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the **TIMBERJAY**



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THE OUTDOORS ECONOMY

Downturn in power sports industry an adjustment

A combination of factors have led to layoffs, worries about the future

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Jeff Carlson hears it all the time. As the owner and operator of Harold's Arctic Cat south of Tower, he said nearly every customer who walks in the door has a question or comment about the future of the company that Carlson's business depends upon.

Since his father Harold

opened the small sales and service operation back in 1967, Arctic Cat has been central to Carlson's livelihood, so such questions are more than academic.

The concerns on customers' minds center around last November's announcement that Arctic Cat's owner, Textron Industries, was halting production of the storied sleds and permanently laying off 65 workers at the company's Thief River Falls assembly plant.

The story, which was big news across northern Minnesota where Arctic Cat has a deep and loyal following, raised uncertainty about the future of the brand in the minds of even some long-time devotees of the green and black. Those fears weren't helped by the oft-times gloomy speculations that made the rounds on social media.

Yet, as was the case with Mark Twain, who once had the opportunity to read his own obituary in a local newspaper,

Right: Harold's Arctic Cat has been in business since 1967 and has weathered downturns in the past.

photo by J. Summit

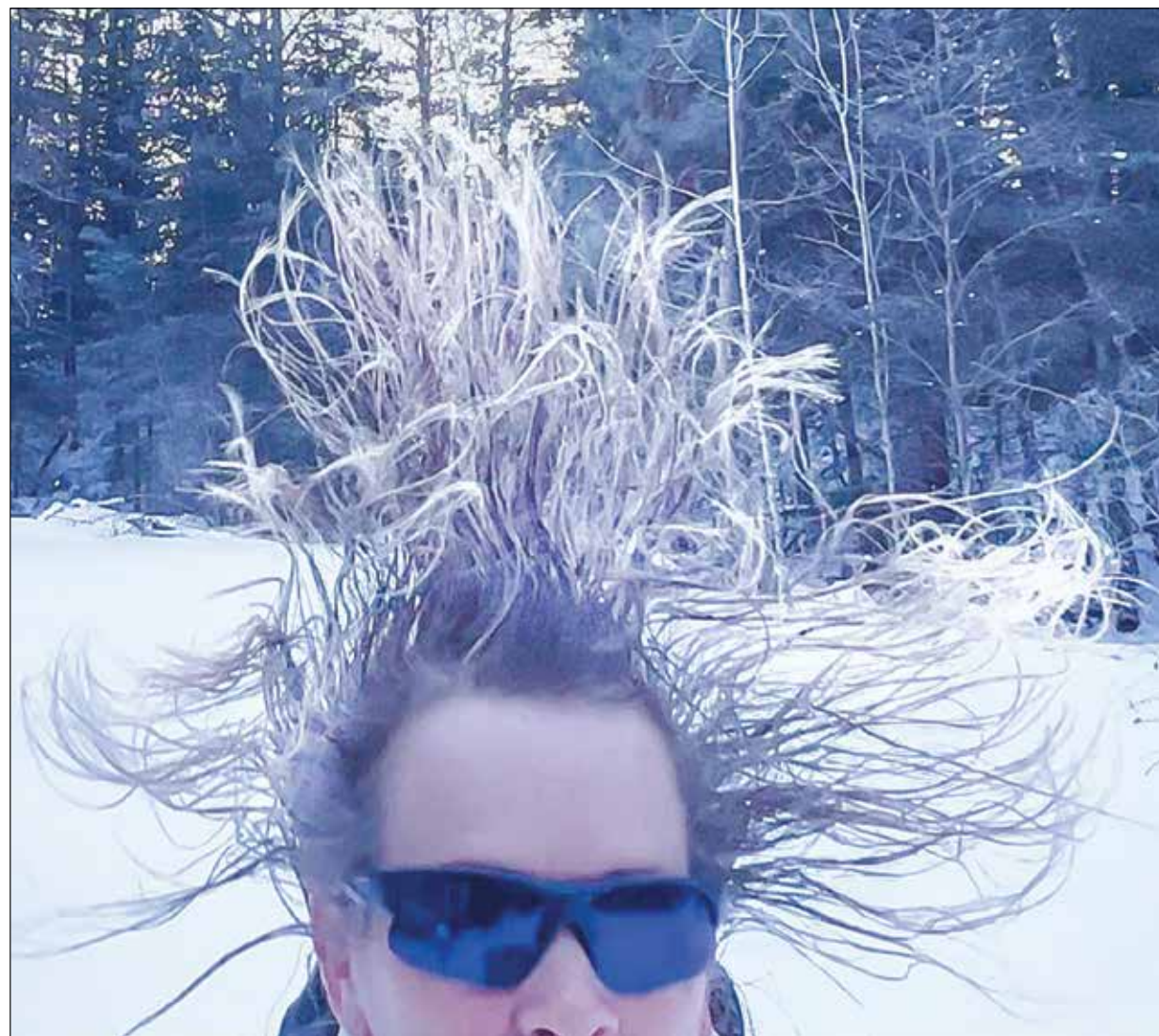
it appears reports of Arctic Cat's death have been greatly exaggerated.

Indeed, it appears far more likely that the recent layoffs— some permanent, others temporary— were part

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LIFE IN THE SWAMP



No, Pam Wattering of rural Tower did not just see a sasquatch! During last weekend's bitter cold she came up with one more fun thing to do when it's freezing outside. Wet your hair and hang upside down while combing it straight out in all directions. She said it took about ten seconds to achieve her memorable doo! photo by P. Wattering

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Voters will have choices on March 11

Option B will be back on the ballot along with contested races for supervisor, treasurer

GREENWOOD TWP- Greenwood voters will have decisions in the March 11 township election, with contested races across the board.

Steve Bradach and Sue Drobac filed for the supervisor seat currently held by Rick Stoehr, who is not seeking reelection. Drobac formerly served as the town clerk, a position she resigned back in 2020 before running for supervisor the following year. She

served one term until losing the election in 2024 to Lois Roskoski. Bradach would be a newcomer to township politics.

Meanwhile, Paul Thompson and JoAnn Bassing both filed for the treasurer seat, currently held by Jeff Maus, who also is not running for reelection.

JoAnn Bassing formerly served as interim clerk, appointed after the resignation

of Debby Spicer in June 2022, and was elected to fill the remainder of that term in 2023, ran again against Spicer in 2024 but lost, and is currently deputy treasurer.

Thompson, who was a major force behind the fund-raising for the new pickleball courts, has become a regular at township meetings. He spoke recently during public comment to urge township residents to vote for Option

B, which will also be on the March 11 ballot.

Option B would change the clerk and treasurer positions from elected to hired, creating two new township employees working under the direction of the town board. Thompson said he is hoping that Option B passes, which means he would only stay in office only until the board is

See...**CHOICES** pg. 11

MINING LITIGATION

Water quality data raises doubts about DNR legal claims

Extensive testing shows path of pollution reaches Boundary Waters

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—A legal proceeding now in its fifth year has the potential to reshape state rules surrounding the permitting of non-ferrous mining operations. The case, filed by Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, or NMW, back in 2020, seeks to require the Department of Natural Resources to revise its mining regulations to provide greater protection to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

NMW alleges that the current rule, established decades ago by the DNR, is

inadequate to protect ground and surface water because it fails to prohibit mining of nonferrous metals, like copper and nickel, within those portions of the Rainy River watershed located upstream of the BWCAW.

The DNR, for its part, argues that the Boundary Waters is adequately protected under the Clean Water Act, which designates the waters within the 1.1-million-acre wilderness as "prohibited outstanding resource value waters." The federal law prohibits any degradation whatsoever of

See...**CLAIMS** pg. 9

CITY OF ELY

Council finds multiple areas of disagreement

by **CATIE CLARK**
Ely Editor

ELY- Unanimity was in short supply at Tuesday's Ely City Council meeting as members wrangled over state funding for a proposed cannabis dispensary and appointing members to a new city committee.

The cannabis issue centered around a preapplication for grant money from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Department for inside demolition work at the old bowling alley on Camp St. that developers plan to turn into a cannabis

dispensary. The council approved the preapplication on a 6-1 vote, with council member John Lahtonen dissenting.

"I cannot support this," Lahtonen said. "I do not believe that government funds should be going to support a business that will be selling marijuana."

Ely Green Team

Appointing members to a new city committee proved fraught with challenges. The city council created the Ely Green Team committee on

See...**COUNCIL** pg. 9



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Community notices

P.E.O. Chapter meeting on Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Fire Brigade Hall

COOK- The next regular meeting of P.E.O. Chapter ER will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8 at 10:30 am at the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade Hall located at 8025 Oak Narrows Rd., Cook. All P.E.O. members in the area are welcome to attend.

Northeast farmers encouraged to apply for funding for on-farm climate change projects

REGIONAL- University of Minnesota Extension Northeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Northeast RSDP) invites small farms in the region to apply for new funding available through The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation Fund at the St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation. The funding will support on-farm projects that address climate change and build resilience. The Farmer Climate Action Fund seeks ready-to-go, farmer-led projects, including but not limited to planting wildlife corridors, replacing fossil fuels with clean energy alternatives, designing and installing agrivoltaics systems, adding biochar, planting nitrogen cover crops, and implementing other conservation practices.

"As a farmer myself, I always have an idea or two I'd like to try that I think would improve my farm's resilience," explains David Abazs, executive director of Northeast RSDP. "The new funding will support Northeast farmers to be innovative while also reducing the risks that often come from incorporating climate change adaptations on their farms. This is a real opportunity to get creative."

Farmers in Koochiching, Itasca, Aitkin, Pine, Carlton, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook counties, as well as from Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and Bois Forte Band of Chippewa are encouraged to apply. Priority will be given to projects that are shovel-ready and can be completed by Dec. 31, 2025. The application deadline is Feb. 14, with awards announced in early March. More information and application materials are available on the RSDP website at z.umn.edu/FarmerFund.

Northeast RSDP is one of five regions of the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships. For more information on RSDP, visit RSDP.umn.edu.

For more news from U of M Extension, visit www.extension.umn.edu/news. University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Arrowhead Croatian Lodge 238 to hold annual meeting and dinner

GILBERT- The Arrowhead Croatia Lodge 238 Gilbert will hold their annual meeting and member appreciation dinner on Sunday, Feb. 9 at noon at the Rink Restaurant, 301 Hat Trick Ave., Eveleth.

There will be a short meeting and election of officers. All lodge and nest members are welcome. A buffet lunch will be served. Please call Elana at 218-744-2891 by Feb. 5 if you plan to attend.

Finlander bocce ball on Jan. 25 in Tower

TOWER- Play bocce ball the Finlander way, on the ice, on Saturday, Jan. 25 beginning at 9 a.m. at Your Boat Club Lake Vermilion Marina. Please preregister your team by 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23. All teams must be two men and two women, 18 years or older.

Sign-up sheets available at D'Erick's, Good Ol' Days, Benchwarmers, or Fuel & Food in Tower. You may also contact Jolene Mroszak at 218-255-2131 or email tseventsboard@gmail.com with your team information.

Cost to play is \$20/person, with payout to the top four places. Payment must be made before the start of play on the day of the event.

Coolers are allowed. For questions, contact Jolene Mroszak 218-255-2131

Your Boat Club will be open so stop in and check out their sale on in-stock items and sign up for the drawing. Players will receive a complimentary tape measure on the ice at the time of registration.

Lake Vermilion Weiner Cruiser is joining us again this year. Ward and his wife welcome you to stop by the stand and grab some lunch, have a snack, and shoot the breeze.

Thank you to our incredible donors: Nelson Williams Linings, Inc. and Tower-Soudan Insurance Agency, Inc.

Thanks to the many volunteers that make this happen. There will be a bonfire on shore for players and spectators. Warm up and hang out while you wait for your playing time on the ice or cheer for your favorite team.

ELY WINTER FESTIVAL

Heritage Center hosting games at EWF

Traditional Ojibwe outdoor games set for Feb. 12 and 13 in Ely

ELY-The Bois Forte Heritage Center and the 1854 Treaty Authority will be co-hosting the Moccasin Games and Hand Games, led by Terry Goodsky, as part of the Ely Winter Festival. The games will be held at the Ely Folk School on Wednesday,



Feb. 12, from 8 to 10:30 a.m.

Moccasin Games are intended only for men to



play but the Hand Games are open to all.

The following day, Ojibwe Snow Snake Games will be led by Rick Anderson, at White-

side Park on Thursday, Feb. 13 at 1 p.m. The game is

played by setting up a track in the snow where participants slide large sticks to see whose stick can go the farthest to win.

Please join us for some fun. Gii comma giizhi dah omah "Let's have fun here!"

TAKE A SURVEY

Help shape the future of the Minnesota Discovery Center

CHISHOLM- The "Museum of the Iron Range" is embarking on an exciting new chapter through a strategic planning process to re-imagine its future. This effort will run from Jan. 17 to Feb. 14, and we're calling on the community to help shape what's next for the Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC).

This is more than a survey or a visit—it's a call to reconnect with the heart of our region's story and play a role in shaping a vibrant future for MDC.

"We know there are people who haven't visited MDC in a while or may not know what's here today," said Char Conger, executive director of the Minnesota Discovery Center. "As we dig into strategic planning, we want you to come back, explore, and help us re-imagine MDC as a place that reflects the Iron Range community's needs and aspirations."

Be part of what is next

Take the survey and win big. Your



input is vital. By completing the MDC community survey, you'll help shape our future and have the chance to win incredible prizes. Weekly drawings will include:

- Two Annual Family Memberships
- Tickets to the Red Dirt Concert

Series

- Trolley Tour Tickets
- Mini Golf Passes
- Gift Shop Gift Certificates

How to Participate: Take the survey at <https://bit.ly/MNDiscoverysurvey>.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Arrowhead Transit offering transit options for MN North campus students

REGIONAL- Arrowhead Transit is thrilled to announce its new partnership with Minnesota North College, aimed at providing enhanced public transportation access to students, staff, and the surrounding communities. This innovative collaboration seeks to expand transportation options for rural Minnesotans, demonstrating that transportation models designed for urban areas can be successfully adapted for rural settings.

Across the nation, urban centers have utilized public transportation models to offer easy access to educational institutions, work opportunities, and essential services. Now, Arrowhead Transit is bringing a similar model to the rural areas of Minnesota, where colleges and universities such as the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, St. Cloud State, and the University of Minnesota-Duluth already employ robust student transit systems. By introducing this model to communities in Grand Rapids, Hibbing, Virginia, and beyond, Arrowhead Transit hopes to give students greater freedom and accessibility, whether it's to attend class, access essential services, or explore social and cultural opportunities.

As part of this initiative, Arrowhead Transit will track student usage of various services, including Scheduled Stops, Commuter Routes, and Dial-A-Ride. These services are specifically designed to make travel to and from campus more convenient and efficient.

Through this partnership, Arrowhead Transit aims to eliminate transportation barriers, ensuring that students can access their educational opportunities without the reliance on personal vehicles, which can be costly and often unavailable in rural areas.

"Just because our communities are rural doesn't mean the same opportunities for mobility shouldn't exist as in urban areas," said Brandon Nurmi, director of Arrowhead Transit. "We are excited to offer a transportation solution that makes it easier for students to move freely between campuses, housing, and essential services. Our goal is to create more interconnectivity between cities and colleges, providing an affordable, reliable, and equitable transportation network for all."

Key details

Scheduled Stops & Dial-A-Ride Services: Arrowhead Transit will offer door-to-door transportation services to and from Minnesota North College campuses, ensuring easy access to class, events, and essential services in the surrounding area.

Ticket Color Change: A dedicated Minnesota North Transit ticket will be introduced to help track ridership and streamline the use of these services.

Expanded Routes: In addition to existing routes, commuter routes will link campuses to the larger Arrowhead Transit network, making it easier for students to travel between cities like Grand Rapids, Hibbing, and Virginia.

This partnership aims to support students in accessing not only education but also housing options, shopping, entertainment, and essential services, all while reducing transportation costs and promoting a more sustainable form of travel. In communities like Grand Rapids, Hibbing, and Virginia, where housing options are often spread out, providing a reliable transit system will expand choices for students and facilitate a more integrated community.

Arrowhead Transit's commitment to enhancing transportation aligns closely with Minnesota North College's mission to create more equitable opportunities for all students, regardless of their background or financial situation. "Transportation shouldn't be a barrier to education or community engagement," added Nurmi. "By expanding access to public transit, we're helping students stay connected, both to their campuses and to everything their communities have to offer."

Get Involved

Students, faculty, and staff at any of the Minnesota North College campuses can now take advantage of these new services. For more information about routes, fares, and to schedule rides, please visit Arrowhead Transit's website at arrowheadtransit.com, or speak with an advisor on campus for further details.

WORDS FROM THE UNITED WAY PRESIDENT

New look for United Way of Northeastern Minnesota

REGIONAL- United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) is starting 2025 fresh with a brand new look. We're excited about our new logo—brighter colors and a more fluid shape that feels more modern, more active, more "us."

Organizations HAVE to evolve, or they won't survive changing times and needs. Luckily, we aren't just experts in our communities; we're experts in adaptability. When the needs of the community have changed, we've always changed, too.

Our last major change came more than 15 years ago when we began developing our own United Way-led programs like Buddy Backpacks and United for Veterans—and fundraising events to support them like Flavor of the North and the upcoming Power of the Purse.

One thing that will never change is our commitment to the community. It didn't change when we began operating our own programs after 40+ years



LATISHA GIETZEN



of operating purely as a funder and connector. In fact, it strengthened—we now not only provide funding to a network of local non-

profits but also operate our own programs to make even more community resources available.

We will never lose sight of the importance of local voices, our appreciation of local volunteers and donors, and the high level of care required to get the best results for our region by investing gifts of time, funds, and insight wisely.

It's an important foundation as we set the United for ALICE® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) study we helped release last fall to work. The study found that while on average 10 percent of our neighbors are living in poverty, another 26 percent on average are ALICE—individuals who are working (or retired) and earning above the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford a basic

household survival budget.

While knowing where our communities fare with ALICE is helpful to understand, coming up with a thoughtful and comprehensive plan to make positive changes will be a big challenge and will require serious coordination. We're ready for our next big move, we're in a unique position to help bring key players together to drive change, and we're excited to see what we can accomplish in 2025 and beyond for ALICE in our region.

