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Cuts at Voyageurs NP... See /3B

Rough winter for wolves... See /4B

Time BERJAY

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\$150

CITY OF ELY

Council backs pilot project to cut sulfate pollution

by CATIE CLARK Ely Editor

ELY- A pilot project to reduce sulfate concentrations in the Dunka River, downstream of the North Shore Mine, got a vote of support from the Ely City Council on Tuesday, over the objections of council member Al Forsman.

The White Iron Chain of Lakes Association (WICOLA), is working with the Friends of the Boundary Waters, the Northern Lakes Scientific Advisory Board, and environmental engineering firms Bay West and Clearwater Biologic to build the project to address a known source of sulfate contamination.

"The technology being tested uses a natural process, sulfate-absorbing microbes to cleanse the water," Holt stated. "It's exciting because it's much more cost effective than prior methods."

WICOLA is applying for a grant from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, and acting president Dave Holt asked the council for a letter of support, for which he provided a template.

Forsman had multiple concerns with the request, including one of the project's partners.

"We typically write our own letters," Forsman said. He added, "I will point out that one of your co-sponsors is the Friends of the Boundary Waters, who I've learned over the years that we cannot trust and has a tendency to put forth information that's unreliable and unworthy of support from this council. What you're proposing has no direct effect on Ely. You're asking for support for something that doesn't directly affect us and potentially could harm us if we do support it."

The council approved drafting its own letter of support, which will be voted on at the March 4 council. The vote on the motion was 5-1 with Forsman voting nay and John Lahtonen

absent.

WICOLA is also asking for letters of support of its grant application from Babbitt, Fall Lake, Fond du Lac, Band Forte, and Grand Portage

Values statement

The council approved publishing the following values

See...COUNCIL pg. 10



COLD WEATHER IMPACTS

Snapped power line leaves Ely in the dark

Outage affected customers from Fall Lake to Embarrass

by CATIE CLARK

ELY- Cold weather was the apparent cause of a power line break that cut power to over 2,300 households in the area, during a period when temperatures had dipped to the mid-20

degrees below zero. Officials with Lake Country Power said the break occurred at a splice in a 46-kilovolt transmission line at the western

edge of Ely. The splice was the point of failure ... where the tight wires pulled apart," said Derek

for Lake Country Power. The minus 20-degree weather was a factor, he said, since intense early Tuesday morning. cold causes metal to contract.

The break cut power to two Lake Country substations, at Winton and Clear Lake, affecting customers as far away as rural Tower and Embarrass as well as Fall Lake and Morse. The break also affected customers of Minnesota Power, cutting electrical service to Tower and Soudan as well as approximately 400 homes in Ely

See...OUTAGE pg. 10

Howe, director of operations Above: Minnesota Power employees rigging a new transmission line over Hwy. 169

photo by H. Langowski

Below: The hot, high-voltage line burns on Hwy. 169.

photo by J. Stodola



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN TOWER

New plan takes shape for harbor

Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER-After years of false starts, delays, and changes in direction, the city of Tower may finally be on the verge of bringing development to the city's harbor.

The Tower Economic Development Authority, at its Feb. 13 special meeting, gave the go-ahead to draft a development agreement with Pine City-based developer Cole Newman, to construct a mixed-use project, including several townhomes, along with over 6,000 sq. ft. of ground floor commercial space with 14 apartments up above.



The mix of commercial and residential is in line with the original vision for the harbor, established back in the mid-2000s. Development of the harbor has been

Above: The city of Tower harbor could be the new home of a mixed commercial-residential development based on a new plan being pursued by the city's EDA.

See...HARBOR pg. 9

file photo

HEALTH CARE

Medicaid cuts could crush local clinics, nursing homes

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The ongoing budget-making in Washington, D.C., could have a major impact on the health care available to low-income children, families, and the elderly across the North

While the specifics of the possible cuts to health care programs, such as Medicaid, will be hashed out in budget negotiations over the next few weeks, those involved in the operations of federally funded community health centers and area nursing homes are deeply concerned about the impact of the cuts currently being discussed.

Health care funding in America is complicated, with a mix of public and private funding sources, percentages of which can vary significantly depending on the region. Rural parts of the country could be among the hardest hit, however, since they tend to rely more heavily on programs like Medicaid, known as Medical Assistance in Minnesota, and the Childrens Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, than urban areas.

