Board Member**

See <https://cityoftower.com/positions-available-or-City-Hall-to-apply>
Deadline Monday, July 31

Published in the Timberjay, July 21 & 28, 2023

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP REQUEST FOR SEALED QUOTES FOR PROPANE AT GREENWOOD TOWN HALL COMPLEX - 2023-2024 SEASON

The Greenwood Township Board is accepting sealed quotes for propane at the Town Hall, 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790, for the 2023-2024 season.

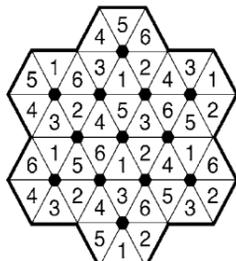
Sealed quotes are to be sent or delivered by Sept. 30, 2023 to JoAnn Bassing, Greenwood Township Clerk at 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790. E-mail: clerk@greenwoodtownshipmn.com

The township reserves the right to reject any or all quotes, to waive any irregularities and to accept any quote deemed most advantageous to the Township.

Published in the Timberjay, July 21, 2023

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Casual Laundry Aide

Radiology

FT Radiologic Technologist (\$4,000 sign-on bonus)
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Casual Radiologic Tech (Independent Contractor, weekend only)

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PT Dietary Aide/Cook

Rehab

Casual Rehab Secretary

TO APPLY:

www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/

More Info? Contact Human Resources

218-666-6220

humanresources@cookhospital.org

The Cook Hospital is an equal opportunity provider and employer

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Eveleth Virginia Airport Authority - Hangar Building Sites Available -

The Eveleth Virginia Airport has hangar building sites available at located at 4280 Miller Trunk Road, Eveleth MN 55734. These sites are owned and managed under the Eveleth-Virginia Airport Authority under a long term lease.

The Eveleth-Virginia Airport Authority will be taking in applications for these sites through August 30, 2023.

**In the event there is more than one applicant for each building site, there will be a lottery style drawing. This lottery drawing will be conducted at an official Eveleth - Virginia Airport Authority Board Meeting to be held on September 12, 2023. Those who do not obtain a building site will be put on a waiting list in the event the selected applicant does not move forward with construction within the terms and guidelines.*

Please review the Minimum Applicant Requirements and the Hangar Site Application at:

https://www.virginiamn.us/live/advisory_boards_and_commissions/eveleth-virginia_airport_authority.php

For further information please contact:

Kris Marafioti
Airport Coordinator
218-744-7563

e-airportauthority@virginiamn.us

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP REQUEST FOR SEALED QUOTES FOR SNOW REMOVAL AT GREENWOOD TOWN HALL COMPLEX - 2023-2025 SEASON

The Greenwood Township Board is accepting sealed quotes for the snow removal at the Town Hall 2023-2025 season. The quote should state the cost of removing the snow per hour for the entrance, driveways and parking areas, additionally shoveling the walk to the entrances, once the snow reaches a depth of 2 inches, at the Town Hall 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790.

The contractor must provide a certificate of insurance as to general liability insurance coverage. Successful quotes must carry vehicle and general liability insurance for no less than \$1,000,000.00 for personal injury and property damage.

Sealed quotes are to be sent or delivered by Sept. 30, 2023 to JoAnn Bassing, Greenwood Township Clerk at 3000 Hwy 77, Tower MN 55790. E-mail: clerk@greenwoodtownshipmn.com. The township reserves the right to reject any or all quotes, to waive any irregularities and to accept any quote deemed most advantageous to the Township.

Published in the Timberjay, July 21, 2023

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

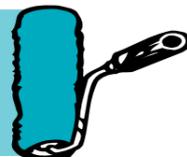
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Classification Title: Administrative Planning Director State

Contact Beth Dewhurst with questions at beth.dewhurst@state.mn.us or 218-735-3009

Application deadline: 7/26/23

Equal Opportunity Employer 7/21

Super Crossword

Answers

T	B	A	D	A	D	E	P	E	E	S	A	G	R	I	P	P	A				
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