United is the way we accomplish big things. If you're ready to join us, there are multiple ways to get involved. Apply to serve on our board or one of our committees; visit our volunteer portal to sign up to help with our events, programs, partners, and other community groups; and check our website and social media pages often because new opportunities arise frequently.

It is a scientific fact that giving and volunteering is healthy for you as it releases natural oxytocin, so whether your New Year's resolution is focused on bettering your community or bettering yourself, look no further than your local United Way.

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CHILD CARE

New family day care to open soon in Tower

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER — Families here who have struggled to find local child care in recent years should have a new option starting as early as March. That's when Country Bumpkins, a new child care facility is set to open in a Main Street apartment next to UBetcha.

Kathie Hill, who has operated a family day care at her home in Winton for the past 12 years, is planning the move to Tower after many of her existing clients moved from the area.

"I decided to take the leap and see what happens," she said. "The census counts for Ely aren't there anymore, and there is definitely a need in Tower," Hill said.

That's borne out from the initial interest. She currently has 17 families on her waiting list and will be interviewing additional families to see which ones will fit into her license, which allows 14 total children, but has limits on how many children of specific ages can be there at any one time.

The day care is licensed for six weeks through 10 years, but she will be taking children up to kindergarten age, along with older siblings of enrolled families.

Hill got into the business to solve her own problem with lack of child care.

"I have four boys," she said, "and wanted to stay home with



Above: Kathie Hill with her grandson Hunter. Middle: Jaxson has fun doing a holiday craft. Right: Weather-permitting, children get to spend time playing outdoors every day. submitted photo



them as much as possible." Hill was working for AEOA and for a home health care agency.

When she was pregnant with her youngest, she couldn't find a placement for him, even though there were 13 day cares in Ely at the time. Most of them are now closed, she said, although Ely now has a new center-based day care option, along with two family day cares.

"I had to do something," she said.

Her career in child care still means keeping her close to her family. Right now, one of her day care "clients" is her young grandson Hunter. And her husband Shawn

helps out when there are more than 12 kids during a single day.

Hill said her favorite part of her job is watching the children grow and learn.

"I love interacting with the children, and watching them interact with their peers," she said. Hill also likes helping parents, who know they have a safe, loving, and stable place for their children to go every day.

Donations of equipment

Hill's current daycare is located in her home, and she is reluctant to move all her equipment and toys to the new location in Tower, because her grandchildren are often at

her house. She is asking for donations of gently-used indoor toddler and preschool toys, outdoor toys for sandbox type play, and large motor toys like indoor/outdoor little slides or Little Tykes style toys (must be in very good condition). She is also looking for a rocking chair and a smart TV.

Country Bumpkins accepts Minnesota child care assistance,

and it also offers a food nutrition program. The day care routine includes free play, snacks and lunch, indoor and outdoor playtime, arts and crafts, naptime, and school readiness activities every day.

For more information on the daycare, contact Hill at 218-235-7622 or find her at Country Bumpkins childcare on Facebook.

ELY

Ely wins DEED grant for old railroad depot remediation

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- A \$1.7 million project to redevelop the Ely railroad depot just got a \$312,257 shot in the arm thanks to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, better known as DEED.

DEED awarded the city of Ely one of its Contamination Cleanup and Investigation grants on Monday to aid with the environmental cleanup portion of the project. The city will act as the fiscal agent for the remediation of the former railroad depot at 212 N. Central. DEED grants typically pay up to

75 percent of the costs to assess and remediate polluted sites, and the private developers of the depot are providing matching funds for the cleanup effort.

The three-acre property qualified for the grant because it has petroleum and other soil contamination. The previous business use of the depot was as the retail space of an outfitter.

In addition to the cleanup, the project includes the preservation of part of the historic depot plus the addition of 1,500 square feet of new construction to include a brewery, bar, restaurant, and event

See **DEPOT...** pg. 5



Ely's former railroad depot, which was most recently used by an outfitter. photo by C. Clark

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OPINION

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

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

American oligarchy

Billionaires control the message like never before. Thank Citizens United

Just days before Donald Trump took the oath of office this past Monday, now former-president Joe Biden used the bully pulpit of his office to warn Americans that the democracy we've known since the enactment of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 is under threat like never before.

“Today,” said Biden, “an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead.”

It was probably only a matter of time. Oligarchy, which is rule by a small group of individuals, usually people of wealth, has been increasingly undermining America ever since the U.S. Supreme Court paved the way with its 2010 Citizens United decision. In its highly controversial and legally imaginative 5-4 ruling, the high court effectively ruled that money is speech, which means those with money have the biggest megaphone in our elections.

Citizens United opened the floodgates to unlimited dark money from virtually any source, and 2024 was the year when the high waters breached the levee, in the form of Elon Musk, a South African who struck it rich in the U.S. and poured nearly a quarter billion dollars of his own money into the election of Donald Trump. Musk's vast sums, along with his heavy-handed control of the social media platform X, almost certainly made the difference in the 2024 election.

Musk, who has since taken up residence at Mar-a-Lago, has been likened to a shadow president since Trump's victory, weighing in on virtually every major decision. That's how oligarchs operate, of course. Their money gives them access to power, and the more money the more access, until, as in Musk's case, the power almost seems to rest with them. And Musk has billions of dollars in federal contracts, virtually guaranteeing that he'll use his newfound power to further enrich himself.

Musk, of course, wasn't the only oligarch to see the potential of a Trump presidency. Trump is a man largely free of political principle, who stands for anything that seems to advance his personal or electoral goals at the moment. He views the use of power in purely transactional terms, all of which creates a void that the suddenly Trump-fawning Silicon Valley billionaires hope to fill with their own agendas—namely tax cuts and a free hand as they reshape society to their whims and profit.

Trump and his GOP allies plan to extend the 2017 Trump tax cuts, which overwhelming

benefit the wealthy, and Trump has put Musk in charge of determining how to gut the social safety net and many other important functions of government to pay the estimated \$4 trillion price tag of those tax cuts over 10 years. It's the hallmark of oligarchy, in which the working class and the poor pay the cost to further gild the lilies of the uber-rich.

The fact that many of the billionaires now running our government own major media outlets will further advance the interests of the oligarchs in a new kind of authoritarianism. Taking control of the media was one of the first key steps in the transition of Hungary from a democratic system to autocracy under Viktor Orban and his Fidesz Party.

Here in the U.S., right-wing media sources, from Fox News to X, helped to spread Trump's seemingly endless false narratives throughout the campaign, serving not as the check on power that our nation's founders envisioned, but as propagandists in service to the would-be autocrat. Even once-respected newspapers, like the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*, saw their billionaire owners nix both papers' planned endorsements of Trump's Democratic opponent Kamala Harris. The oligarchs are clearly gathering at the foot of the throne, hands extended with their bags of cash and promises to further Trump's interests. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced recently that he's ending fact-checking on his platform, virtually guaranteeing it will become the same cesspool of disinformation now found on Musk's X.

Authoritarians and their loyal oligarchs thrive when the public has limited access to accurate and fair reporting. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that an informed electorate is a prerequisite to democracy, which is why our nation's founders enshrined freedom of the press in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The sunshine that the media can direct toward government officials is a threat to the oligarchs who hope to use the government to further their own interests.

A disinformed electorate, by contrast, is the plaything of demagogues, which is why Trump is threatening to sue or pull broadcast licenses from networks or newspapers that question or investigate his actions. The oligarchs surrounding Trump—whose power was vastly increased by Citizens United—now control the message like never before. They'll make sure that message is pleasing to the man on the throne.



Letters from Readers

Give the SafeTech proposal a fair hearing

I don't believe that the modern, sustainable, Ely-Tower-Babbitt ambulance service, envisioned by the EBCH/SafeTech proposal should be declared dead. It's too good of a plan and it deserves to at least be fleshed out and considered in the light of day. What's to be afraid of? This plan certainly echoes the recommendations laid out in the Office of the Legislative Auditor report that thoroughly dealt with the precarious situation facing rural ambulance services and the need for us to modernize so patients across the region can experience Advanced Life Support care when we need it.

Lake County Commissioner Joe Baltich's negativity about the Ely Hospital is unfortunate and unbecoming. We're very fortunate to have the Ely Hospital in our region, and we need to do everything we can to take advantage of it, not tear it down. If you do a check of the hospital-owned ambulance services in Minnesota, you will find that they provide, for very solid reasons, very good Advanced Life Support ambulance services.

It's in everyone's interest to have Advanced Life Support ambulances as compared to Basic Life Support ambulances. A lot of us potential "patients" would appreciate it if the entities involved would calmly sit down with the hospital and give the EBCH/SafeTech plan a fair hearing.

**Lee Peterson
Greenwood Township**

Presidency is already going to Trump's head

It is unlikely that Panama, Greenland, and Canada will start a war with the United States. Trump, however, indicated he

might start a war or wars with them using military force to accomplish his goal of "Making America Great Again." Would Trump still feel that way about his war if his 18-year-old son, Barron, died in the unnecessary war to advance his territorial ambitions?

Panamanian President Mulino said, "The sovereignty and independence of our country are not negotiable." Trump's response, "We will see about that!" Trump also said, "Ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity."

As President, Trump is the military Commander in Chief. He is in full charge of the Army, Navy, and states' militia. Trump has never served in any branch of military, although at times it's almost like he claims personal ownership of the Army because he refers to "his" army.

Previously Trump wanted to display a very large military parade in Washington, D.C. and now he wants to show his military prowess by fulfilling his territorial ambitions.

The prospect of his starting a war or wars is alarming. His selection of military leaders represents some people who have limited or no military or command experience but will be completely loyal to him despite oaths to uphold the Constitution.

Instead of making America Great Again, he may very well scuttle America.

**Gerry Snyder
Ely**

The board has been picking our clerk and treasurer for years

In the Jan. 10 issue of the *Timberjay*, Paul Thompson placed an ad touting the benefits of our township operating under Option B. We have been doing so, in a way, in the last few years already: Treasurer Pam Rodgers resigned and the board chose Belinda Fazio and when Belinda resigned the

board chose Jeff Maus for treasurer. In the clerk's office, Sue Drobac resigned and the board chose Debbie Spicer who then resigned and the board chose me. The board has had plenty of chances to appoint, which Option B basically is except for the nonresident allowance.

We have had and need a resident to be clerk or treasurer because they have skin in the game and hopefully a desire to embrace public service not just a paycheck. An overwhelming number of townships in Minnesota operate with an elected clerk and treasurer. Supervisors don't inherently have some innate ability to select the perfect treasurer or clerk so let's keep their selection in the hands of the many to serve the many, not in the hands of the five supervisors to serve those five. You refused to give up your right to vote in 2020 and 2021 (both by 2:1 margins) so why start now? Let's keep our clerk and treasurer from Greenwood Township not from anywhere as Option B allows! VOTE NO TO OPTION B!

**JoAnn Bassing
Greenwood Township**



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.

COMMENTARY

Building trust in communities...one person at a time

There is a LOT going on in this human space between heaven and Earth as Donald Trump becomes our 47th president. Emotions are rampant, whether despair or jubilation, anticipation, or angst. I imagine social media posts are exploding, but I choose not to venture in that



BETTY FIRTH

direction. You can almost feel this week's sub-zero atmosphere filled with human static, even without any electronic gadgets: "What's he gonna' do? What's happening? How do I/we prepare

for what's happening next?" A variety of somewhat random resources have come to my attention that are interwoven in their focus on our current social milieu, converging into similar conclusions about the importance of our connections to each other in what are called "healthy communities," where people can feel protected, respected, and connected to others in an

environment of collaboration and trust.

"Thank You for Being Late, An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations" is a book written by Thomas L. Friedman, a three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his work at the *New York Times*. He takes on the task of examining and explaining the causes and effects of the major forces affecting our lives in the 21st century, which have resulted in changes happening at a dizzying speed, often leaving us feeling disoriented, overwhelmed, and off-balance. Some people are exhilarated by the pace, many react with

stressed-out exhaustion, and some with despair and hopelessness, but I don't think there are many who don't notice. He points out that the three planet-wide forces of technology, globalization, and climate change with biodiversity loss are all accelerating exponentially and transforming the workplace, politics, geopolitics, ethics, and community, which he takes over 300 pages to explain, so you'll have to look that up on your own. For now, just know that we're in the middle of that, trying to stay grounded and keep our balance.

Friedman grew up in St.

Louis Park, and the last hundred pages of his book take us to Minnesota to examine a phenomenon that he was part of, which he believes gives us clues for the present. His grandparents and many other Jewish immigrants along with a large Black population settled in North Minneapolis around the turn of the century, one of the few places they could find housing. Blatant discrimination in the Minneapolis area at the time, more so than in St. Paul, denied them housing, jobs, and access to social, recreational, and service clubs.

After World War II, with improved finances, his par-

ents' generation was able to move out of the urban core, which they did en masse, to the newly developed township of St. Louis Park, where starter homes on smaller lots were readily available to Jewish buyers. So, Friedman grew up in this small town with many relatives and friends who were part of a well-connected network, attending the public and Hebrew schools together through twelfth grade. Not welcome in gentile country clubs, they built their own golf club, Brookview, a com-

See TRUST...pg. 5

COMMENTARY

Minnesota State Senate shows working together is possible

As the 2025 Legislative Session begins, the Minnesota State Senate finds itself in an unprecedented position. Following the tragic passing of former Majority Leader, Kari Dziedzic, our chamber is in a temporary 33-33 tie between the DFL and Republicans. In the face of this unique situation, both parties have come together in a remarkable show of bipartisanship, forging a co-governing agreement that ensures we can continue to serve the people of Minnesota effectively.



SEN. GRANT HAUSCHILD

This collaboration is a testament to what can happen when we set aside partisan differences and focus on what unites us: the shared goal of improving the lives of Minnesotans. The co-governing agreement reflects a mutual commitment to thoughtful compromise, accountability, and respect. It underscores our belief that the real work of governance should transcend political gamesmanship. It is these kinds of outcomes that I will continue to foster as a mem-

ber of the moderate Blue Dog Coalition.

Unfortunately, the contrast between the State Senate and the current state of the Minnesota House of Representatives is stark. Political gridlock and partisan maneuvering in the House have created an atmosphere of unprecedented chaos, distracting from the critical issues that demand attention. Minnesotans deserve better. While the House struggles to find common ground, the Senate has demonstrated that we can rise above division to ensure progress continues on behalf of the people we represent.

As your state senator, I remain steadfast in my commitment to working in a bipartisan way for what is best for Northern Minnesota. For example, although Representative Skraba and I may disagree a lot, we find ways to work together on the bipartisan issues that matter most to our region. It is the work our constituents expect and voted for. As your State Senator, I will look beyond party labels to work with anyone with a good idea.

I am also deeply honored to have been chosen as an Assistant Majority Leader in the State Senate, a role that will allow me to elevate the

voice of the Iron Range and ensure our region's needs are front and center at the Capitol. Whether it's investing in our infrastructure, continuing to address the EMS crisis, supporting childcare solutions, protecting access to rural healthcare, or fighting for equitable education funding in Greater Minnesota, I will always prioritize the interests of Northern Minnesota.

While the political landscape can often be contentious, I remain optimistic about what we can achieve when we come together in good faith to do the real work Minnesotans expect and deserve. My focus will remain

on the practical, pressing needs of our communities, and I encourage all constituents to share their thoughts, questions, and ideas with me directly at sen.grant.hauschild@mnsenate.gov.

As we embark on this legislative session, know that I am committed to working tirelessly for the Iron Range. Together, we can navigate these challenging times and make meaningful progress for our state.

State Senator Grant Hauschild is an Assistant Majority Leader, Minnesota State Senate

Letters from Readers

Pros and cons of driverless cars

Do you like waiting in traffic? If you say yes or simply don't mind traffic, then don't read any further.

If you are bothered by traffic jams, slowdowns, or any other stop and go traffic problem, consider this. Soon, autonomous, or driverless vehicles, will be entering the roadway and yet we have no zoning or traffic provisions to address the potential problems they will create for other drivers.

Most communities' Main Streets are designed with some type of parking on both sides, with two opposing lanes of traffic. Autonomous, or driverless vehicles, are programmed today for successful angular or parallel parking, but ask yourself what happens when there is no parking space available? Keep in mind that these are logic-driven computer platforms that will most likely take the passenger to the closest possible point to their destination. That may mean passengers

will be exiting the vehicle from the busy street, potentially blocking traffic. Stopping traffic for who knows how long!

There is, however, a positive benefit to these new vehicles. I do believe that autonomous, or driverless vehicles, will present new business opportunities for our communities. No one likes to get into a dirty vehicle and as such, car cleaning and detailing will become of interest to the owners of these vehicles. Secured parking areas will be re-

quired. Electric vehicles that will need to be recharged or just a place for vehicles to park while waiting for their next scheduled trip. New tourism opportunities will be created using apps and vehicle compatibility platforms. These are just a few of the items that come to mind, but there are so many more opportunities if I just dare to dream.

Lastly, this will have a profound impact on public transportation as we know it. Our communities will need to embrace this new

cellular transportation model. Realizing that bus, train, and even aircraft are going to need to reform to what the autonomous, or driverless vehicles, have to offer.

**Donald Negley
COP Rural Living
Environments
Babbitt**

Elections have consequences

Regarding the upcoming Greenwood Township ballot question on allowing the board, rather than the

registered voters, to choose their clerk and treasurer, please vote NO! The positions are designed to be 'independent', following the laws and rules for townships, rather than the whims of board members. The constant nitpicking attacks on our current, elected treasurer proves my point. The new regime began harassing him as soon as they were seated. Unfortunately, he will not be running again.

**Barbara Lofquist
Greenwood Township**

Two recent structure fires reported

Garage fire in Babbitt

BABBITT—A fire here last Sunday destroyed a garage on Fern Court, according to the Northland Fire Wire. The Babbitt, Ely, and Embarrass fire departments all responded to the scene, while the Babbitt Ambulance provided medical standby. There were no reports of injuries and the fire remains

under investigation.

Cabin fire in Morse Township

MORSE TWP—Firefighters from four Ely area departments battled a cabin fire early Monday morning, when air temperatures hovered close to minus 40 degrees. According to the Northland Fire Wire, the blaze was re-

ported around 5:30 a.m., prompting a response from Morse-Fall Lake, Eagles Nest, Ely, and Breitung fire departments. Ted Krueger, Morse-Fall Lake and Eagles Nest fire chief, told The Northland Fire Wire that the cabin, located in the 3300 block of Wolf Lake Road, was a complete loss. No injuries were reported and the cause is under investigation.