Since President Trump had promised not to cut Medicare, the health care program that predominantly serves seniors, that leaves Medical Assistance to potentially take the brunt of the potential cutbacks.

"Some of the proposals out there would be catastrophic," said Jonathan Watson, CEO of the Association of Minnesota Community Health

See...HEALTH CUTS pg. 9

COUNTY SCHOOLS

Parents worry over planned staffing cuts

by DAVID COLBURN

Cook/Orr Editor

FIELD TWP - Frustration and anger is running high among many North Woods School parents who are upset with teacher staffing cuts at the school to address ISD 2142 St. Louis County Schools' projected \$1.5 million shortfall for next year.

Parents are concerned that the school, located four miles north of Cook, is taking the brunt of the district's staffing cuts. They're also concerned about rising class sizes and the quality of their children's education and they plan to bring those concerns to the school board meeting at Tower-Soudan next week.

Whether they get any satisfaction remains in doubt, for two reasons. First, board policy for public comment at meetings is to listen but not respond to speakers, a common practice among

See...SCHOOLS pg. 9



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Community notices

Ojibwe language Star Wars movie in Ely



ELY- "Anongong Miigaading" is the Ojibwe-language version of "Star Wars: A New Hope." The film premiered in select Canadian theaters in August 2024 and

will open at Ely's Historic State Theater on Friday, Feb. 28 for a run that will last through Sunday, March 9. On Friday, Feb. 28, there will be costume contests for ages 12 and under, 13 through 20, ad 21 and older. Admission on Feb. 28 is free with tribal ID. Go to elystatetheater.org for showtimes and details.

"Anangong Miigaading" was created through a collaboration between Lucasfilm, the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and the University of Manitoba. The film was dubbed in Anishinaabemowin, the indigenous language of the Great Lakes region. The project was supported by the Government of Canada. The project was created to help revitalize the endangered Anishinaabemowin language. The film was also intended to break down barriers between English and Anishinaabemowin.

For English speakers who know no Anishinaabemowin, also known as Ojibwemowin, the movie is subtitled in English.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota upcoming March events

REGIONAL- United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) is holding numerous upcoming events around the region.

On March 3, tickets open for United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Flavor of the North event presented by U. S. Steel. This popular fundraiser to support UWNEMN's Buddy Backpacks program will be held on Thursday, April 24 at Range Recreation and Civic Center in Eveleth. Tickets can be purchased at www.unitedwaynemn.org/flavor or by calling 218-295-3329. Get your tickets early as this event sells out quickly.

Bean Bags for the Brave tournament is on Thursday, March 20 at Hibbing Memorial Building. This event is being organized by Adolfson & Peterson Construction and Park State bank to benefit UWNEMN's United for Veterans initiative. Lunch begins at noon, game play begins at 1 p.m., and winners are expected to be announced by 5 p.m. Register your team at www.unitedwaynemn.org/bean-bags.

United for Veterans Connections Bingo Night and Pizza will be held on Tuesday, March 25 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Biwabik Pavilion. Local veterans, service members, and their families are invited to connect, play Bingo, and enjoy pizza from veteran-owned Biwabik Pizza Co. Register at www.unitedwaynemn.org/vets-connect-bingo. Registration is free but required.

UWNEMN's Annual Celebration at Minnesota Discovery Center is on Thursday, March 27. Social hour starts at 5 p.m., dinner will be served at 6 p.m., awards for Partner Agency of the Year, Youth United contest winners, top 2024 workplace campaigns, and volunteers will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Register at www.unitedwaynemn. org/celebration. Tickets are \$35.

Kalevala Day Celebration on Sunday, March 2 in Virginia

VIRGINIA- A Kalevala Day Celebration will be held on Sunday, March 2 at 1 p.m. at the Historic Kaleva Hall, 125 3rd St N in Virginia. We will be honoring the culture of Finland with music, song and a presentation of the Ladies of Kaleva Grand Lodge's Historic Quilt and its unique design. You will see traditional Finnish costumes and will meet Ella, our area's Finnish exchange student. Enjoy our Finnish coffee an' while touring our 119- year-old Historic Kaleva Hall building. All are Welcome!