DEPOT...Cont. from page 3

center.

"This is spectacular news," Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski told the *Timberjay*. "It took a lot of work over a year and half to get this funded. There is also Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board money supporting this project. The owners, the Otts, are very

committed to the redevelopment of this property."

Langowski added that while this isn't the first DEED grant the city has received, it is the first one from this agency specifically for a redevelopment project.

DEED estimated that the redevelopment will create 22 new jobs and in-

crease the local tax base by \$27,368.

Ely was one of 11 communities that received a total of \$6.9 million in clean-up grants this week.

"DEED recognizes the importance of being able to clean up land that might otherwise be deemed inoperative," said DEED Com-

missioner Matt Varilek. "That's why the Contamination Cleanup and Investigation grant program is so great — it allows Minnesota cities to further pursue economic growth in locations where that once might have not been possible."

TRUST...Cont. from page 4

munity nestled within the broader community, where the members put on plays they wrote and had family talent nights, summer Sunday dinners and bingo games, a swim team, a bowling league, and a poker club, which accumulated all the winnings to go on vacation together.

From the late 50s to the early 70s, a surprising number of very accomplished individuals who became famous in their chosen fields grew up in the St. Louis Park area, approximately 10 square miles, with only 45,000 residents. They included: movie directors Joel and Ethan Coen; political scientist Norm Ornstein; senator and former comedian Al Franken; classical guitarist Sharon Isbin; drummer for Prince, Bobby Z (Riven); Chicago Bears head football coach, Marc Trestman; feminist historian Margaret Strobel; Grammy winner songwriter Dan Wilson; best-selling author Peggy Orenstein; environmental journalist Alan Weisman; author Pete Hartman; Harvard professor and philosopher Michael Sandel; Oprah's favorite interior designer Nate Berkus; and the author, Thomas L. Friedman. All either grew up in St. Louis Park or went through its public schools and/or the St. Louis Park

Hebrew school in that fifteen-year span.

Friedman does not claim to understand everything about the dynamic that unleashed all this human energy in one place and time, but he thought it had something to do with the spontaneous combustion that happened when a new generation of American Jews was thrown together with a bunch of progressive Scandinavians in one little suburb. He said, "If Israel and Finland had had a baby, it would have been St. Louis Park," which from the beginning had a pluralistic, welcoming attitude and developed a unique liberal and collaborative culture, different from the surrounding towns.

St. Louis Park had the ingredients of a healthy community, where people felt protected, respected, and connected. He describes the town as a microcosm of the ordinary miracles that make America what it is at its best, and which we are going to need more than ever to build communities that can both ground and invigorate their citizens in the age of accelerations. Friedman says he is "always looking for Minnesota, looking for ways to recreate that spirit of inclusion and civic idealism." Not coincidentally, the Minnesota political environment at the time of this

demographic blip of human excellence was shaped by the likes of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Orville Freeman, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, and Donald Fraser, who worked to promote education, labor, civil rights, and economic measures through their many years of public service.

The movie "Join or Die" describes Robert Putnam, author of "Bowling Alone" compiling acres of data about community dynamics when Italy revamped its governmental structure, creating new regional states, providing an opportunity to compare the various states' successes and failures. He saw a marked difference in successful regions: the people had trust in their government and they participated. His research in the U.S. showed that decreased trust and participation in government and political activities mirrored the decreased membership in organizations of all kinds: churches, service clubs like the Elks and Kiwanis, social clubs like the VFW., and recreational clubs like bowling leagues with a parallel increase in polarization and distrust of other people, particularly those with differences in culture, race, and beliefs. He concluded that a major factor in the social

dynamics is that people are doing more activities individually and in look-alike groups, participating less in activities that allow them to get to know and trust people with different experiences, perspectives, and cultures.

Friedman contends that we don't need to complicate it; that we need to adhere to the Golden Rule, which is found in some form in every major religion. Beyond that, he urges that we not only do unto others, but do with others by joining hearts, souls, and hands to build the trust and values essential for healthy communities. President Jimmy Carter's creation of and work with Habitat for Humanity is a perfect example of this in action.

Dov Seidman, CEO of LRN, advises global businesses on ethics and leadership and emphasizes the need to take the time to build trust. He states, "Our ability to forge deep relationships—to love, to care, to hope, to trust, and to build voluntary communities based on shared values—is one of the most uniquely human capacities we have, the single most important thing that differentiates us from nature and machines."

How healthy are our Range communities? We'll take a look in future columns.

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the
TIMBERJAY

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

Week of Jan. 27

- 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. New location in the old St. James Church building. Next food shelf day is Feb. 18
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.



TSHS weekly winners
TOWER- The winner of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society Week 19 Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize is Jordan Cannon of Oak Creek, Wis.

History Tidbit: DM&IR
passenger coach No. 81 was built by the American Car and Foundry in 1911 as part of a six-car order (Nos. 80-85) for the Duluth, Missabe, and Northern Railroad. The order presented the first passenger coaches of all steel construction placed in service by the DM&N. The all-steel coach was much heavier than the wooden coaches it replaced and has a seating capacity of 84 passengers with a weight of 150,400 pounds. Coach 81 was used in passenger service on both divisions from 1911 until 1953 when the Rail Diesel Car took over.

Local filings for township elections
REGIONAL- Greenwood, Vermilion Lake, and Breitung townships are holding elections on March 11. Filings for the seats closed on Jan. 14. All three have one supervisor and one treasurer seat on the ballot.

Vermilion Lake Township: The two incumbents up for reelection, Tim Hughes for supervisor and Steve Lotz for treasurer, both filed and are running unopposed.
Breitung Township: The two incumbents, supervisor Tim Tomsich, and treasurer Jorgine Gornick, are both retiring. Newcomers Steve Tekautz filed for supervisor and Teresa Dolinar for treasurer.
Greenwood Township: Neither of the two incumbents, supervisor Rick Stoehr and treasurer Jeff Maus, filed for office. Steve Bradach and Sue Drobac filed for the supervisor seat, and JoAnn Bassing and Paul Thompson filed for the treasurer seat.

Get Informed!
Get the Timberjay!

LAW ENFORCEMENT



St. Louis County Sheriff Gordon Ramsay (right) was all smiles with Tower Cafe owner Jen McDonough, and Breitung Police Chief Dan Reing, and Dep. Maclean during the Coffee with a Cop event at the cafe on Jan. 17.

Below: Dep. Rickland spoke with Embarrass Region Fair organizers, who had questions about obtaining help with security during the busy fair weekend in August.

photos by J. Summit

Coffee (and cinnamon rolls) with a Cop at the Tower Cafe

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Roll over donuts, it was freshly-baked cinnamon rolls on everyone's plate as the Tower Café hosted a Coffee with a Cop get-together on Jan. 17.

If you noticed a lot of police cars on Main Street last Friday, there weren't any crimes underway.

St. Louis County Sheriff Gordon Ramsay stopped by for a visit, along with several other sheriff department deputies and Breitung Police Chief Dan Reing.

The only thing that might have approached a criminal level during the event were the rolls.

"These are dangerous," said Ramsay, as he finished his.

The event is part of a larger effort by the sheriff's office to make

connections with local communities and residents.

Two volunteers from the Embarrass Region Fair Association stopped by to see what resources the sheriff's office could offer during fair events, and were happy to leave with more information, contacts, and faces to put to names. They were also impressed with the breakfast they ordered. Both had chosen the French toast, which barely fit on the plate.

Another young man, who was interested in a career in law enforcement, got time to talk with Ramsay, as well as Reing, about the different options for career paths in the field.

Café owners Jen and Bob McDonough, along with Jen's mother Marge, poured free coffee and also served up hot cinnamon rolls to all the officers who stopped by.



Left: Ramsay talked to a student interested in careers in law enforcement.

Right: Cafe visitors talked with the sheriff staff.

BOIS FORTE HERITAGE CENTER

Winter tales storytelling at the heritage center

VERMILION RESERVATION- On the evening of Jan. 10, the Bois Forte Heritage Center featured Ojibwe storyteller Char Lewis (pictured seated on the left). Attendees moved to the center of the museum space under the lighted star ceiling to hear special stories that are only told during the winter months.

Char shared the story of how the Mukwa (Bear in Anishinaabemowin), used to have a long tail and how he lost it. Mukwa was being mean to Anishinaabeg (the People) so Nanaboozhoo, a main Ojibwe folk hero and demigod, grabbed him by the tail and threw Mukwa into the sky and his tail fell off. Thus, Mukwa has had a short tail ever since.

Morgan Olson, Bois Forte Tribal Archivist, has displayed other stories as part of a series called Ojibwe Winter Stories. The three on display right now are: "How the Ojibwe Got Maple Sugar," "The Magic Pots," and "Nanaboozhoo Made a House for Turtle." To view these, the museum is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., and is located at 1500 Bois Forte Road, just



down the road from Fortune Bay Resort Casino. The heritage center is offering an introduction to the Ojibwe language class on Wednesdays in February. The classes are offered via zoom during the lunch hour. For more information, text Jess Anderson Ojala at 218-235-9891.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Chimpy's Skating Party set for Jan. 25
SOUDAN- The Soudan Skating Rink will host a skating party on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 12 noon - 3 p.m. Everyone is welcome, skaters and non-skaters. There is a small children's rink also available for beginning skaters five and under. As always, there will be lots of free food and ice cream floats. Watch for the schedule for upcoming parties on the Breitung Township Facebook page.

Alyssa Mundle Johnson Named to SNHU President's List
REGIONAL- Alyssa Mundle

Johnson, of Embarrass, has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's (SNHU) Fall 2024 President's List. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, non-profit, accredited institution with a 92-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Recognized as one of the "Most Innovative" regional universities by *U.S. News & World Report*

and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner.

Tower-Soudan Elementary student council sponsoring food drive
TOWER- Tower-Soudan Elementary is collecting non-perishable food items for the Tower Food Shelf from Jan. 27 - 30. The food drive is being organized by the sixth-grade student council. Food shelf director Kate Smith met with the sixth-grade students in December. All of the elementary classes are competing to see who can collect the most food

items. The winning class will be treated to a pizza party.

Anyone in the community interested in helping out, should contact an elementary school student.

St. Paul's Lutheran annual meeting on Jan. 26
SOUDAN- St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Soudan is holding their annual meeting on Sunday, Jan. 26 following the worship service. A meal will follow.

AROUND TOWN

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – Hosted by Boundary Waters Connect, the Tuesday Group community educational luncheon 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:

- Jan. 28: Arts, Culture, and the Ely Economy with the Ely Cultural Alliance
- Feb. 4: Lucy Soderstrom, executive director of the Ely Folk School
- Feb. 11: Anna Farro Henderson, author of Core Samples: A Climate Scientist's Experiments in Politics and Motherhood

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2025



bitter wind and cold most covered from head to toe
exposed face burning

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.
AA FRIDAYS - 7 p.m.
Fridays, First Presbyterian Church, 262 E. Harvey St., Ely.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA - Monday at noon at Ledgerrock Church, 1515 E. Camp St., Ely.
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.
Thursdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church.

AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely.
BABBITT AL-ANON - Thursdays 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian Church.

AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely.
BABBITT AL-ANON - Thursdays 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian Church.

CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays, hosted by Well Being Development, Ely. *This meeting is suspended temporarily.*

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.

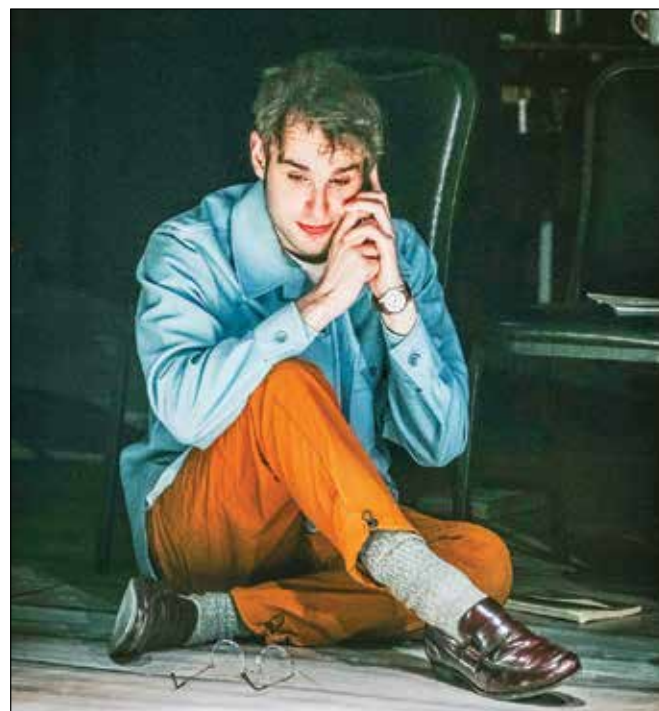
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, or 1-800-662-5711.

Elyite named to Dean's List
MENOMONIE, Wis.-The University of Wisconsin-Stout has named Elyite Abigail Thompson to the Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester. The award is presented to students who have a grade point average of 3.5 or above.

UW-Stout is named for James Huff Stout, who founded the school in 1891 as the Stout Manual Training school. It is the polytechnic university in the 13-campus system and the only one not named for a location.



The Ely Folk School and Boundary Waters Connect sponsored a free movie night at Ely's Historic State Theater on Tuesday, Jan. 14. The film was the award-winning documentary "Join or Die," which examines the cause and obvious solution to America's decline in civic engagement through the lens of Harvard professor Robert Putnam's ground-breaking work, "Bowling Alone." After the hour-and-a-half film, Boundary Waters Connect's Lacey Squier (with microphone) and Ely Folk School program director Lucy Soderstrom invited the audience of almost 80 attendees to break into small discussion groups (above) on how the ideas and concepts presented in the documentary could be applied to the Ely community.
photos by C. Clark



Ely area social media exploded over last weekend with Elyite praise and enthusiasm for the Northern Lakes Arts Association production of "Every Brilliant Thing." The audience-interactive one-man show stars Broadway in the Boundary Waters actor Toby Davis ("Bright Star," "Romeo and Juliet"). Tickets are limited to 40 for each performance because of the role the audience plays in the performance. Buy tickets at northernlakesarts.org. Remaining performances are on Jan. 30-31 and Feb. 1-2. submitted photo

Ely United Methodist Church welcomes new pastor

ELY- The Ely United Methodist Church will celebrate the appointment of its new pastor, the Rev. Kay Carter, with a service on Sunday, Jan. 26, at 10 a.m. at 305 E. Camp St.
A reception in honor of Rev. Carter will follow the service from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in the lower level of the church. Visitors are welcome to attend.
Rev. Carter is coming from

Woodland United Methodist Church in Windsor, Va. Her appointments started in the mid-1990s and include several United Methodist Churches in California and Virginia. She received a B.A. in International Studies — National Security Issues from John Hopkins University and earned an M.Div. from the Claremont School of Theology.
Rev. Carter has continued her

education and training with courses in family systems theory, critical incident stress management, strength-based leadership and Messy Church. Her community involvement and service includes the Board of Directors of the William and Mary Welsey Foundation Board, the Master Naturalist Program, and many knitting groups.
Both Rev. Carter's parents were

career military officers stationed from Alaska to Norway. Frequent moves were common while she was growing up. She attended a variety of churches in her early years and developed an appreciation for the diversity of Christian and spiritual beliefs.
Rev. Carter can be contacted after her arrival in Ely by calling the church office at 218-365-3355.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Live Benefit Concert

ELY- The Duluth jam band, the Salty dogs, will be at the Boathouse, 47 E. Sheridan St., on Friday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. for a live concert to benefit the Sage Foundation, a nonprofit that serves students at the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota North College. The foundation is asking for a \$15 cash or check donation at the door

NLAA Auditions

ELY- Auditions for the Northern Lakes Arts Association spring production of "Matilda the Musical" will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 28 from 5-10 p.m. at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater, Minnesota North College, 1900 E. Camp St. The award-winning musical, commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company, is based on the award-winning children's book by British author Roald Dahl. The NLAA production will be staged March 27-April 3.

Estate Planning

ELY- Ely Community Education is offering a no cost class on estate planning taught by attorney Kelly Klun on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Register for free at <https://www.elyk12.mn.us/communityed>. The class will be in the Me-

dia Center at the Ely Public Schools campus, 600 E. Harvey St. Enter through door No. 1 and turn right after the double doors. The Media Center will be on the right across from the new gym.

Mining Panel and Discussion

ELY- The Ely chapter of the Braver Angels Alliance will host a panel and moderated discussion on precious metals mining on Thursday, Jan. 30, at 6 p.m., at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E.

Book Sale

ELY- The Ely Friends of the Library will hold their annual book sale at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E., on Friday, Feb. 7, and Saturday, Feb. 8. The hours of the sale will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.
Patrons who buy a book bag for \$10 can then fill it with books for free.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The library will be closed Monday, Jan. 27 through Wednesday, Jan. 29, for carpet installation.

The Get Crafty activities group for adults will meet on Thursday, Jan. 30, at 1 p.m. for a session with diamond dots. Please register in advance so the library

has enough supplies for everyone.

The Curiosity Cohort for adults will meet on Monday, Feb. 3, at 1:30 p.m. to learn about ancient beauty tips, like what Caesar's wife Calpurnia may have used for skin care or what Elizabeth I may have had on hand for cosmetics. The library will have some of these historic ingredients on hand at the event as well as recipes to take home for those who might want to try some of these old-fashioned compounds on their own. Please register in advance so the library has enough supplies for everyone.

The Friends of the Babbitt Library membership drive will be on Monday, Jan. 27, from noon-4 p.m. with complimentary refreshments. The library will host internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Dennis Warner in concert on Monday, Jan. 27, from 3-4 p.m.
Starting on Jan. 30, kids in grades K-12 can pick up the free take-and-make monthly art kit for February while supplies last. Created by 321 Art Studio, the February kit is for aluminum foil sculpture.

The book club will meet on Monday, Feb. 3, at 2 p.m.

Babbitt Public Library

BABBITT- There's still plenty of time to sign up for the library's "Snow better time to read" adult winter reading program which runs through March 3. Register for the program at the library. Then, read two books to earn an entry for prizes. The more books you read, the more entries you will receive for the prize drawing.

Join the library's adult coloring contest. Stop by the library to pick up your coloring sheet at the library now through Feb. 24. Submit your completed picture by Feb. 25 for a chance to win an exciting prize!

The Friends of the Babbitt Library membership drive will be on Monday, Jan. 27, from noon-4 p.m. with complimentary refreshments.

The library will host internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Dennis Warner in concert on Monday, Jan. 27, from 3-4 p.m.

Starting on Jan. 30, kids in grades K-12 can pick up the free take-and-make monthly art kit for February while supplies last. Created by 321 Art Studio, the February kit is for aluminum foil sculpture.

The book for discussion will be "Happy Place" by Emily Henry.

The library will hold an arts and crafts supply swap on Friday, Feb. 14., when all are welcome to take home free supplies. Donate gently used arts and crafts supplies at the library between Jan. 27 and Feb. 12 for early access to the supply swap on Feb. 13 from 1-3 p.m.

Preschool story time is every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. All library events are at the Babbitt Public Library, 71 South Dr., unless otherwise noted.

Elyite named to Dean's List

MENOMONIE, Wis.-The University of Wisconsin-Stout has named Elyite Abigail Thompson to the Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester. The award is presented to students who have a grade point average of 3.5 or above.

UW-Stout is named for James Huff Stout, who founded the school in 1891 as the Stout Manual Training school. It is the polytechnic university in the 13-campus system and the only one not named for a location.

VINCE SHUTE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Bear association ready to enter podcast world

Popular sanctuary snowshoeing event makes a return on Saturday

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- It's definitely not bear-viewing season at the Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary near Orr, but lovers of bears and the outdoors should try to take advantage of two major events happening this week with the American Bear Association (ABA) site – a snowshoe hike and the debut of a brand-new bear-focused podcast.

The snowshoe hike is on Saturday, Jan. 25 beginning at 10:30 a.m., but pre-registration is still available online through Friday.

"We used to do this program before COVID and we haven't gotten the opportunity to do it again because of a couple years of COVID and then last year there wasn't snow for it," ABA Executive Director Steph Horner said. "So I'm excited to do it again."

With temperatures expected to be in the low 20s, conditions should be ideal for the event, which will kick off at the ABA Visitor Center at 4303 Hwy 53 in Orr.

"We're going to start at our visitor center first where we'll have coffee and donuts," Horner said. "I'm going to do a presentation about bear hibernation and other animals that hibernate, and also talk about animals that don't hibernate but adapt. We'll talk about some of the winter birds that we've been seeing in the area because that's been exciting with lots of different owl species this winter. Then we'll talk brief-

ly about how to identify different animal tracks."

The crew will then load up for the 13-mile drive to the sanctuary, where they'll put some of their newfound knowledge to work as they trek through portions of the sanctuary not typically seen by summertime visitors.

"We are going to do a little loop through the actual sanctuary, and it will be a 'behind the scenes' look at part of the feeding area," Horner said. "Then, we have almost 700 acres so we're going just do a little out and back on our property. We've got a beaver dam on the property that I'm hoping to make it out to, but it'll be kind of dependent on the people that register and if they want to go that far."

Participants should bring binoculars, snowshoes, cameras, warm layers, snacks, and water. The cost for the event is \$20. Pre-registration is required and can be completed by going to <https://www.americanbear.org>, clicking on the Events menu and choosing "Snowshoe at the Sanctuary."

Bear Den podcast

Horner was particularly excited to talk about ABA's new podcast series, "The Bear Den," debuting next Tuesday, Jan. 28 on the ABA website, hosted by volunteer and ABA board member Philip Stublely.

"A lot of us within my age range love podcasts," Horner said. "I listen to podcasts pretty regularly and people have approached me asking, 'Do you have a podcast – maybe you should do



Above: The logo for The Bear Den podcast was designed by Asha Kaur

Right: Podcast host and ABA board member Philip Stublely stands in a meadow at the bear sanctuary holding a copy of his children's book, "Schwinn and the Woodchip Pile," that is based on the beloved three-legged bear and other sanctuary favorites.

that.' I was too busy to even think about doing something like that, but Philip had the time. He's a newer board member so it was something he wanted to contribute, and what a great way to reach people anywhere and everywhere because you can tune in anywhere. It's going to be really important for us to just reach people with more about bears and peaceful co-existence, and to further our mission, so we're very excited to see what happens."

A new episode of The Bear Den will drop every Tuesday on the ABA website, and Horner said they will also make it available on popular podcast sites such



as Spotify and Apple. The series will have 15 episodes in all, and some of the topics include:

- ▶The 100-year history of the ABA and Vince Shute's colorful life.
- ▶ Insights into bear conservation, behavior, myths and safety.
- ▶Stories of sanctuary adventures featuring both humans and bears.
- ▶A wildlife biologist's account of surviving a grizzly bear attack.
- ▶A look into the volunteer experience and a recent radio collar program.

"We've got lots and lots of exciting different people

and voices to hear from," Horner said.

Host Stublely brings an international perspective to the podcast. He lives in Newcastle, England, and after seeing wild black bears in Canada, he became interested in their feeding habits and how bears and humans coexist. In his research, he came across the ABA and decided he had to see it for himself. He first became involved as a volunteer at the ABA in 2014. Since then, he has tried to make it back every summer to volunteer, and now also serves as board secretary. Stublely also has an interest in sun bears and

has traveled to Borneo, Indonesia to see them and works with a number of nongovernmental organizations to support them. He has worked in various ways designing and supervising the construction of bear enclosures, assisted with husbandry and nutrition and has helped raise over 15 orphaned sun bear cubs.

Horner said that Stublely has almost finished recording the episodes for the initial series and is already planning another one that would likely be available beginning next January. Horner said she would welcome any ideas people have for topics or guests.

AND ONE DAY THERE WILL BE PICKLEBALL



A good number of community members braved the cold on Saturday and turned out to support Cook's Big Chill at the Cook Community Center. The event, a new festive day created by Cook Friends of the Parks to raise funds for their pickleball court project, featured open skating, a cribbage tournament, a basket raffle, plenty of kids' activities and lots of food.

Above: A friendly but competitive group of cribbage players kept the room lively with banter.

Left: A red-cheeked Sully Roesch blazes across the ice rink with the aid of a walker.

Right: Youthful Lucy Hed has no problem dueling older competitors playing cribbage.

photos by D. Colburn



Community notices



North Woods third graders helped to glaze these bowls for the Empty Bowl event. submitted photos

North Woods Empty Bowl will be Feb. 7

FIELD TWP- It will be the 12th edition of what's become an annual tradition of giving for the North Woods School Art Club when they host the Empty Bowl fundraiser on Friday, Feb. 7 from 4:30-7 p.m. in the commons area prior to the Grizzlies' boys basketball game against Littlefork-Big Falls.

Art teacher and reigning Mrs. Universal Petite pageant title holder Rachel Betterley has once again tapped her pageant community to bring in Miss Minnesota, Emily Schumacher, for the event. Free photos and autographs with Miss Minnesota have always been treasured highlights for kids at past Empty Bowl events, and Schumacher will warm-

ly welcome any and all to learn about her heart health initiative, "The Heart of the Matter."

Art Club members have been busily handcrafting the bowls and ceramic art that will be available for purchase for \$10 and have enlisted the help of North Woods Elementary students for their decorative glazing.

A \$10 purchase entitles the buyer to a hearty bowl of soup, dessert and beverage. Basket raffle tickets may be purchased for \$1, and the Art Club will offer face painting as well.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the food shelves in Cook and Orr.

NWFA invites photos for February exhibit "People That I've Known"

COOK- Whether you're skilled with a single lens reflex camera, snap your photos with a cell phone, or simply collect photos of family and friends, Northwoods Friends of the Arts invites you to submit photos of people you know for their February exhibit, "People That I've Known."

Photos submitted, whether new or old, need not be taken by you, but should feature people you've known.

Photos of any size should be framed or mounted on material such as mat board, plywood, foam core board or other material suitable for display, and should be accompanied by a one to two paragraph explanation of how the person or persons in the photo are important to you.

Photos ready for display should be delivered to the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 30-31 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or on Saturday, Feb. 1 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The exhibit will open on Feb. 6 and continue through Feb. 28.

And be sure to catch the January exhibit, "Piecing it Together: A Fabric Art Show with Cecelia Rolando," running through Saturday, Jan. 31.

**Read It
HERE**

CITY OF ELY

Mayor lauds local achievements in “State of the City”

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY—Calling Ely a “small town that does big things,” Mayor Heidi Omerza enthusiastically explained why 2024 was a year filled with proof of that in the city’s first ever “State of the City” address on Thursday, Jan. 9 at City Hall.

With her characteristic signature humor and panache, Omerza regaled the small crowd for a half hour, outlining a long list of things that make Ely special.

“We do a lot for our size,” she said as she ran through a list of community-oriented activities that happened here last year, including:

- Two films shot footage in Ely, “Boundary Waters,” which will be shown at the Ely Film Festival in March, and “Bigfoot Woods.”

- Ely’s many festivals. “I was going to try to name them all,” Omerza said, “but I didn’t want to forget one — and I would. I would probably miss half of them.” She did mention the Dark Sky Festival, the Ely Winter Festival, and the WolfTrack Classic Dog Sled Race.

- “That’s three events already, and that’s just through mid-February. How many communities of 3,400 do that much?”

- “Disney’s Frozen, The Musical” at Ely Memorial High School.

- The 100-year anniversary of Ely Memorial High School and the All-Class Reunion.

- The new statue of “The

Voyagers” in Whiteside Park, donated by William and Holly Rom.

Omerza lauded Ely’s many volunteers, who she said are the driving force behind Ely’s many events and Ely’s city government. She identified several people in the audience who were already volunteers. She also pointed out that most of the city council got their start in local government by getting involved by volunteering.

“I love the fact that most of what we do is run by volunteers,” Omerza said. “We have a lot of volunteers in Ely, but there’s always room for more, especially for our boards, committees, and commissions.”

City projects

Omerza described how the city’s projects are an important part of what makes Ely a desirable place to live or visit. She also explained that seeing most projects through to completion takes years of work, including the pursuit of funding and grants.

Omerza commented that the city’s staff was persistent in hunting down project funds, “so that net impact on you, the taxpayer, is as little as it can be, because we know the community we live in, and we want to make sure that the people who live here can stay here and are not priced out of anything.”

Omerza’s list of project highlights that saw significant progress last year, many of which will come to fruition in 2025, included:

- The sale and redevelop-

ment of the former Ely Community Center building into a downtown boutique hotel, funded by private investment.

- New market-rate, city-owned apartments. Minnesota did not fund the city’s application for state housing money in 2024; however, Ely intends to apply again in the next funding round. The current project to build new apartments began in 2020. Omerza used this as an example of how Ely is persistent in pursuing projects in the long term.

- The Trailhead Building, which is currently under construction on the west side of the city. Omerza commented that all the funding came from sources outside of the city.

- A “Type 3” high-speed charging station for electric vehicles that can fully recharge in a half hour. This project is currently up for funding from state and federal sources and will be installed at the new Trailhead Building. The nearest high-speed charging stations are in Silver Bay and Eveleth. “We need this for people who live here and for those who come to visit for the ATV trails that are part of the future of tourism in our community,” Omerza said.

- The ongoing improvements and expansion of ATV, snowmobile, and mountain biking trails.

- Replacement of underground utilities under Harvey Street, which will piggyback with repaving the street by St. Louis County. Construction will start this spring.

Right: Ely Mayor Heidi Omerza gave the first Ely “State of the City” address on Thursday, Jan. 9. photo by C. Clark

- The replacement of Ely’s five-mile-long water supply pipeline from Burntside Lake, whose superstructure is over a century old. Half the funding is already secured for this \$4.5 million project, and the city is currently pursuing a direct federal allocation for the rest through Minnesota’s Congressional delegation.

- The Miners Memorial at the Pioneer Mine, which is projected for completion in August.

- Fire Hall No. 2 and the garage for the Ely Area Ambulance Service. These projects are currently in the design phase.

- The redevelopment of the Ely Railroad Depot. Ely is acting as the fiscal agent for pursuing state DEED and IRRR grants for the brown-field clean-up of the site. Most of the project is funded through private investment.

The “F-word”

Omerza praised the efforts of Ely’s city council, remarking that unlike most of the years she’s been involved, when the city council has been mostly retired people, the current council has more working people than retirees.

“So, we’re busy, we’re engaged, and we’re hard-working, and we’re out in public.”

Omerza then called upon her sense of humor as she talked more about city funding.



“I could only think of so many appropriate F-words,” Omerza joked. “Just so you are aware, F is for funding.”

“Some of our budget comes from property taxes, but Ely gets much of its funding from St. Paul as local government aid. We call it LGA — 64 percent of our revenue is LGA.”

Omerza explained that the LGA formula is so complicated “that maybe three people at the state capitol could explain it.”

Ely does well in the LGA calculations, Omerza explained, because of its older population, its older housing stock, its profile as a lower-income community, and because so many people come here to visit.

Another factor in bringing state dollars to Ely is the city’s willingness to lobby for funding in St. Paul.

“I testified at two hear-

ings last session, and we got funding from both of them,” Omerza said, referring to the city’s efforts to secure the one-time aid of \$290,000 for the Ely Area Ambulance Service and money to help the International Wolf Center replace its problematic roof and HVAC.

The mayor wrapped up by stating, “We need to make sure that we have more housing, that we have more jobs and better jobs, and that we have more students to fill up our schools, to ensure we have a college and a hospital, and to ensure all of our businesses stay open. That’s what we need — and will continue to need — to ensure that Ely continues to be Ely.”

The talk was sponsored by the Ely chapter of the American Association of University Women and the Ely Rotary.

CLAIMS...Continued from page 1

waters with this pristine designation. In other words, there’s no possibility an upstream copper-nickel mine could pollute the Boundary Waters, according to the DNR, because federal law prohibits it.

Yet lawyers for NMW argued in a contested case hearing in November that laws, by themselves, don’t protect resources like the Boundary Waters from pollution — only enforcement of those laws can do that. And based on the intensive water testing program undertaken by NMW in recent years, they argued the DNR appears to already be failing to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Indeed, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, citing NMW’s water testing data, added Birch Lake to the state’s list of impaired waters for wild rice last year due to sulfate pollution from the Peter Mitchell pit, located east of Babbitt, as well as the sulfide-bearing waste rock piles at the nearby Dunka pit. NMW’s rigorous testing program, which included more than 330 samples from 28 dis-

tinct locations, has documented a path of sulfate pollution extending downstream more than 20 miles from the two tacomite pits, extending into the BWCAW through the White Iron chain of lakes. NMW has documented that its sampling meets all appropriate collection standards and all testing is done by independent labs.

While the Peter Mitchell pit remains active, the Dunka pit was closed more than 40 years ago yet has continued to discharge pollutants ever since. NMW’s testing data shows the highest levels of sulfate just downstream from the Dunka pit, where levels in Unnamed Creek routinely register over 300 milligrams per liter. The state’s wild rice standard limits sulfate levels to 10 mg/l in wild rice lakes.

The sulfate levels in Birch Lake decline as water flows to the northeast and as other streams and rivers, unimpacted by mining, enter the lake and dilute the sulfate levels. Even so, NMW’s testing has found sulfate levels remain 50 percent higher than normal background (0.5 - 1.5 mg/l in the region) as far north as

Newton Lake, located in the Boundary Waters, more than 20 miles downstream of the sources of the pollution.

The copper-nickel deposits that Twin Metals hopes to mine are located several miles closer to the Boundary Waters than either the Peter Mitchell or Dunka pits and would be mining ore high in sulfur, which converts to sulfate when exposed to oxygen.

According to Becky Rom, who has opposed the Twin Metals proposal as head of the national Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, the DNR has claimed that the pollution from the mining operations only extends downstream about two miles, but she says that NMW’s test data proves that claim is false.

Predicting pollution

For years, mining supporters have argued that the Twin Metals project should have the chance to prove it can operate safely by going through the environmental review process. NMW, in its case, has argued that such reviews are rarely accurate and routinely underestimate

the amount of pollution that is eventually seen from mining operations. They pointed to a 2005 peer-reviewed study, Predicting Water Quality at Hardrock Mines by James Kuipers and Ann Maest, that highlighted the complexities of modeling impacts that may play out over centuries, long after mines have ceased operation. “The degree of confidence in the models is severely limited in part because the models are so complex that they cannot be easily reviewed by regulatory staff and the public,” noted the study’s authors. “Considering the difficulty in representing physical and chemical properties of mined materials, the meaning of “accuracy” in water-quality modeling must be reconsidered in the regulatory process,” the authors concluded. In the end, said Rom, the study found that modeling of mines near ground or surface typically underestimated the water quality impacts nine out of ten times.

The DNR challenged that study during the November contested case hearing,

arguing that it was nearly 20 years old and that its review did not include any mines in Minnesota.

Yet, NMW countered that the DNR has much more recent evidence of the failure of modeling from right on the Iron Range.

They point to the results of a stockpile of sulfide-bearing rock exposed in 2019 as part of expansion of the Peter Mitchell pit. Both the DNR and Northshore modeled the impact of the new stockpile with the implementation of the planned mitigation, including a cover to eliminate water infiltration that would release sulfate and other pollutants. That study concluded the average increase in sulfate discharge from the stockpile of between two and five percent, but subsequent monitoring showed a much higher rate of discharge — approximately 43 percent higher.

“Actual pollution was significantly greater than predicted pollution based on modeling, and this is a modern mine in Minnesota,” said Rom.

Such conclusions raise

questions about the validity of environmental review of mining operations, particularly those in water-rich environments, where the pathways of pollution may be varied and highly complex.

The *Timberjay* sought comment from the DNR for this story, but officials declined given the ongoing nature of the litigation.

Findings expected in April

During the hearing in November, the DNR offered up its own evidence and expert testimony to argue that the rules as written are adequate to protect water quality. Post-trial briefs in the case are due Feb. 12 and findings and recommendations from the administrative law judge are expected sometime in April.

The DNR won’t need to abide by the recommendations, but the overall case is being overseen by a Ramsey County judge who could overrule the DNR if its ultimate decision in the matter isn’t consistent with the administrative law judge’s findings.

COUNCIL...Continued from page 1

Nov. 12 to aid the city with its participation in Minnesota’s green steps program, on the recommendation of the Ely Climate Group. Ely is currently at step two and has been for years because no one in city government oversees the city’s involvement. The new committee is tasked with filling that role.

But filling four positions for resident and non-resident members of the eight-member committee on Tuesday proved difficult.