Cook Hospital Wellness Fair scheduled for June; vendors wanted

COOK- The Cook Hospital and Care Center will be hosting their annual Wellness Fair on Saturday, June 14 from 9 a.m. until noon. This will be the same weekend as Timber Days.

If you are interested in being a vendor, contact the Cook Hospital at info@cookhospital.org or submit form online at www.cookhospital.org\healthfair.

Our slogan this year is "Live Well, Be Well." We will have various vendors, food, and prizes. We hope you are able are able to join us for this well-attended event.

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FINNISH HISTORY

Sisu Heritage annual meeting Feb. 23; Schlueter to speak



will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. at Embarrass Town Hall. The guest speaker will be Crystal Schlueter, recipe creator and contest

winner. Crystal is a Babbitt native who traveled the world while serving in the U.S. Navy. While abroad, she developed a great appreciation for the ethnic foods of her upbringing, predominantly from her Finnish maternal lineage. Upon her return, she fell into the world of recipe contests. Her recipes have been featured by Good Morning America, CMT, Campbell's Soup Company, Taste of Home Magazine, "The Old Farmer's Almanac," and many other websites and magazines. Crystal's debut cookbook will be released in the fall of 2026 with a focus on Iron Range ethnic cuisine.

The public is cordially invited to join Sisu members for the afternoon. A short business meeting will include committee reports, election of board members, and presentation of the 2025

budget. Coffee an' will be served and door prizes awarded.

Sisu Heritage, Inc. is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the St. Louis County Historical Society. Its mission is "to enhance the Embarrass region by preserving and sharing its unique culture, climate and history." Memberships are \$10/year or \$250/lifetime and can be renewed or purchased at the meeting, or by mail to Sisu Heritage, PO Box 71, Embarrass, MN 55732.

Embarrass Town Hall is located at 7503 Levander Rd. Please call 218-984-3402 with any questions.

Left: Crystal Schlueter and her recipes have been featured on local television stations.

ELY FUN

WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race this weekend

ELY- The 17th Wolf-Track Classic Sled Dog Race is scheduled this week for Sunday, Feb. 23; but there is plenty to do before the race begins. On Friday evening, Feb. 21, the Grand Ely Lodge will be the host site for the Ely Chamber of Commerce's second annual WolfTrack Prance. The event will feature live music by Bernie Palcher, Ely's favorite Accordion King. A special "Musher Menu" will be available from 4-6 p.m. and a cash bar will be open from 4-7 p.m. Palcher will provide music from 5-7 p.m. There is no admission fee for this dinner event.

On Saturday, Feb. 22, the mushers and the teams will arrive in town and prepare for the race. At 3 p.m., the teams will assemble in the Minnesota North College Vermilion campus parking lot. This is the first opportunity for the public to meet the sled dogs and their mushers. The college's Wilderness Club will provide an all-youcan-eat spaghetti dinner in the school cafeteria from 4-6 p.m. The meal will be \$10 per adult and \$5 for youth. The dinner is a fundraiser for the Wilderness Club. The WolfTrack Classic staff will have race gear available for purchase from 3-5 p.m., and Midco will be offering free drawings and other treasures.

The race will be this Sun-

day on Feb. 23 and will feature two mid-distance races: a 30-mile, six-dog race and a 50-mile, eight-dog race. The public is welcome to attend: however, please leave your pets at home. Spectator parking will open at 8 a.m. on the Old Airport Road parking lot. Parking will close at 8:45 a.m. or when the lot is full. If the lot is full, the race staff will direct you to side street parking or the Ely Chamber of Commerce parking lot. The recycling center is closed on race day.

The race will begin at the Ely Softball Complex on Old Airport Road (Forest Concrete Plant) at 9 a.m. The eight-dog teams hit the race route first, followed by the six-dog teams at two-minute intervals until all the teams are on the trail. The race is along the Taconite Trail. The Teams loop around and return to Ely. The first teams are estimated to reach the finish line around noon.

While waiting for the race to begin, Midco Communications will serve free hot coffee, hot chocolate, and a light breakfast while supplies last. Midco is also providing three warming fires near the dog trucks, the start-and-finish line, and the coffee area. Robinson Lake Trucking & Excavating is donating the firewood, and Dutchman Tree Service will keep the fires burning. The



Ely Chamber of Commerce wishes to thank these businesses for their support.