There were eight applicants for the four positions, two of whom — Megan Wind and Laurie Angell — submitted their applications late. Mayor Heidi Omerza decided that rather than debate the merits of all the applicants together, the council would vote on each of the applicants in the order they were listed in the city council’s agenda packet until the seats were filled.

Ely resident Mary Louise Icenhour was approved with

a 6-1 vote, with Angela Campbell voting nay. Non-resident Jodi Chaffin was approved with a 4-3 vote with council members Campbell, Emily Roose, and Adam Bisbee dissenting. Celia Domich was approved with a 6-1 vote with Roose voting nay. The motion to approve non-resident Barbara Jones, the chair of the Ely Climate Group, did not receive a second so the council did not vote on her application.

The last seat was filled by resident Bill Tefft, well-known in Ely as the face of the Ely Field Naturalists.

Having filled all the open seats, other applications were never considered.

Filling out the seven voting seats on the Ely Green Team are council representative Roose, projects committee representative Mike Banovetz. Planning and zoning administrator, Scoot Kochendorfer will fill the one non-voting seat, while the EUC representative won’t

be filled until the EUC meets next week, pending approval by the city council at its Feb. 4 meeting.

In other business, the city council:

- Approved the attendance of the city council and staff at the following events: the League of Minnesota Cities City Day on the Hill on March 6 in St. Paul, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Legislative Action Day on Feb. 12 in St. Paul, and the League of Minnesota Cities Safety and Loss Control workshops in Virginia on April 22. The city council also approved city clerical staff to attend the Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association annual conference on March 18-21 in Brooklyn Center.

- Approved advertising for bids for the inside demolition work at the former community center. The bids would be open on Feb. 18. The city has an IRRR grant for the demolition work. The private developer of the property will

fund the remainder of the demolition costs. Because of the terms of the IRRR grant, the city is the fiscal agent for the work.

- Approved submitting a request to the Dept. of Natural Resources for the repair of the boat landing at Miners Lake.

- Approved providing a letter of support for a grant application to Lake Country Power for the Ely Giving Gardens project. The project is a volunteer effort by Ely’s master gardeners.

- Approved a service amendment for an amount not to exceed \$9,000 for TKDA to complete the trailhead project.

- Authorized city staff to draft an ordinance to reduce the price of lots 9 and 10 in Sibley Court to \$25,000 each and to also offer a combined price of \$38,900 if they are sold together. These are the remaining lots the city has to sell at the Sibley Court extension in the Spaulding neighborhood. The two lots include wetlands which reduce the footprint

available for building residences on the properties.

- Heard a report from planning and zoning chair Roose that the commission presented longtime member Tim Riley with a certificate of recognition for his years of service on the planning and zoning commission, as well as his time as planning and zoning administrator.

- Approved the subdivision of the property at the corner of E. Washington St. and 15th Ave. E. belonging to Mary and Newton Nickerson.

- Approved paying the invoice from the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers Board for \$38,138 for the second half of the 2024 operating subsidy and 2025 ambulance building expenses.

- Approved the purchase of a Ford 4x4 F550 truck chassis for \$55,942 plus tax and license, from low-bidder Lundgren Ford in Eveleth. The truck chassis will be for a dump truck to replace the 2008 Ford F550 currently at the end

of its service life. Only one other dealership, Chrysler of Forest City, Iowa, submitted bids, for both Ford and Dodge chassis. The vote was 6-1 with city council member Al Forsman voting nay.

- Approved a recreational ATV trail license agreement with Thomas and Jennifer Nemanich of Eveleth for \$1,100/year. The trail license is for a connector to the Taconite Trail.

- Did not approve a first reading of an amendment to Ely City Code, Chapter 6.36 on second-hand goods dealers. The council expressed concern that the word in the ordinance “excepting” should be “accepting,” which would change the meaning of the law. The city council voted to send the wording back to the planning and zoning commission for clarification.

- Approved making direct paycheck deposit mandatory for all city employees and elected officials.

CRIME

Warrantless search nixes case against Greaney couple

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

GREANEY- Charges of theft and receiving stolen property filed against a Greaney couple were dismissed recently following a judge's ruling that officers violated their Fourth Amendment rights by failing to get a necessary warrant to enter their home and search their property.

Martin Voss and Stormie Kottom were charged with the crimes in August 2023 after St. Louis County deputies tracked a stolen Argo utility vehicle and trailer to their property using GPS locators affixed to each. The items had been reported stolen from a work site in Cook by their owner, Zielies Tree Service.

According to the probable cause statement, when officers arrived at the residence at 7:45 a.m. on Aug. 16, the GPS trackers indicated the Argo and trailer were on the property, though not visible from the front of the property. When one of them ran the license plate for a Dodge Ram pickup in the driveway that was equipped with a trailer hitch, he learned that it had been listed as stolen in June 2023. He also observed a license plate on the ground that was subsequently matched to the stolen trailer.

When deputies knocked on the door, Kottom called out and refused to come to the door, indicating that Voss was also there but too sick to come to the door. Additional officers were then requested.

While walking behind the residence to secure the back, one of the officers discovered the trailer that was stolen that morning, with the Argo nearby. Officers also found another trailer and six-wheeler that had been reported stolen in August 2019.

After other deputies arrived and tried multiple times to "gain compliance" from Kottom and Voss, officers forced the door and entered the residence. The couple was on a bed with a dog, which appeared aggressive, and when Kottom and Voss refused to come out they were told that they were under arrest. Both Kottom and Voss were argumentative and uncooperative, but eventually Voss complied and left the house. When Kottom pulled away from an officer's grasp, she allegedly kicked her legs at him, and he responded by tasing and handcuffing her.

Both suspects were charged with felony theft and felony receipt of a stolen motor vehicle.

Motion to dismiss

Last September, Assistant Public Defender James Perunovich filed a motion in district court to have the charges against Voss and Kottom dismissed. He argued that evidence was obtained in what he asserted were warrantless and illegal searches and arrests should be suppressed. Perunovich contended that the trailer license plate, Dodge Ram, Argo, and trailer were found on the property curtilage, an area of the property for which owners have a reasonable right to privacy and which therefore serves as an extension of the home. As a person's home is a constitutionally-protected area, any evidence discovered during a warrantless curtilage search cannot be introduced at trial, he argued. A similar argument was made for evidence resulting from the forced entry of the home and the arrests.

In a counter-filing, Assistant County Attorney Jeffrey Vlatkovich conceded that the warrantless entry into the residence and arrests were unconstitutional violations of Voss's and Kottom's Fourth Amendment rights.

But Vlatkovich argued that the evidence discovered outdoors should all be permissible. The Dodge Ram and the trailer license plate were

in "plain view" of officers, an established exception to needing a warrant, he wrote. The Argo and trailer were found far from the house in the "back corner of the lot," and the lack of any evidence the area was used for private activities meant that the area did not meet the tests to define it as protected curtilage, Vlatkovich argued. His conclusion was that both the Argo and the trailer were discovered as part of a legal search and should be admissible as evidence of theft.

Ruling tosses evidence

Judge Rachel Sullivan's ruling in November, as documented in court records, gave wins to both sides, although Voss and Kottom got the greater benefit.

Using footage from three body cams and written narratives from two investigators to inform her deliberations on the filings, Sullivan found that the disputed land behind the residence did meet the four-factor test for declaring it to be curtilage and not an open field as prosecutors had claimed. There was a well-worn tracked trail and an appearance that the back lot had been mowed regularly, it was enclosed by densely wooded tree lines and was gated, and the area was regularly used for storage of

personal property, all contributing that Voss and Kottom had a "reasonable expectation of privacy" for the area where the Argo and trailer were found.

"Because the search occurred on the curtilage of Defendant's home, law enforcement was not constitutionally permitted to conduct a warrantless search of the area unless the search came within a recognized exception to the warrant requirement," Sullivan wrote. "While it is true that law enforcement likely had probable cause — based on their discovery of the truck and license plate along with the discovery of what appeared to be Argo tracks — to conduct a search of Defendant's home and property, law enforcement failed to secure a warrant and conducted a constitutionally impermissible search that ran afoul of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article 1, Section 10 of the Minnesota State Constitution."

With the evidence suppressed, the theft case quickly fell apart. And while prosecutors had already conceded the point, Sullivan also ruled the warrantless entry into the residence as impermissible and suppressed any evidence

obtained from that action.

Quoting a state Supreme Court ruling, Sullivan wrote, "A warrantless, nonconsensual intrusion of one's dwelling is not to be lightly regarded; indeed, such an entry is considered presumptively unreasonable, and the United States Supreme Court has stressed the state bears a 'heavy burden' to establish exigent circumstances. The State has failed to meet that burden here."

Sullivan did agree with prosecutors that the plain view doctrine applied to the trailer license plate and Dodge Ram, although the license plate without the supporting evidence of the trailer it came from would be inconsequential.

With the stolen Dodge Ram still allowed as evidence, a subsequent hearing on the charge of receiving stolen property was scheduled, but that charge was dismissed in December at the request of prosecutor Vlatkovich. No rationale for the dismissal was included in the related court filing. During her initial arrest, Kottom told officers that the truck had been in the driveway for over a month and that it belonged to someone named Nicky, a person she said she had never met.

DOWNTURN...Continued from page 1

of a painful adjustment within the entire powersports sector, which has seen falling sales almost across the board the past two years.

Derek Lossing, who owns and operates Lossing Power Sports in Babbitt, said it's affected more than snowmobiles. He notes that sales of off-road vehicles of all kinds are down. "I think there's a combination of several things happening," said Lossing. "Everyone in this sector did very well during the pandemic so I think we're now just getting back to a new normal."

Carlson agrees and notes that dealer inventories on both "the dirt side" (ATVs) and "the snow side" have been building the past couple years and that it's only good business for the manufacturers to adjust their production. In fact, he said many dealers have been urging production slowdowns as inventories rose and as the cost of holding all that inventory rose right along with interest rates.

When it comes to layoffs, Arctic Cat is hardly alone. both Polaris and Quebec-based Bombardier, which manufactures Ski-Doos, all instituted even larger layoffs than Arctic Cat, even though they experienced less media coverage, at least in Minnesota. Bombardier's layoffs across North America have topped 1,200, according to media reports from Canada.

While Arctic Cat announced a production halt in November, a letter sent shortly afterward to dealers promised that production would ramp up again beginning in March as the company begins production of its 2026 lineup of sleds.

End of post-pandemic boom

If there's one thing that everyone who follows the power sports industry agrees on, it's that the pandemic years proved to be an historic boom. Rather than sit at home during the COVID shutdown, many Americans opted to get outside and, with COVID checks in

hand, outdoor toys like snowmobiles, motorcycles, and UTVs practically flew out of showrooms.

Manufacturers ramped up production to meet the seemingly insatiable demand and dealers ordered more units than they were used to selling as they tried to keep some of their suddenly red-hot inventory in stock.

But as with so many industries, boom times almost always lead to busts. All that buying eventually saturated the market. Showrooms that were finally filled with inventory suddenly attracted fewer buyers. As interest rates rose, the cost of borrowing jumped for consumers and the bite was even worse for dealers who had to pay interest on all their unsold product.

Some dealers couldn't survive. Just before Christmas, the 73-year-old Harley-Davidson Sports Center in Hermantown announced it was closing its doors for good due to what the owners

described as "challenging economic times."

Still other factors seemed to pile on the misery. Last year's record mild and nearly snowless winter affected most of North America and added further hurt for snowmobile dealers, in particular, who saw little service work as sleds sat unused. Sales beyond the pre-season orders were nearly non-existent last winter, which left many dealers holding excess inventory this spring. And pre-season sales ahead of this winter were generally disappointing as most riders opted to get another year or two out of their existing sleds, particularly after they sat idle an entire season last winter.

As dealers adjusted to lingering inventory and sluggish sales, they ordered fewer units from manufacturers, which eventually forced the production slowdown across the industry.

Long-term purchases

There's almost certainly at least one other factor at play

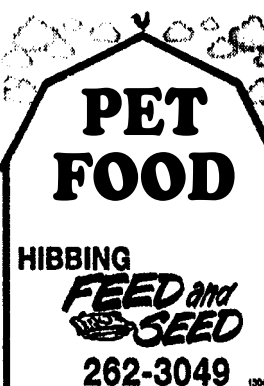
in the current slowdown. As with any product, manufacturers are constantly looking to add bells and whistles, the kind of accessories or features that can attract the interest of the buying public. Snow machines have come a long way from the loud and sometimes unreliable beasts that roamed Minnesota lakes and woods in the 1960s and 70s. The side-by-sides that now fill powersports showrooms are night and day from the "three-wheelers" that dominated the industry's early days. Along with those changes have come significant price increases, with many side-by-sides now setting a buyer back more than \$20,000, or even \$30,000 for some top-of-the-line vehicles. New snow machines start at \$10,000 and go up quickly from there.

Lossing agrees that with current new prices, buying sleds for the whole family, as used to be common, just isn't in the cards for most people these days — which may be

one reason more people are renting now than in the past. Indeed, Lossing is among those dealers now renting sleds.

In the boom times of the pandemic, dealers and manufacturers worried less about the rising price tag as units flew out the door regardless. But with most pandemic cash long since spent, Lossing said consumers seem more reluctant to shell out big bucks for new toys. "People are doing other things with their disposable income," he said. "In many cases, they're opting to travel."

In either case, said Lossing, it helps to have perspective. While demand for power sports equipment isn't what it was during the height of the pandemic, "we're still up over 2018 and 19," he said.



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William M. Isham
"Four Wolves Howling at the Moon"
10.10.1946 - 11.25.2024

Chance Isham
"Mini-Moose"
1996 - 12.18.2024

Our father William began his new adventure in November and his best friend Chance joined him a month later. They are together again enjoying all the things they loved to do, driving, hunting, eating, taking four-wheeler rides, visiting friends, and spending time together.

With a humble and grateful heart, we would like to sincerely thank you for all you have done for dad, Chance, and us as we all go through this transition. It means more than you will ever know. We would like to thank everyone personally, however, there are so many kind souls we may miss a few of you — this is not intentional. Every day we send our gratitude out into the universe thanking everyone. Please know that your kindness and generosity does not go unnoticed.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Isham
Louise Isham



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EMS

Joint ambulance proposal appears dead

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY— A proposed three-way merger of ambulance services in Ely, Tower, and Babbitt, appears to be dead after Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital CEO Patti Banks said the hospital has suspended work on a study of the concept.

“It was made clear to us that Ely Area Ambulance did not want to participate in the system approach, so we are regrouping and moving forward with a different option,” Banks told the Ely Area Ambulance Joint Powers Board at their Jan. 14 meeting in Winton.

After Ely’s ambulance service ran short of funds two years ago, hospital officials hired SafeTech Solutions, a consultant specializing in rural EMS, in the summer of 2023 to propose better financial options for providing ambulance service in the local area. SafeTech developed a plan to merge the three area ambulance services into one system owned by the hospital. While

operating costs would increase sharply under the plan, the proposed system would take advantage of the 101-percent Medicare cost reimbursement provision available only to rural critical access hospitals like EBCH.

Lake County Commissioner Joe Baltich, a member of the joint powers board, commented that the Ely ambulance had several reasons for being less than thrilled about the EBCH proposal. He referenced the recent dust-up over the revocation of the hospital’s federal critical access designation, which he said could put it out of business, an outcome that could leave a merged ambulance service as collateral damage.

Banks rebutted Baltich’s claim, noting that EBCH was one of four St. Louis County hospitals that received the revocation notices but that all of them were reinstated after submitting new applications to the federal government. The bureaucratic tempest in a teapot over the critical access status was covered in detail in the Jan. 17 issue of

the *Timberjay*.

Another more substantive Baltich comment underscored the ongoing sour relationship between the Ely ambulance and the hospital. “We have 23 people on the ambulance service. Twenty-two of them have said that if we do this deal, they’re quitting and they’re not going to do the EMT services anymore.”

In other business, the members of the joint powers board sparred over how the local governments should be billed for their contribution toward operations of the Ely ambulance. The ambulance service rocked the boat last week when it sent invoices directly to Fall Lake and Morse townships for the second half of 2024. The move disregarded the financial arrangements made by the board to use the city of Ely as its fiscal agent.

The joint powers board represents the four communities — Ely, Winton, Fall Lake, and Morse — that financially support Ely’s nonprofit ambulance. It also owns the facility that the ambulance service

uses in downtown Ely.

Baltich, who is on the ambulance board, noted that the ambulance board had billed communities directly prior to 2020, adding, “We need to be able to do that ... It was paid directly from the governmental entity back then.”

JPB chair Marlene Zorman pointed out that the joint powers board voted on Oct. 18, 2022, that Ely would handle all invoices and disbursements as the board’s fiscal agent.

Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski took issue with the undated invoices, claiming they did not accurately reflect what was actually paid (by the two townships) for the 2024 subsidy. Langowski argued that if the ambulance reverted to direct invoicing, it would complicate the accounting process and make it difficult to track the financial arrangements between the ambulance service and the four joint powers board communities.

“We have spent a tremendous amount of time with

our auditor putting together the JPB account within our accounting processes at the city of Ely,” said the clearly unhappy Langowski. “If somebody else would like to take it over and do it some other way, have at it. I will give you the fund balance at the end of 2024, and we’ll transfer it to any other entity that wants it. Because I tell you what, this is quite upsetting. I thought we were all on the same page.”

Langowski recommended that the ambulance service send the money it received back to Fall Lake. Then Ely would send out corrected invoices to all four communities for the remainder of the 2024 subsidy. The joint powers board voted to approve Langowski’s suggestion and the ambulance service board members at the meeting agreed to return the money it received from Fall Lake. Morse had not yet paid the invoice it received from the ambulance service.

In other business, the ambulance joint powers board:

► Approved the second half of the 2024 operating

expenses subsidy at a rate of \$20.20 per capita. The amounts from each of the four communities are: Ely, \$32,000; Fall Lake, \$6,400; Morse, \$11,750; and Winton, \$1,670. Fall Lake currently receives \$32,000 from Lake County for ambulance services, which is approximately twice what they will be billed annually for operation subsidies and building expenses.

► Approved spending \$3,933 for an archeological and historic survey at the property and building it owns and leases to the Ely ambulance. The vendor for the survey is the Duluth Archeological Center. The study needs to be completed before construction can start. The study is a requirement for the federal grant that funds the project.

► Received the report from the ambulance service that the audit of 2022 was finally completed and that the four JPB communities could receive a copy of the audit results if they requested one.

CHOICES...Continued from page 1

able to hire a treasurer.