The WolfTrack Classic is possible only with the generous support from area businesses, the community, and volunteers. The race will be live streamed through iFan

Sports. The link for the iFan channel will be available at WolfTrackClassic.com and on Facebook @WolfTrack-Classic. Please remember to support the sponsors who support the race.

HOME RENOVATION

Spring into Action: USDA's Section 504 Home Repair Program is here

REGIONAL-As the first signs of spring appear, it's a natural time to think about home repairs. The warmer weather invites homeowners to assess their properties and consider the upgrades and repairs that may be necessary to keep their homes safe and functional. For many rural residents, making these improvements might feel daunting - especially when financial barriers come into play. That's where the USDA Rural Development's Section 504 Home Repair Program steps in, offering crucial support for very-lowincome homeowners in our community.

The Section 504 Home Repair Program provides loans and grants to those who need assistance in repairing, modernizing, or improving their homes. For homeowners unable to secure affordable credit from other sources, this program could be a financial lifesaver. Financial aid is provided in two ways - loans of up to \$40,000 to improve or modernize homes, and grants of up to \$10,000 specifically for elderly homeowners aged 62 and older to remove health and safety hazards. This unique combination of assistance can help families achieve safer and more comfortable living spaces.

Eligible applicants must be homeowners who occupy their house, have a family income within the very-low-income limit, and demonstrate the inability to obtain credit elsewhere. Properties must also be located in eligible ru-

ral areas.

With repair needs ranging from fixing leaky roofs to making homes more accessible for those with disabilities, the funds from the Section 504 program can be life changing. Whether it's tackling health hazards or making general improvements, these repairs not only enhance quality of life but

often increase property val-

It's worth noting that this funding opportunity is available yearround as long as funds are available, and applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. With a fixed interest rate of just 1 percent for loans and a repayment term of up to 20 years, the financial terms are incredibly favorable for those who qualify.

Rural Minnesotans can support each other by spreading the word about available resources like the Section 504 Home Repair Program. If you know someone who is struggling with home repairs





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HEALTH CARE

Kennedy backs down from Indian Health Services cuts

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The latest round of on-again, off-again firings within the federal government have left some confusion surrounding staffing at the federally funded Indian Health Services, or IHS, Last Friday, almost 1,000 probationary employees of the service were fired as part of President Donald Trump's purge of federal employees, but within hours, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. backpedaled from the action and rescinded the layoffs.

Layoffs were initially expected to include 2,200 IHS workers, of whom 1,400 provide direct patient care, including more than 90 physicians, 350 nurses, at least 25 nurse practitioners, nearly 20 dentists, 43 dental assistants, more than 85 pharmacists, 45 lab technicians, 25 hospital social workers, 45 lab technicians, nearly 130 medical assistants, as well as paramedics, dieticians, behavioral health workers, hospital food service workers, and nursing assistants.

But that number was reduced to 950, and Kennedy reversed those terminations on Friday out of concern over their impact on Errors of firing critical government personnel continue to pile up

after employees were notified by phone that they had been fired. 'The Indian Health Service has always been treated as the redheaded stepchild at HHS," Kennedy said in a statement emailed to Native News Online. "My father often complained that IHS was chronically understaffed and underfunded. President Trump wants me to rectify this sad history. Indians suffer the highest level of chronic disease

Native communities, just hours

the chronic disease epidemic beginning in Indian country." Multiple Native health and social service organizations petitioned the administration for the

of any demographic. IHS will be a

priority over the next four years.

President Trump wants me to end

restoration of the workers. The reversal comes on the heels of another embarrassing set of terminations last week of up to 350 workers at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), an agency within the Energy Department that oversees the nuclear weapons stockpile. Rob Plonski, a deputy division director with the NNSA, confirmed the firings in a post to LinkedIn and spoke out against the decision. "The mission of NNSA is not simply about maintaining weapons it's about ensuring readiness, modernization, and accountability in a highly complex and evolving geopolitical landscape," Plonski wrote. "Cutting the federal workforce responsible for these functions may be seen as reckless at best and opportunistic at worst.'