Absentee voting in the township opens Feb. 7 and runs through March 10. Absentee ballot applications are available at the town hall office Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. or online at www.greenwood-townshipmn.com.

Other business

In other business at the Jan. 14 meeting, the board:

► Passed a motion regarding the renewal of the township’s large CDs to invest \$50,000 into a six-month CD for the broadband account, \$100,000 into a one-year CD, and \$107,000 into a six-month CD. The CD interest rates will be around four percent, or a little higher.

► Once again, failed to

approve the treasurer’s report, even though all the requested information was made available by treasurer Jeff Maus.

► Discussed a \$6,200 bill from B & D for plowing services for the town hall and Birch Point Extension in December. “It is very excessive,” said Supervisor Paul Skubic, who said they need to make sure plowing is only done if the snow total is two inches or higher, and also request that the plow operator get permission for other plowing such as removing slush or other clean up.

► Decided not to do any further testing on the town hall water supply at this time and will continue to post the outdoor faucet as non-potable due to high levels of arsenic.

The township did have a quote to replace the treatment system’s filtration media at a cost of over \$2,000, but were concerned that this would be an ongoing expense, perhaps every 10 months. The idea of installing an under-the-sink water treatment system in the town hall kitchen was discussed.

► Heard a request from a group of residents to improve the kitchen facilities so it could be used by those renting out the town hall. Right now, there is not a working stove or potable water. Roskoski offered to meet with the group of residents hoping to get the kitchen back in working order, and then come to the board with recommendations.

► Agreed to pay clerk

Debby Spicer \$25 per hour for the 58.5 hours she spent working on resolving the missing PERA payment issue. When the previous treasurer quit and interim treasurer Maus was appointed, he was not made aware that the township was responsible for making these payments to cover the township’s matching amount. These payments do not go through the township’s ADP payroll service. The township’s back amount due is \$4,990 which includes some interest but no penalties. The issue affected 10 township employees. Maus noted that he could have worked on correcting the issue if he had been asked. The motion to pay Spicer was 3-2 with Bassing and Stoehr voting against.

► The board appointed election judges and the absentee ballot board members and voted to increase the hourly pay rate to \$17.

► Set a special meeting for Jan. 22 for a performance evaluation of the fire chief on a 3-2 vote with Bassing and Stoehr voting against.

► Will hold the annual board of audit on Tuesday,

Feb. 11 following the regular meeting. “We need to have the clerk’s and treasurer’s financials matching by then,” said Chair Lois Roskoski. “I hope they can work it out and they balance.”

► Approved a \$100 donation to the W. C. Heiam Foundation of the Cook Hospital.

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BREITUNG TOWNSHIP

Township waits for FEMA funding approval

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

SUDAN- Breitung Township is still waiting to finalize its application for FEMA funding to cover what it spent to repair roads and other infrastructure damaged by flooding from the June 18, 2024, rain event.

As the township waits for final invoices on some of that work, the town board, at their Jan. 16 meeting, approved moving \$120,000 from other town accounts to cover expenditures in the road and bridge fund that exceeded the 2024 budget.

“We can get through this,” said Chairman Tim Tomsich. “It’s not like a fire wiping out an entire town.”

The township just needs a few final invoices from contractors and then will be able to submit their final application for reimbursement from FEMA. But the township said they expect the federal funding will cover only part of the costs the township incurred. FEMA has told the township it will cover the costs of actual repairs to existing infrastructure, not the costs incurred to improve township roads and drainage to help prevent future flooding. For example, the township did

improvements to Junction Road, raising the roadbed and improving the ditches but only expects FEMA reimbursement to cover what it would have cost to simply repair the road.

To date, the township has submitted receipts totaling \$138,000 to FEMA, but of this, \$45,655 was for mitigation work. The township has also incurred over \$9,000 in engineering costs, plus costs for extra time spent by the town clerk and maintenance supervisor, that is hopefully eligible for reimbursement. The township is also expected to be reimbursed \$18,000 for work to repair and remediate damage on Stuntz Bay Rd. They are also planning to submit costs of about \$30,000 for repairs and mitigation work at McKinley Park and on Church St. Clerk Amber Zak said there may be another \$20,000 in contractor costs on several smaller projects; they are waiting for invoices from the contractors.

Any FEMA funding received will go back into the road and bridge fund. The township did get their sam.gov account activated, which is required as part of the FEMA process.

As part of their year-end budget review, the board also voted to move \$100,000 into the projects fund, taking money from the parks,

police, and water funds. These transfers are mostly to avoid cash flow issues, since grant funding due for projects often lags when the township has to pay its contractors. The township will be receiving 100-percent reimbursement for the costs spent on the Stuntz Bay Rd. reconstruction project.

Overall, the township showed \$2.25 million in receipts in 2024, and \$2.136 million in disbursements. The township started 2024 with \$331,346 in total fund balances, and ended the year with \$445,248.

The township will set its 2026 budget and levy at the March 11 annual meeting.

With longtime township officials chairman Tim Tomsich and treasurer Jorgine Gornick retiring, two new township residents have filed for the two open seats. Steve Tekautz has filed for supervisor, and Teresa Dolinar for treasurer.

Skating rink

While the board was happy to see a great turnout for the first round of skating parties this winter, they expressed some concerns about staffing the warming shack daily, when usage of the rink is often minimal. “Some days we are paying someone for four hours and nobody is skating,” he said.

The township has struggled to find adults interested in working at the warming shack. The board discussed limiting warming shack hours to weekends and Wednesday afternoons, but they were not ready to make any changes for this winter.

The warming shack is open afternoons and on weekends, weather permitting. Supervisor Matt Tichel wondered if the township should just put the rink lights on a timer, so they would shut off the lights at 9 p.m. Supervisor Erin Peitso wondered of the township could put up security cameras, but noted this would require installing wifi, which might be costly.

But unattended skating could also be problematic.

“Parents want an adult in the shack,” Peitso said. “I do think we will have problems if kids realize there isn’t an attendant.” She added that they weren’t worried about the kids that do skate, but they were worried about other kids hanging out and causing problems.

“Why do we need the warming shack open?” Tichel asked. The rink itself is open all the time, and there is an outdoor biffy. The warming shack has a kitchen area, indoor bathroom, and a large selection of loaner skates available. The board also discussed leaving the shack building open but locking the

bathroom and other storage closet.

Tichel told the board that Embarrass does not staff its warming shack, which is heated by a woodstove if skaters decide to light the fire. “They did have a problem once,” he said, “when someone stole all the firewood for the stove.”

Tichel said he would talk to an electrician to find out the cost of putting the rink lights on a timer.

Other business

In other business, the board:

► Extended the initial contract for Jorgine Gornick as water account manager through the end of April. It was previously set to the end of March to coincide with her retirement as treasurer.

► Passed a resolution in support of the Public Facilities Authority loan for the water treatment plant project. The loan is being taken out jointly by Tower and Soudan and will be repaid by Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board customers.

► Hired election judges and absentee ballot board members, at a rate of \$17 per hour for the upcoming township election.

MINNESOTA

Walz targets future deficits with budget proposal

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Sales tax decrease plus extensions would create revenue gains

REGIONAL- Gov. Tim Walz has placed a sales tax reduction at the heart of his proposed two-year state budget released last week, and that’s stirring up plenty of debate in St. Paul as he takes aim at a looming budget problem.

The proposal comes as Minnesota faces a potential deficit in the years ahead. Current spending trends could drain the state’s financial cushion by 2027, leaving lawmakers with tough decisions to make. While a \$616 million surplus is projected for the next two years, a \$5.1 billion shortfall is expected for the 2028-29 biennium.

In a pre-emptive strike, Walz hopes to increase revenue while simultaneously cutting expenses.

“This is the year to do it,” Walz said last Thursday when presenting the plan. “We’re cutting state spending. We’re cutting it respon-

sibly.” Walz’s budget aims to trim the gap between state revenue and expenditures by about half. That would be no small feat, given that Minnesota’s previous two-year budget reached a record \$70.7 billion, thanks to one-time spending fueled by pandemic relief and a huge budget surplus.

Central to the \$66 billion plan is a historic tweak to the state sales tax. Walz wants to reduce the rate from 6.875 percent to 6.8 percent, a move he called “historic and a response to inflation concerns.”

On the surface, a tax cut would appear to reduce revenue, but Walz’s proposal will actually generate more money by extending the sales tax to professional services that have long been exempt from such taxation, including legal, accounting, brokerage and trust services. The

changes would net the state an additional \$108 million annually.

Walz stressed that the extensions are an issue of fairness.

“Why would you pay sales tax on your tires when you wouldn’t pay it on adjusting your trust fund?” Walz said. “If a tree falls in your yard and you hire someone to remove that tree, you pay sales tax on that. If you call your stockbroker and make a deal you do not pay sales tax on that. It brings fairness back into who is paying the sales tax.”

House Republican Leader Lisa Demuth characterized the tax change as a type of bait and switch.

“It’s almost like having that shiny object – look what I’m going to do for you over here, but really, I’m going to tax you over here and increase the state revenue,” Demuth said.

Republicans have remained resolute in their position that the Legislature should not pass any new taxes this term.

Disability services cuts

One of the biggest challenges Walz cited with soaring costs is the state’s expenditure on disability services. Minnesota’s Medicaid spending on people with disabilities is the highest per capita in the nation, with annual costs exceeding \$50,000 per person.

Walz wants to curb those rising expenses by capping annual growth in Medicaid waivers at two percent, down from the current rate of around six percent.

“If we don’t make the move, by the end of the 2029 fiscal year this will be an eighth of the entire budget,” Walz said. Despite the lower cap, Walz maintained that no

one would be turned away and there would be no waiting lists.

Unsurprisingly, the proposed cut in the cap hasn’t been received well among numerous disabilities advocacy groups. Jennifer Walton of Advocating Change Together described the proposal as “crushing.”

“This is people’s lives,” Walton said. “Their day-to-day lives and fundamental needs, fundamental rights.”

A cut of \$68 million is proposed for nursing home facility payment system charges.

Walz also proposed trimming state reimbursement for special education transportation from 100 percent to 95 percent, a move he believes will encourage efficiency among school districts.

“This one has to be addressed,” he said.

The move would certainly be a blow to the St. Louis County School District, which has advocated for more, not less, state reimbursement to help cover overall transportation costs for the state’s geographically largest school district.

Private schooling would also take a hit under Walz’s proposal, which targets both pupil education and transportation aid for total cuts of around \$108 million.

A crack in the ranks?

Walz’s proposal will see anything but smooth sailing in a divided Legislature. With the DFL likely holding

a slim one-vote majority in the Senate, and the House likely to be deadlocked after the current disputes are resolved, Republican Demuth has made it clear that tax increases are a nonstarter for her party.

“Any tax increases are off the table,” she said. “A budget that raises taxes on Minnesotans and cuts funding for long-term care is not a budget that values the people of Minnesota.”

But not all Republicans are dismissing the proposal. Rep. Greg Davids, R-Preston, the House’s top Republican on tax matters, signaled some willingness to engage in talks.

“This doesn’t look like a non-starter to me,” Davids said. “We have to work together.”

Fraud prevention

To counter criticisms in the wake of the Feeding our Futures \$250 million fraud scandal, Walz is also focusing on fraud prevention as a mechanism to enhance fiscal stability. His plan includes nearly \$45 million for initiatives like using artificial intelligence to flag potential Medicaid fraud. The idea is to save money while ensuring resources go to those who need them most.

What’s next?

Lawmakers have until the end of the session in May to agree on a plan, although if they remain at an impasse, Walz can call a special session. If a budget isn’t in place by June 30, shutdown of some essential services could begin on July 1.

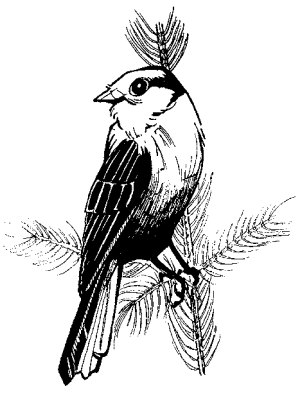
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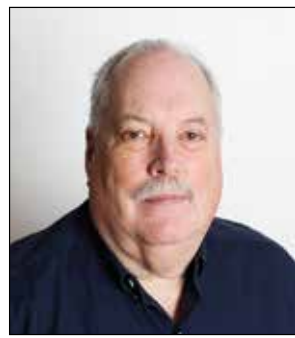


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Ely-Bloomenson Hospital board director completes advanced certification



John Saw

ST. PAUL- The Minnesota Hospital Association announced on Jan. 13 that John Saw, a member of the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital board of directors, has completed its certificate program for advanced hospital trustee training. Saw was

one of 12 hospital directors from around Minnesota to successfully finish the training.

“Hospitals and health systems are cornerstones for the communities they serve, and are facing a multitude of historic challenges,” said Dr. Rahul Koranne, the association’s president. “The MHA’s trustee certification program ensures that hospital and health system leaders are well-prepared for their roles.”

The advanced course covers advocacy and community relations, effective governance, quality and safety, and strategic planning.



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GAS PROSPECTING

Drilling underway on Pulsar's second helium well

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

BABBITT—Enduring the recent cold snap, Pulsar Helium, the Canadian firm exploring for helium southeast of Babbitt, completed the deepening of its first well, Jetstream No. 1, and began drilling operations of its second well, dubbed Jetstream No. 2.

The wells are part of Pulsar's Topaz Project, its exploration campaign for helium in the billion-year-old rocks of the Duluth Complex. Jetstream No. 1 was

completed to a depth of 2,200 feet last year and extended to a final depth of 5,100 feet earlier this month. The well intersects a helium-enriched zone discovered by a mineral-exploration rig in 2011. Samples collected last year indicate that the gas resource is mostly carbon dioxide with helium concentrations between 7 and 14 percent, which is considered exceptionally rich.

Pulsar collected new geophysical data in 2024 that indicates the helium resource extended at least another 1,640 feet. To penetrate

the entire reservoir, Pulsar brought their drilling contractor, Capstar Drilling, back to the well site in December to deepen the well.

During a visit to the drill rig on Jan. 14, Pulsar CEO Thomas Abraham-James told the Timberjay that deepening the well penetrated the entire reservoir, encountering multiple gas-bearing zones.

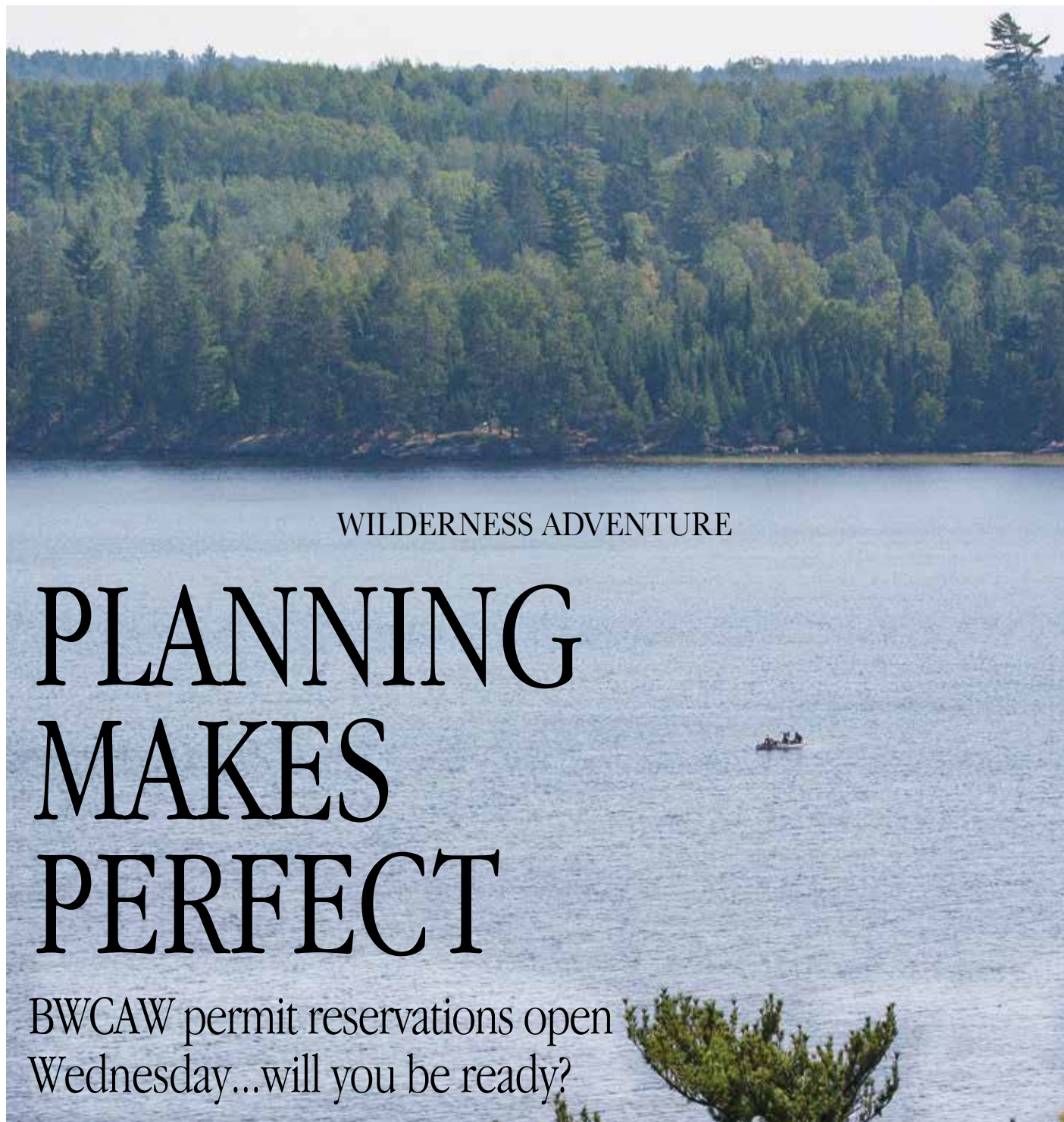
Jetstream No. 2

"The objective for Jetstream No. 2 is to intersect and go through the same helium-bearing reservoir as we did with Jetstream No. 1," Abraham-James said.

Right: Pulsar CEO Thomas Abraham-James with one of the drill bits for the drilling of its new helium exploration well. photo by C. Clark

Pulsar completed the drill pad for Jetstream No. 2 over the holidays, then brought in an auguring drill rig to install and grout a 31-foot conductor casing, according to Abraham-James. A conductor casing stabilizes the top of the well, isolates it from

See **PULSAR**, pg. 2B



WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

PLANNING MAKES PERFECT

BWCAW permit reservations open Wednesday...will you be ready?