Administration officials have been trying to rehire the affected NNSA staff, although they were having difficulty because they did not have current contact information for many of them. And on Tuesday, NBC News

reported that the Department of Agriculture had accidentally fired "several" people who were working on the government's response to the H5N1 avian flu epidemic. "Although several positions

supporting (bird flu efforts) were notified of their terminations over the weekend, we are working to swiftly rectify the situation and rescind those letters," a USDA spokesperson said in a statement.

The administration's rush to produce budget-cutting results by firing probationary federal workers has come without adequate review of what many, if not most, of those workers do, causing the mistaken firings of workers deemed critical to their agencies' missions.

Pending impacts on **Native Americans**

When Trump attempted to freeze all federal grants and loans shortly after taking office, concerns were raised about 638 contracts the government has with Native tribes. Although the order was later rescinded, many tribes continue to report difficulties accessing their funds through electronic portals at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service.

Some tribes can temporarily rely on other financial sources, but there is no guarantee they will be reimbursed. Funding disbursement varies: some tribes receive full-year allocations at the beginning of the fiscal year, while others, such as those receiving Housing and Urban Development funds, get monthly disbursements.

Cuts of 2,600 employees at the Department of the Interior will also have direct impact on Native tribes. The Bureau of Indian Education was expected to lose 40 employees, and tribal colleges face staffing cuts that could impact their accreditation.

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The Trump administration's federal employee buyout program also threatens tribes that get direct services from the government, as there is no assurance that doctors and other essential staff who accept buyouts will be replaced.

Tribal leaders, including those at Bois Forte, are still assessing the impact of the administration's decisions. There are concerns that the administration's actions stem from a lack of understanding of tribal sovereignty and the federal trust responsibility. Notably, the position of Tribal Advisor to the Office of Management and Budget remains unfilled, leaving tribes without a direct advocate in federal budget discussions.

In response, tribal organizations, including the National Congress of American Indians and the Native American Rights Fund, have sent letters to the administration urging the U.S. government to uphold its trust and treaty obligations.

MPR News 89.3FM and 92.5FM, and ICT contributed to this article

News briefs



Woman injured in snowmobile crash

ORR- A Shoreview woman was seriously injured on Saturday, Feb. 15, when her snowmobile struck a tree on the Arrowhead Trail north of Orr, authorities said.

First responders and law enforcement were dispatched to the crash at approximately 12:59 p.m., according to the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office.

The 62-year-old woman, who was the sole rider of the snowmobile, sustained serious but non-life-threatening injuries. She was treated at the scene by Orr EMS before being transported to a waiting medical helicopter, which flew her to a Twin Cities hospital for advanced care.

Authorities did not immediately release further details on the cause of the

Logging truck, SUV collision sends one to hospital

ORR- A woman was injured in a two-vehicle crash involving a logging truck and an SUV on Saturday, Feb. 15, north of Orr.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office reported that emergency responders were dispatched at approximately 2:02 p.m. to a crash on Sheep Ranch Road, about 25 miles north of Orr.

A Toyota Highlander with four occupants and a logging truck collided at the intersection with Fawn Creek Road. Authorities described the incident as a low-speed, T-bone-style collision. The driver of the logging truck was the sole occupant of that vehicle.

The crash sheared off the passenger-side door panel of the Highlander,

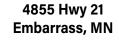
injuring a 36-year-old woman from International Falls who was in the front passenger seat. She was transported by International Falls ambulance to the Cook Hospital. Her condition was not immediately known.

The other three occupants of the Highlander and the driver of the logging truck were not injured, officials said. The sheriff's office is investigating the crash.

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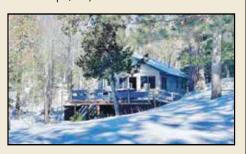
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February 21, 2025 THE TIMBERJAY

OPINION

OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;" The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

"CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW...ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM

Editorial

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Medicaid cuts

Rep. Stauber needs to make a stand and support our rural health care services

Rep. Pete Stauber needs to stand up for the Eighth District. He can do so by telling his colleagues in Washington, D.C. that the cuts to the Medicaid program currently under consideration by Republican congressional leaders are unacceptable.