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— If you're planning a wilderness canoe trip in the Boundary Waters this summer, you'll want to finalize those plans before Wednesday, Jan. 29. That's when permit reservations open for the season and getting yours can be a matter of timing as the available permits go quickly, particularly for the most popular dates and entry points.

Last year, nearly six-in-ten of available overnight permits were reserved opening day, so those who delay can be left with limited options. Overnight permits are required for campers wanting to enter the wilderness during the quota season, which runs May 1-Sept. 30.

If you're using the services of an outfitter, you have the option of letting them reserve your permit.

Above: A lone canoe makes its way across Nina Moose Lake in the far northwestern portion of the Boundary Waters.

Right: Canoeing along steep bluffs on the north end of Slim Lake.

photos by M. Helmsberger

For years, that was typically the best way to ensure you'd get your first choice of dates and entry point.

But that's no longer the case, according to Jason Zabokrtsky with the Boundary Waters Outfitting Co., in Ely. While outfitters used to make use of a bank of computers to make reservations, the Forest Service now limits outfitters to just three computers. And with hundreds of reservations to make on opening day, Zabokrtsky said

See **BWCAW**, pg. 2B



Editor's Note:

Most high school sports were canceled this week due to weather. Limited coverage of last week's contests begins below. The Timberjay's full Sports section will return next week, Mother Nature permitting.

NORDIC SKIING

Ely boys top the field at Marshall Sprints

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The Ely boys Nordic ski team put up one of its most impressive performances of the season so far, as Dylan Durkin and Eli Olson finished first and second overall while four more Wolves placed in the top 15 at the Marshall Sprints at Spirit Mountain in Duluth on Friday. Duluth East skiers filled four of the other top-ten finishes.

Durkin set a blistering pace as he mastered the 1.4K course in 3:02.5 to get the win, finishing two-and-a-half seconds ahead of runner-up Olson. Aksel Skustad slotted in fourth with a time of 3:09.7, Oliver Hohenstein came in sixth in 3:13, and Otto Devine was the fifth Ely skier in the top ten, placing tenth with a time of 3:20.2. Rounding out the group of Wolves who finished in the top third of the field were Wyatt Devine, 14th, 3:23.2, and Tory Hughley, 20th, 3:34.8.

The Ely girls finished three skiers into the top third of the 74-girl field. Anna Larson had the best finish for the Wolves, placing 21st with a time of 4:03.5. Mattie Lindsay came in 24th with a time of 4:07.7, and Anna Dunn finished 25th in 4:08.1.

Team results were not available as of press time.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wolves tame the Broncos

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— Four Timberwolves reached double digits in scoring here last Friday as Ely tamed the Broncos 65-49 to improve to 11-4 on the season.

Senior Clare Thomas had one of her strongest nights of the season

See **WOLVES**, pg. 2B



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BOYS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies lose OT heartbreaker at the buzzer

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The North Woods boys lost an overtime thriller on the road to Northome-Kelliher on Friday when a buzzer-beating three-point attempt by Louie Panichi rattled in and then fell out of the basket, handing the Grizzlies their fifth consecutive loss.

With both teams riding losing streaks coming into the game, this match up was a toss up from the opening

tip, but the Mustangs put the Grizzlies on notice early that they were in for a battle, streaking out to a 12-2 lead. But down 20-9, the Grizzlies got on a roll when Panichi connected on a pair of treys, followed by a Kalvyn Benner score on a fast break and an Aiden Hartway bucket. A Talen Jarshaw trifecta brought North Woods all the way back to take a 22-20 lead. The rest of the half was a slugfest as the teams trading the lead multiple times, with North Woods taking a 38-36 advantage in

the final minute of the half on yet another Panichi three-ball. A three-quarter court length buzzer-beating heave by Jarshaw found the bottom of the basket and put the Grizzlies up 42-38 at the break.

Riding high, the Grizzlies got another trey from Panichi to open the second half, and quickly stretched their lead to nine on a pair of free throws by Andrew Hartway and a bucket by Aidan Hartway. But the Mustangs remained within striking distance, trailing 71-63 with seven minutes

remaining, and cut into the Grizzlies lead from there, pulling into a 79-79 with two minutes left in the game. The Grizzlies went up by three with 40 seconds left after Panichi was fouled on a three-point attempt and made all of his charities, but the Mustangs came back with a trey in the waning seconds to force the contest to overtime.

North Woods went down by four before a Jarshaw trey and an Andrew Hartway scoop shot put them back in the lead, and another basket by Jarshaw

appeared to put the Grizzlies in the driver's seat at 94-91. But with only 17 seconds left, the Mustangs got a bucket and one on a tip in of a missed shot to go ahead 97-96. North Woods called time out, but the Grizzlies were unable to get a good shot, forcing Panichi to put up a desperation three that banked off the glass, hit the front of the rim, then bounced away as time expired.

Thanks to his earlier sharpshooting, Panichi lit up the board for the Grizzlies, scoring 33. Jarshaw hit for

21, and Benner and Andrew Hartway each had 14.

The loss dropped the Grizzlies to 7-7 on the season, and they were huge underdogs for a scheduled Thursday road trip to undefeated, top-ranked Cherry. Their best chances to get back in the win column are a pair of home contests, Friday against Duluth Marshall and next Tuesday against South Ridge.

Slow starts prove deadly as Ely drops two straight

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

DULUTH— Slow starts proved troublesome for the Timberwolves as they dropped two straight matches over the past week, to fall to 10-4 on the season.

Against Duluth Marshall on Saturday, Ely struggled against the Hilltoppers' six-foot, four-inch senior forward

Brooks Johnson, who was nearly unstoppable on the inside as he led his squad to a 72-61 victory. "He got a lot of easy baskets with our lack of size inside," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. Ely fell behind early although a late game rally cut the gap to just six points, but they just couldn't hold off Johnson, who was recently signed to a basketball deal at UMD.

The Wolves showed a balance offense, with Caid Chittum, Jack Davies, and Drew Johnson each pouring in 17 points. Chittum had 11 rebounds as well for the double-double, but it wasn't enough to stay ahead of the Hilltoppers' firepower.

Saturday's defeat came in the wake of last Thursday's 69-59 loss at home at the hands of the Rangers. "We got down

51-26 early in the second half but fought back and cut it to eight late in the game," said McDonald. "The difference was we shot the ball well in that stretch and made some stops on the offensive end."

Despite the loss, McDonald was satisfied that the Wolves had gotten back in the game after falling behind in the early going. "Last year we were blown out three times

by MI-B so it was good to be competitive."

Chittum led the Wolves offensively with 25 points and 13 rebounds for yet another double-double. Johnson and Trent Bishop connected on five treys apiece to round out the major scorers for Ely.

TJ Duchamp led MI-B on offense with 27 points, while Chris King added 20 along with 12 boards.

The Wolves Tuesday night home contest with McGregor was rescheduled to Thursday night, after the Timberjay's weekly press time. They're set to travel to Littlefork on Friday to take on the Vikings. They'll be back home on Tuesday to host Greenway.

PULSAR...Continued from page 2B

soils and unconsolidated sediments, and protects any shallow groundwater from drilling activities and vice versa. Installing the conductor casing is the last step of well-site preparation.

The site for the new well is approximately a third of a mile south of the first well.

Abraham-James said the target depth for Jetstream No. 2 is 5,000 feet.

Pulsar expects to conduct

more gas flow testing in early March to measure how gas moves between the two wells.

"Once both wells are completed, the objective is to see how the gas flows between them," Abraham-James told

the Timberjay. "What you do is open up one of them to vent the gas. The other well remains closed, and it's got a pressure gauge on it. If you see that the pressure on the closed well changes, it tells

you that the two holes are speaking to one another. And that will tell us a lot about the connectivity, porosity, and permeability of the gas resource. That information will go into our resource model

and refine our estimates of the production potential of this reservoir."

BWCAW...Continued from page 1B

they can no longer be confident of obtaining the reservations clients want.

"Five years ago, about 90 percent of the time we could get their first choice of entry point and date," said Zabokrtsky. "Now, we tell them they may have a better chance of getting their first choice if they do it themselves."

If you're thinking of making a reservation yourself, Zabokrtsky said to be online and signed into www.recreation.gov ahead of the 9 a.m. central opening of the Boundary Waters reservations. If you don't already have an account on recreation.gov, set it up beforehand so you're not spending time establishing an account as reservations are snapped up by others. You can also obtain a permit by phone at 1-877-444-6777. The U.S. Forest Service recommends using the Chrome browser for the best experience.

Other tips that can help you obtain a reservation include:

Have alternative dates if you can't get your first choice. Zabokrtsky says Tuesdays

and Wednesdays tend to be the least popular days of the week for wilderness entry so if you have some flexibility, consider entering on those days. Other times are also busier than others. Zabokrtsky said demand for Memorial Day weekend permits is always high, while interest over the 4th of July holiday drops sharply. June and early July are periods for anglers, while July and early August attract lots of families.

Have alternative entry points in mind as well if your first choice fills up early. Some entry points, which provide easier access to popular routes can be gone within minutes, so have a few other entry options if that's the case. Have them planned out in advance and written down so you can adjust on the fly. The forest service recommends having at least three travel options to help you lock down at least one permit.

Even if you don't lock down your first choices for your trip, keep an eye out on recreation.gov. The forest service notes that people frequently reserve more permits than they can use and many

of them are later canceled. As soon as that happens, they become available again on the system. "That happens a lot," said Zabokrtsky, who notes that he uses the alert system on paddleplanner.com, which can send you a notification as soon as a permit you've indicated becomes available. According to the forest service, over 11,000 permits were later canceled, which can occasionally free up even some of the hardest-to-get permits.

Be considerate of others

Keep in mind, you're not the only person trying to reserve a Boundary Waters permit. If everyone took steps to be considerate, it would allow more people to get the permits they're seeking.

The forest service recommends several things that visitors can do to ease some of the

frustration surrounding permit reservations, including:

Only reserve permits you know you can use.

Only reserve one permit per day. The forest service reserves the right to cancel multiple same day, overlapping, and consecutive reservations under the same permit holder name without notification.

Cancel your reservation on recreation.gov as soon as you know you can't use it. That helps to ensure that someone who can use it can make their trip a reality. The forest service has noted that the number of people who reserve permits and then don't pick them up, so-called "no-shows," has been on the rise in recent years. By failing to cancel their reservations, these individuals are denying others the opportunity to visit

the wilderness. In addition, canceling is the only way to obtain a refund of the recreation fee associated with the permit. The \$6 reservation fee, however, is not refundable.

Other things to keep in mind when making your Boundary Waters reservation include:

Be sure to check the box under group member names to select alternate leaders who can pick up the permit instead of the permit holder. Alternates cannot be added later.

Permits are not transferable. Only the permit holder or alternates can pick up the permit and photo ID will be required. Permits must be picked up on the entry date or one day prior.

According to the forest service, sound trip planning make all the difference when

it comes to your visit to the wilderness. For those bothered by biting insects, don't plan your trip for June or early July. However, if you want great fishing, June is probably your best choice.

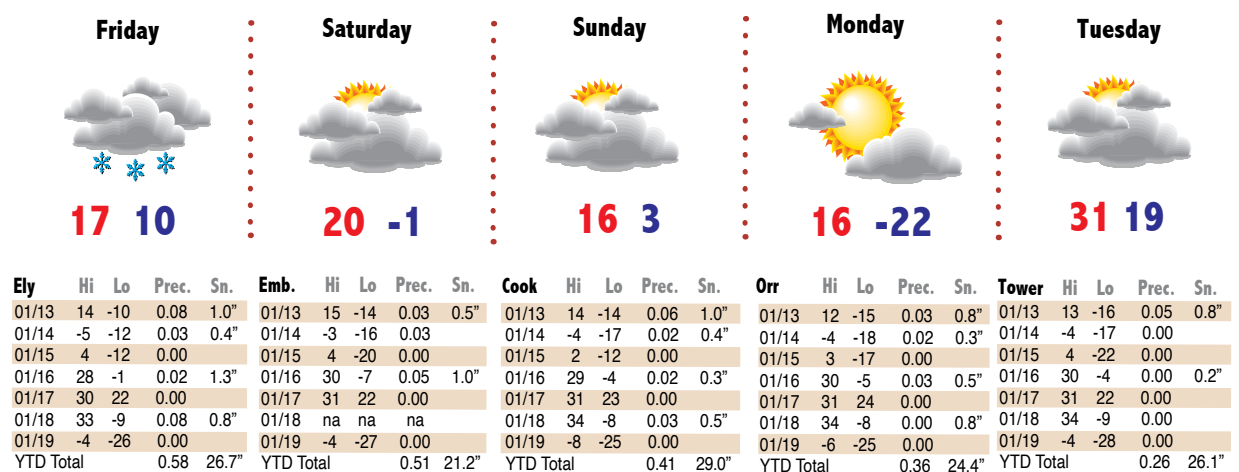
If you like to swim or want to hunt for ripe blueberries, plan your trip for early August.

If you want to avoid the crowds and enjoy fall colors, the second half of September is a good choice. And if you want to avoid the quota system altogether, and don't mind unpredictable weather, early October can be a good choice.

There are lots of options to be sure, so with a little planning you can have the wilderness experience you've been dreaming of.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Even Exchange

by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

- 1. Sweet treat _ _ _ N _ _ _ Golfer's assistant _ _ _ D _ _ _
2. Pasta segment N _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Curly-haired dog P _ _ _ _ _ _ _
3. Prison official _ _ _ _ _ D _ _ _ Rabbit den _ _ _ _ _ R _ _ _
4. Thick D _ _ _ _ _ _ Nervous T _ _ _ _ _ _
5. Bandit _ _ _ _ _ _ W Expenditure _ _ _ _ _ _ Y
6. Musical tones _ _ _ _ _ _ D Household task _ _ _ _ _ _ E
7. Nod off _ _ L _ _ _ _ Use a broom _ _ W _ _ _ _
8. Every 24 hours _ _ _ _ _ L _ _ Forget-me-not flower _ _ _ _ _ S _
9. Baggage carrier _ _ _ _ R _ _ _ _ Rowling's wizard _ _ _ T _ _ _ _
10. Church official _ _ _ D _ _ _ Glue maker _ _ _ M _ _ _

WORD LADDERS

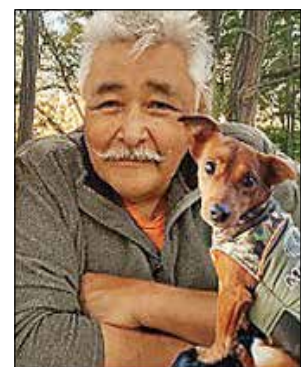
Can you go from TRADE to DRAIN in 6 words? Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

TRADE

Blank lines for word ladders between TRADE and DRAIN.

DRAIN

Obituaries and Death Notices



William M. Isham

William Merle Isham, 78, passed away peacefully on Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, at St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth. Visitation was held on Sunday, Dec. 1 at the Bois Forte Government Community Building in Nett Lake and continued until the service commenced on Monday, Dec. 2. Pallbearers were Tyler Buchholz, Nicolis Buchholz, Jake Isham, Alexander Isham, Ernie Landgren Jr. and Luke Landgren. Honorary pallbearers were William G. Isham, Shullon Isham, Kevin Strong, Pablo Gonzales, Jim Prepodnik, John Prepodnik, Elius Strong, Garret Landgren and Henry Thompson. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

William was born on Oct. 10, 1946, in Cloquet, to William George Isham and Lillian Day. He was a Combat Veteran, who served proudly in the U.S. Army, 1st Logistical Command from 1968 until he was honorably discharged in 1970. His talent and knowledge were vast. His career included, but was not limited to, Law Enforcement Officer, Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Prison Guard - Stillwater, Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement Officer, Bois Forte Conservation Officer, Heavy Equipment

Operator, Sawyer, Millwright, Logistic Specialist 92A and Teacher. He attended college at Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas to study welding.

William enjoyed spending time with friends and family, hunting, fishing, driving, motorcycling, martial arts, shooting, reloading, billiards, cooking, beadwork and collecting. He loved to explore new places, new restaurants, shopping, and he especially cherished spending time with his

partner in crime and best friend, Chance "Mini-Moosh" Isham. These two were inseparable; it was rare that you would see one without the other. Chance joined his friend to continue their adventures together on Dec. 17, 2024. William was always willing to lend a helping hand and cared deeply for animals. William often spoke about the heartbreak he had to endure as a conservation officer addressing unwanted pets. He was extremely resourceful and if he could not find something he needed, he would build it. Many would say he was a pretty good mechanic, although he would say he was only a mechanic because he had to be.

William is survived by his son, William George Isham (Jannan); two daughters, Louise Elizabeth Isham and Jennifer Loraine Isham; grandchildren, Tyler Buchholz (Crystal), Nicolis Buchholz (Racheal), Shullon Isham/Strong (Kevin), Jake Isham and Alexander Isham;

great-grandchildren, Elius and Hazel Strong, Neko Buchholz, Boo Isham, Stella Isham, Molly Isham, Sally Isham, Grace Isham, Allyssa Isham, Graham Isham, Jazmin Buchholz, Gabryl Buchholz and William Isham.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Grace Elizabeth Isham; parents; and siblings, Clint, Ernie, Jake, Lee, Lois, Lazinea, Zenobia and Roberta.

Darrell A. Brigan

Darrell "Louie" A. Brigan, 72, longtime resident of Cook, died on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025, at his home. A gathering of family and

friends was held on Thursday, Jan. 23 at Dougherty Funeral Home in Hibbing. A spring interment will be in the Bearville Cemetery in Cook.

He is survived by his wife, Robin Cochran Brigan of Cook; children, Melanie Brigan of Cook, Cheryl Brigan of Duluth and Jeremy (Danielle) Larson of Hibbing; siblings, Viola Newman of Cook, Mike (Carol) Williams, Debra "Debbie" Williams and Steve Williams, all of Duluth, and Dale Williams of Chisholm; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Florence M. Young

Florence Merle Young, 86, of Cook, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025. There will be a private family interment in the spring. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Margaret Pete

Margaret Charlene Pete, "Wabiishkii Maiiganikwe," age 42, of Virginia, died Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025, at Essentia St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth.