The Eighth District is a large, rural congressional district that serves a population that is disproportionately elderly and with a significant number of low-income households. Throughout the district, there are 19 federally funded community health center delivery sites that rely heavily on Medicaid funding to keep their doors open. Those include facilities in Cook, Tower, Eveleth, Bigfork, Northome, as well as Duluth, Grand Marais, Tofte, and Grand Portage.

These facilities operate at more-or-less break-even, which means there isn't fat to trim. Cuts in funding will inevitably lead to cuts in the services provided to patients or the closing of facilities. The three community health care systems that operate in the district serve nearly 30,000 patients annually, and the vast majority of those patients live in the far northern part of the district. In our region, Scenic Rivers is a mainstay for patients, and its sliding fee scale makes it affordable for everyone. Without it, residents would need to drive further, in some cases much further, and would be largely reliant on expensive emergency rooms to address their needs.

And it's not just community health centers at risk. As we've reported in recent years, rural nursing homes are facing unprecedented financial challenges. And nursing homes are even more dependent on the Medicaid program than community health centers, which can provide as much as 80 percent of their funding depending on the patient caseload in the facility. Cuts of any significance could force the closure of nursing homes in Ely and Cook and many other communities in the Eighth District. What options would seniors and their families have for handling elderly family members with significant care needs?

It isn't just patients who would feel the effects of these kinds of cuts. In St. Louis County, a quarter of the workforce is employed in the health care and social service sector. Cuts of the magnitude being considered will cost plenty of jobs right in our communities.

Community health centers in the Eighth District leveraged \$7.11 million in federal funding

according to the National Association of Community Health Centers, and more than half of that comes from Medicaid. Add in the funding dedicated to nursing home care for the elderly and we're talking about a real financial hit that will translate to jobs lost, local economies weakened, and patients going unserved. Approximately one-out-of-five residents in the country are on the Medicaid program, and that percentage is almost certainly higher in the Eighth District, so these cuts certainly matter.

While residents of the district voted to send Stauber to Washington and Donald Trump to the White House, most didn't do so with the expectation that their local clinics and nursing homes would be on the chopping block

What's worse, Medicaid is facing enormous cuts not because it's unaffordable, but because the GOP-led Congress has a much higher priority. The cuts in Medicaid are being proposed to help pay, at least in part, for the cost of the renewal and expansion of the Trump tax cuts, which overwhelmingly benefit corporations and the very wealthy. According to the Congressional Budget Office, that extension is expected to add \$4.5 trillion to the nation's debt over the next decade. Lawmakers are struggling to find offsetting spending cuts, but the magnitude of the Trump tax giveaway is making that very chal-

Republicans are touting those tax cuts as a way to spur the economy, but economic growth actually slowed after the tax cuts were implemented during Trump's first term. What's more, if the tax cuts are paid for by a slash and burn approach to the federal workforce and funding for a wide range of community-based services, the economy will inevitably take a hit as tens of thousands of lavoffs ripple through the workforce.

Stauber, who has issued press statements over the past two weeks attacking the Minneapolis mayor and Gov. Tim Walz over what are predominantly state matters, appears more interested in diverting attention from the major harm to his district currently being contemplated in Washington.

It's time for Stauber to focus on his day job, serving the residents of the Eighth District. He can start by standing up for the clinics and nursing homes that serve a large portion of his dis-



Letters from Readers

We have lost our moral compass

In 1977, about 20 people in Minneapolis decided to do something about the rise in death rates for children from poor, mostly African countries. They were appalled by the marketing tactic of the Nestlé Corporation for their baby infant formula.

Nestlé went on an all-out effort to convince new African mothers that breast feeding was not supplying the proper nourishment to their infants. Nestlé sent sales representatives dressed as doctors and nurses to hold nutrition clinics in these very poor countries. The new mothers were supplied with about a month of free formula to feed their infants. When the free formula was finished, most new mothers found that they no longer were lactating and had to buy formula. The cost of the formula was so expensive that it often totaled the monthly food budget for the entire family. Mothers started to water down the formula and the result was that babies got sick and many died.

The formula was meant to be full strength. Many of these families lived in areas that did not have safe, abundant, potable water. The disease and death rates for infants skyrocketed. And so, in 1977 these 20 Minnesotans organized the first of the nation's Nestlé boycott. The boycott grew to be nationwide and eventually worldwide. The boycott was so successful that when our young son and daughter went trick-or-treating, there was not even one Nestlé candy product in their collections.