Tribal rites were held on Saturday, Jan. 18. Tommy Councillor was the Spiritual Advisor. Burial was in the Bois Forte Vermilion Cemetery. Arrangements were

provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

Marge was born June 29, 1982, in Virginia, the daughter of Peter Pete Jr. and Muriel Deegan and was a graduate of Tower-Soudan High School. Marge worked at various retail stores and was a security guard at Fortune Bay Casino. She loved her music, beach outings, followed the Lake Vermilion Drum Group, and cherished time with her children and family.

Marge is survived by her mother, Muriel Deegan; children, Anissa Pete, Alexander (Ava Smith) Pete, Nevaeh Hartland, Nijjah Pete;

grandson, Alexander Pete Jr.; brothers, Peter Deegan and Tristan (Jasmine Gawboy) Day; stepbrother, Bern Day; sister Juanita Deegan; step-sisters, Stacy Day and Anne Isham; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her father, Peter Pete Jr.; sister, Anya Pete; maternal grandmother, Jeanette Deegan.

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<p>2022 FRONTIER SV W/LEATHERS</p> <p>\$27,391 #25980A</p>	<p>2018 EXPLORER BASE 88K MI</p> <p>\$15,397 #25887A</p>	<p>2016 EDGE SPORT AWD 85K MI</p> <p>\$15,972 #8250</p>	<p>2016 F150 XL SC</p> <p>\$13,710 #26062A</p>	<p>2020 F250 XLT SC 29K MI</p> <p>\$39,710 #26096A</p>
<p>2022 PACIFICA TOURING L 65K MI</p> <p>\$22,980 #8289</p>	<p>2023 TUCSON SEL AWD 38K MI</p> <p>\$22,712 #8265</p>	<p>2022 EDGE TITANIUM AWD</p> <p>\$23,972 #8253</p>	<p>2023 PACIFICA TOURING L 68K MI</p> <p>\$24,980 #8288</p>	<p>2015 NAVIGATOR</p> <p>\$15,741 #26031A</p>
<p>2014 EDGE LIMITED 88K MI</p> <p>\$12,980 #8287</p>	<p>2018 FUSION SE HYBRID</p> <p>\$14,710 #8264</p>	<p>2019 FUSION SE AWD 85K MI</p> <p>\$13,980 #8290</p>	<p>2023 ROGUE SV AWD 16K MI</p> <p>\$23,712 #8267</p>	<p>2019 DURANGO SXT 52K</p> <p>\$22,984 #8269</p>
<p>2021 EXPLORER XLT AWD</p> <p>\$21,974 #25989A</p>	<p>2020 EDGE TITANIUM 37K MI</p> <p>\$24,980 #8291</p>	<p>2021 ECOSPORT TITANIUM 67K MI</p> <p>\$14,980 #8294</p>	<p>2017 JOURNEY CROSSROAD +</p> <p>\$13,980 #8292</p>	<p>2021 EXPLORER XLT AWD 64K MI</p> <p>\$26,483 #8263B</p>
<p>2015 FOCUS SE 85K MI</p> <p>\$8,980 #8293</p>	<p>2022 SILVERADO LT CREW</p> <p>\$25,483 #25852A</p>	<p>2014 FUSION SE AWD 32K MI</p> <p>\$15,980 #8275A</p>	<p>2002 ACURA RL 3.5</p> <p>\$5,980 #25943A</p>	<p>2022 ESCAPE SEL 53K MI</p> <p>\$21,980 #8296</p>
<p>2019 FLEX SEL AWD 59K MI</p> <p>\$19,710 #8260</p>	<p>2023 ESCAPE ST-LINE AWD</p> <p>\$23,472 #8280</p>	<p>2022 EXPLORER ST LINE 70K MI</p> <p>\$28,980 #8297</p>	<p>2021 EDGE SEL AWD</p> <p>\$18,397 #8281</p>	<p>2021 ESCAPE SE AWD 34K MI</p> <p>\$21,980 #8298</p>

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ST. PAUL

Courts are battleground for legislative control

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

DFL claims House Republicans have acted illegally in quorum dispute

REGIONAL- It's become clear that the Minnesota court system has and will continue to play a key role in shaping the power structure of the state's new legislative session. The state Supreme Court was scheduled to hear arguments on Thursday this week in a DFL lawsuit contesting Republican actions to control the House of Representatives.

The current power struggle was precipitated by a previous court ruling in the contested election of the DFL's Curtis Johnson, who was elected to the House 40B seat in November. His Republican challenger, Paul Wickstrom, filed suit, claiming that Johnson was not eligible for the legislative office because he did not live in the Rosville apartment he rented in the district, but rather maintained his residence in Little Canada. A Ramsey County District judge ruled in favor of Wickstrom, saying Johnson did not meet the necessary residency requirement and nullifying his election.

A 67-67 tie between the parties in the House election suddenly became a temporary 67-66 Republican majority, and the party acted quickly to abandon a power-sharing agreement that would have had Republican Lisa Demuth and DFL leader Melissa Hortman share Speaker of the House duties and have members of each party act as committee co-chairs.

Flexing their muscle on the first day of the session, Republicans ignored a ruling by presiding officer Secretary of State Steve Simon that the chamber did not have a quorum to operate, and with DFL representatives boycotting the session they proceeded to elect Demuth as speaker and conduct additional business. The DFL boycott has continued as Republicans have continued to operate under the pre-

sumption of having a legal quorum, holding floor sessions and committee meetings without their DFL counterparts.

The DFL and Simon both filed suits last week asking the Supreme Court to intervene on the question of what constitutes a legal quorum under the state constitution and state law. The DFL and Simon contend that it should be 68, one more than half of the number of House seats. On the other hand, Republicans have proceeded under an interpretation that a quorum is 67, one more than half of the representatives elected and eligible to serve.

Justices will have to consider sections of the state constitution that each side has drawn upon, sections that don't specify either 68 or 67. One states that "A majority of each house constitutes a quorum to transact business," while two others refer to "a majority of the members elected to each house of the legislature." Additional sections and state statutes will come into play as well.

The DFL has asked the court to provide the following relief:

- Issue an order preventing Republicans from transacting any legislative business, including making nominations and electing leaders, until a quorum of 68 is present.

- Declare that Republicans acted unlawfully when they took action following Simon's adjournment.

- Declare that all actions taken by the House in the absence of a 68-member quorum are null and void.

- Award the DFL all costs associated with the lawsuit.

Republicans fired back on Tuesday with their 39-page response. They argued that the DFL willfully created the quorum controversy with their boycott and lacks standing to sue, having cre-

ated any alleged harm themselves. Furthermore, they contend that Simon's role in opening the session is only ceremonial, and that separation of powers dictates that his call to adjourn was an unconstitutional exercise of authority by the executive branch over the legislative branch. They extended the separation of powers argument to the court itself, arguing that organizational matters of the House are internal ones, and that the court cannot intrude on a separate branch of government to choose, for example, a Speaker of the House. "Petitioners are seeking a fleeting political advantage—they hope to deprive the opposing party of the ability to organize the House of Representatives for a few weeks," the response concludes. "But to achieve this, they ask the Court to reverse constitutional principles that Minnesota has consistently articulated and applied since before it became a state. That is backwards. The petitions should be dismissed for lack of jurisdiction or alternatively denied on the merits."

Special election reversal

The Supreme Court has already weighed in on another Republican lawsuit that challenged the legitimacy of a Jan. 28 special election called in December by Gov. Tim Walz to fill the vacant District 40B seat. Ruling in favor of the Republicans, the court canceled the election, stating that Walz violated a state law that he cannot establish a special election to fill the seat until 22 days after the first day of the session. Walz set the date in December on the same day Johnson said he would not appeal the decision nullifying his election.

The decision raises the possibility that the DFL could extend its House boycott by another month, as they had vowed not to return

until after the special election that is expected to re-establish the 67-67 tie. Walz is expected to set the new date for early in March. The Supreme Court's ruling on the quorum question could affect a decision on the boycott.

Tabke controversy

Meanwhile, the DFL has sought to leverage another court case involving a disputed election to forge a revised power-sharing agreement that would lead to the end of their boycott. Rep. Brad Tabke, DFL-Shakopee, won re-election to his seat by 14 votes over Republican challenger Aaron Paul, but Scott County election officials discovered that 20 absentee ballots were missing and were not included in the total, enough ballots to potentially flip the outcome. Paul sued and requested a special election, but Scott County District Court Judge Tracy Perzel, presented with testimony from six of the absentee voters who said they cast their ballots for Tabke, ruled that the election was valid.

However, the court's ruling did not automatically give Tabke the seat, because the Minnesota Constitution says that the House has the final say in determining who is a member.

Demuth said that the Republicans would evaluate the ruling and consider their options, and did not commit to seating Tabke. She previously indicated on a conservative podcast that "until there is a new election ... we should not be seating that representative."

That seat has become a sticking point in trying to negotiate a new power-sharing arrangement. Hortman offered a revised agreement that would provide Republicans with temporary control of the speakership and committees, but the DFL continues to insist that

Tabke be seated, using the court ruling as additional justification.

"Brad Tabke won on election night, he won in a recount, and he won in court," Hortman said on Tuesday. "But Republicans want to kick him out and disenfranchise 22,000 Minnesotans who voted in the November election. Democrats are asking Republicans for something very simple: to honor the will of the voters."

If a special election was held, a Republican victory would give the GOP a majority.

In the Senate

Yet another court ruling has helped the DFL in its quest to preserve a one-vote majority in the Senate, which is currently operating under a power-sharing agreement after the death of DFL Sen. Kari Dziedzic, which left the chamber deadlocked at 33-33.

But the status of Sen. Nicole Mitchell, DFL-Woodbury, for the entirety of the session was in doubt due to a criminal case for alleged first-degree burglary filed against her last spring for allegedly breaking into her stepmother's Detroit Lakes home. At the time, Republicans attempted to have her voting privileges revoked, and after she refused to testify at an ethics committee hearing, action was deferred.

Michell's trial was scheduled to begin next week in Becker County District Court, but a judge ruled in favor of Mitchell's motion to delay the proceedings until after the legislative session has concluded. Mitchell's continued presence in the chamber will likely allow the DFL to continue its majority after next Tuesday's special election, in which DFL candidate Doron Clark is expected to win.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Great River, LCP energy projects get federal boost

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Electricity consumers in Lake Country Power's service territory are expected to benefit from

two major federal grants designed to promote new ways of providing power, while reducing emissions from traditional power plants.

The awards were announced earlier this month and are part of the Empow-

ering Rural America program, being overseen by the USDA's Rural Development agency. More than \$6 billion in grants were approved in all, helping to fund projects in 30 states, including Minnesota.

One of the largest awards nationally, a total of \$795 million, will go to Twin Cities-based Great River Energy to assist in procuring 1,275 megawatts of renewable energy across Minnesota and North Dakota to

service its member co-ops, which include Lake Country Power.

"Our consortium laid out an innovative portfolio of projects and power purchase agreements that will benefit cooperative members across

Minnesota," said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "The projects in our proposal will allow us to procure more than 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy while creating over 1,500 new jobs, saving our members \$40 million on average annually, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by over 5 million tons and creating a host of benefits across the communities we serve."

This projects, once completed, are expected to reduce greenhouse gases by the equivalent of taking 1.3 million gasoline-powered cars off the road.

Lake Country Power

Meanwhile, Lake Country Power will receive a \$1.2 million award that the rural co-operative will use to modernize its demand side management system with up to 50 megawatts of dispatchable load as part of a virtual power plant, providing needed capacity for roughly 13,000 homes during peak times.

A virtual power plant is a network of distributed energy resources like rooftop solar panels, electric vehicle chargers, and home batteries, which are connected and managed together through software to act as a single power plant, allowing them to collectively respond to grid demands by adjusting their energy usage or generation as needed, essentially mimicking the function of a traditional power plant but without a single physical location.

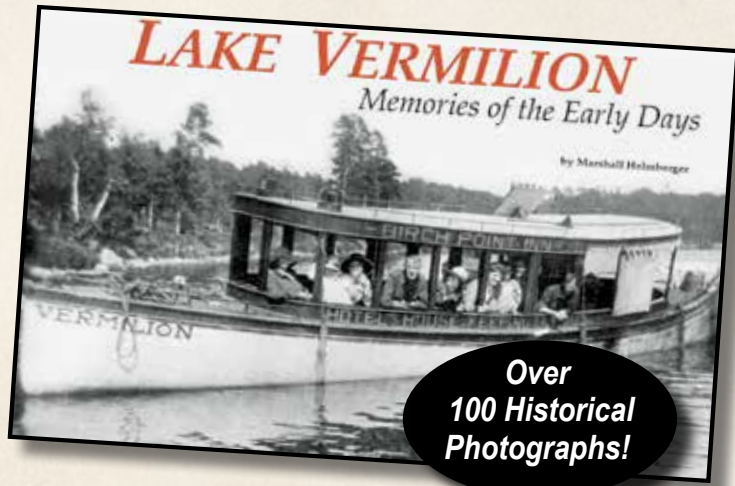
It is estimated that Lake Country Power's virtual power plant will save members \$250,000 per month during the summer and \$700,000 per month during the winter.



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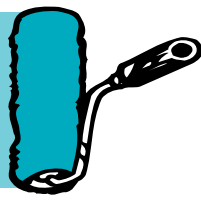
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CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is **LONGFELLOW**

One letter stands for another. In this sample, **A** is used for the three L's, **X** for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

GPROZ OR KXQDJDNE HSL
QWNE XLJN GJTOZ O SJBL
LWZQPWHLXLF OW GE NOML.
- HQG KLHHE

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Weekly SUDOKU

	7		3					
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		3	6	5	4	9	7	
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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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PUBLIC NOTICE

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTING

The Greenwood Township annual election of officers will be Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Absentee voting is available February 7 thru March 10.

Applications are available at the Greenwood Town Hall office during business hours, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9 am – 1 pm or on our website: www.greenwoodtownshipmn.com

Return a completed and signed application to:
Greenwood Township,
3000 County Rd. 77, Tower MN 55790
or
Attach to an email to:
clerk@greenwoodtownshipmn.com
or
Voting absentee may be done in person at the office during regular business hours and on Saturday March 8, 2025, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and Monday, March 10, 2025, from 1pm to 5pm.

Debby Spicer-Clerk 218-753-2231

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 24, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 7, 2025

Proceedings of St. Louis County Schools, ISD 2142

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Chris Koivisto, Jarrett Bundy, Kristin Zorn, Linsey Larson, Lynn Hilde, Mallory Manick, Ron Marinaro
ABSENT: None
ALSO PRESENT:
Dr. Reggie Engebretson, Kim Johnson, Jeanne Sopp

Organizational Meeting of the School Board was held at the District Office on January 14, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance.

Ceremonial Oath of Office. Approved agenda. Elected officers. Named school board committee members. Established school board salaries and district reimbursement rates. Established regular school board meeting schedule. Designated depositories. Designated legal counsel and named individuals authorized to contact legal counsel. Designated official newspaper.

Meeting adjourned 5:28 p.m.

A full text of the minutes of this meeting is available on the district's website or may be obtained from the District Office.

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 24, 2025

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www.mnpublicnotice.com/

EMPLOYMENT

PART-TIME GRAPHIC DESIGN/LAYOUT

Help Wanted!

The Timberjay Newspaper, in Tower, is looking for a part-time graphic artist or page designer to assist with newspaper pagination on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Must be proficient with InDesign and Photoshop and able to work under deadline. Hourly rate based on experience. Call Jodi or Marshall at 218-753-2950.

DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE RESOURCES & REHABILITATION

LOAN OFFICER

Permanent, Full-Time

The Loan Officer will help develop, implement and promote the financing investment programs of the Business Development Division. The incumbent in this position will review and evaluate applications for financing, service the existing loan portfolios and make recommendations to the Executive Director of Business Development, Technical Advisory Committee, Commissioner and Board for approval. This position will monitor agency programs for compliance with agency policies and practices as well as state and federal laws, and will assist communities and businesses region-wide in determining financial needs and strategies.

This position is located in Eveleth, MN with the eligibility for a mixture of in office and telework.

Learn more and apply online at mn.gov/careers
Job ID: 83392
Application deadline: February 3, 2025
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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: H equals S

UWMB RL WI WVWVG FVRFP
UMRSOFTIQ BZY HROISH RL
LRVPH HZRRBTIQ BZY EMYKY:
BZY HFZGRRKY EOBRI.

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Answers

S	T	A	B	L	E	D	I	S	C	U	S	S	E	D	A	P	P	S		
P	O	L	E	A	X	I	N	C	E	N	T	I	V	E	B	E	A	N		
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King Crossword

ACROSS

- Pickle holders
- Klutz
- Pre-weekend yell
- Layered cookie
- School org.
- Nozzle site
- Complaint
- Mahal pre-ceder
- Memory method
- Jungle trek
- Apple product
- "Lunch break is over!"
- Sports bar fixture
- "Mangia!"
- Avril follower
- Marsh plant
- "Blue Bloods" aier
- Nov. honorees
- 401(k) alternative
- Notable time
- Trig terms
- Consecutive
- Puerto -
- Small apes
- Help a hood
- Fanatic
- Aswan's river
- Roster
- Compass dir.
- Radiate
- bitty
- Carried out
- Lushes
- Toss
- Favorable sign
- Follower (Suff.)
- Service charge
- Squealer
- Souped cooker
- Skewered entree
- Assess
- Smooch
- Chicago paper, briefly
- Actress Farmiga
- "American Idol" host Ryan
- Sang softly
- Minnesota footballers
- Catchall abbr.
- Learning ctr.
- Poker pot
- Played a part
- Actor O'Shea
- Conspiracy
- Stitches
- Boxing legend
- Morsel
- Numerical prefix

DOWN

- Want-ad listings
- Region
- Coral formation
- Sleeper
- Eye-related
- One-time link
- Tex-Mex wraps
- 8 Toss
- 9 Favorable sign
- 10 Follower (Suff.)
- 11 Service charge
- 19 Squealer
- 21 Soup cooker
- 23 Skewered entree
- 24 Assess
- 25 Smooch
- 26 Chicago paper, briefly
- 27 Actress Farmiga
- 28 "American Idol" host Ryan
- 32 Sang softly
- 33 Minnesota footballers
- 35 Catchall abbr.
- 36 Learning ctr.
- 38 Poker pot
- 39 Played a part
- 42 Actor O'Shea
- 43 Conspiracy
- 44 Stitches
- 45 Boxing legend
- 46 Morsel
- 48 Numerical prefix

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