In 1981, the United Nations voted on a set of world standards for the selling and distributing of infant baby formula. The entire UN General Assembly voted on the standards and only two countries voted against it - Switzerland (the home of the Nestlé Cor-

poration) and the United States. President Reagan ordered our UN ambassador to vote against this standard because it was "anti-business." Citizens of the United States and the world took a stand for children even if two governments did not.

Today we live in a different America where there is no loud and boisterous cry from the Republican Party, the religious community, and other civic leaders, to get the food that has already been purchased by USAID into the hands and mouths of the starving children and families for whom it was bought. While Sens. Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar have urged the administration to get that food delivered, there has been silence from Rep. Pete Stauber. And, sadly, there has been silence from the citizens who have elected those who now hold power to save the lives of these poor people. What kind of "Great America" is

Andrew Urban Eagles Nest Township

Yanking the rug from under our government

The list of potential harm from illegally defunding federal government programs is very long. If successful, this will most impact those Trump and Musk care the least about — the poor and middle class. One example is personal to me. The how and why is pretty simple, I have been living with cancer since December 2012. It almost got me in the beginning, but new treatments then saved the day. When the cancer slowly gained the upper hand after four years, newer and better treatments beat it back again, and when those waned, even better treatments have worked flawlessly since with almost no side effects. I have no doubt that research done with funding managed through the

National Institute of Health (NIH) had a great deal to do with this outcome. Because of this process and the fact that science works, my cancer has become an almost non-issue to my daily life. Defunding the NIH will slow progress on fighting all cancers and many other diseases. Ask someone with cancer if defunding is a good idea. Rather than saving money, these cuts could cost a lot more than money.

According to our Constitution, the power to levy taxes and appropriate funds to certain endeavors is squarely in the control of Congress, not the President. Once a funding bill is passed, the executive branch, led by the President, is charged with carrying out that funding and spending. Agencies are also set up by law in the same way to administer funding in the ways congress intended. If the government is doing something he doesn't like he can petition Congress to change the law, just like you and me. What is going on now is totally unlawful. The rest of the world would label it a coup. I do

> Tim Wallace Zim



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

COMMENTARY

Are our communities keeping us protected, respected, and connected?

Do you feel protected, spected, and connected in your community? so, what creates that feeling for you? In my last column, I cited author Thomas L. Friedman urging us to "do with (not just "for") others by joining hearts,

souls, and hands to build the trust and values essential for healthy communities."

Dov Seidman, an adviser on business ethics and leadership states that "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."

Historically, churches and service organizations have provided a sense of belonging and communal purpose. Today I see a number of other groups popping up regularly, and I wondered where on the "healthy

communities" barometer our northern cities might The Ely Area Communi-

ty Care Team was created in 2011 to identify and address gaps in care in Minnesota's Northeast Iron Range communities through a partnership of community members and 20 organizations representing health care, behavioral health, education, social service, and nonprofit organizations. Care facilitators in the community work with individuals to help them wend their way through confusing options and bureaucratic mazes of available resources to promote their wellness. The interactive collaboration allows those involved to pass on referrals to other providers and organizations that can help, getting care and resources to people more quickly. Connecting people with resources like Northern Lights Clubhouse and classes to improve wellness also provides new connections

between people. EMPOWER (Ely Minnesota Progressive Organization of Women for Equality and Reform) was formed in 2002 specifically to create a network of women interested in getting to know and support each other. The group chose to advocate for leadership for women and girls, women's health issues, and peace and non-violence. The Ely AAUW (Amer-

ican Association of University Women) works to support equity for all girls and women in the areas of economic security, educational opportunities, and leadership among many others. A Native American jus-

tice group, Awareness...then Change, strives to honor the heritage of our area and to set the stage for supporting policy and social action to reduce the risks for and support the

resilience of Native American women and children.

Boundary Waters Connect's name states their mission: to connect people-which they see as Ely's greatest resource-with other resources to contribute positively to the community and economy through Tuesday Group's educational forums, Ely for Ely's networking and professional development meetings, and Hello Neighbor's many activities to welcome newcomers and help them integrate into the com-

With over 45 nonprofits in Ely, just imagine the high level of volunteerism needed to keep the groups viable. That equals a lot of people working together on their shared values, contributing

to the well-being of the community, creating friendships, and just having fun.

I'm also aware there are smaller groups that have formed around particular issues, to get together for recreational purposes, or to support each other's personal goals or needs. So, I'd say Ely is doing quite well in building a healthy, inter-connected community, and striving to do even better.

I asked residents in other northern communities to let me know what they were seeing in their area. Residents in and around Cook had a lot to say about the heroic efforts of the Cook Lions Club after the flooding. They acted quickly to

See COMMUNITY...

pg. 5

February 21, 2025 5 THE TIMBERJAY

COMMENTARY

Baby, it's cold outside; Or how to keep warm in the morning

four layers of covers. First, a forty-year-old lightly-tattered quilt given to me by my sister-in-law for a wedding gift. Not much to look at but it was handmade by her grandmother, now honored for its sentimental value. Under that, a heavy,

olive green wool army blanket that I inherited. I pull it out just for nights like this. Next layer, another handmade quilt found at the Cook Thrift Shop a long time ago. A treasure. And on top of all that, a down comforter upon which "me pup," Duffy, nestles up tight against the fetal curve of my spine. He's happy to offer the added comfort of his little warm body. It doesn't get any better than this on a minus thirty degree morning.

It's way before dawn. The house is still pitch black. I'm not ready to peel the



like. What I'm not hearing is the usual tick and crackle from the wood stove. That usually means it's burnt down to ashes and coals. I place my hand outside the blankets. A chill hovers over the bed, my cue. It is time to rise. When temps reach thirty below outdoors, enjoying the refuge of bed for too much longer will assure the misery of a cold house, or worse. Winter living in my cabin has taught me that survival depends on keeping the wood stove well-stoked.

I'm up and ready to face "another beautiful day

in paradise," as the saying goes. But you have to be vigilant. As the fire dies, the cold creeps in. And once the logs cool down, it takes a long time to get the house cozy again. Glory be that I've got a good supply of dry wood to keep me from an imagined catastrophe. Heavy curtains hanging from floor to ceiling on every window (just a necessary part of my decor) also help. If you slip your hand behind them, you instantly feel the bitter cold just beyond those thin panes of glass.

My instinct is to whip open the curtains for some sorely needed light but I'll be damned if I do that. I must wait for the sun to come up and do its holy work of raising the outside air temp to tolerable. For now, I'll grab my Extendo BBQ lighter and light every propane lamp in the house, not just for light but as another source of heat to reach the furthermost corners of the house. They help soften that bone-chilling air until my trusty Free Flow stove starts radiating its steady current of hot air. With a few sticks of kindling and some small chunks of birch still wearing a few patches of their papery bark, and a flick from my Extendo, Duffy and I are assured a healthy shot at northern comfort. The house'll be warm before the coffee's done dripping.

I love freshly roasted and ground coffee. The old flour mill has come in handy for that. After thirty-four turns of the cast iron handle the beans are perfect for brewing. Once they're ground and the water's on to boil, I can heed Duffy's muffled "whoof" at my feet. He's hungry after the long dark night. No signs that he's ready to go outside for the tortuous trek down the driveway, with the cold wind quickly forming frost on his whiskers. I'm in awe of his ability to relieve himself in what I'd guess is record time. He knows the score and dreads it!

The sun is up now. The thermometer should begin to rise. My weather app says it's moved from -30 degrees to -25. Oh, good. The high today, It's telling me might reach -18, if we're lucky! The experts call this a "cold snap." They're forecasting a short break possible in two days but then "dropping back down for another bout of dangerous conditions." The kind of weather we all know one false move could mean you're dead.

weather Dangerous isn't reserved just for us. More and more Americans are experiencing weather calamities. Back-to-back hurricanes, record-breaking floods and raging forest fires, are only some of the climate-related catastrophes we've witnessed. The difference with our weather extremes is that ours are a mat-

ter of fact. We expect them. We try to prepare. Look at us! We live for months with extra blankets and "survival kits" in our backseats. But we also are aware that no one can cover all the bases all the time. Bad things still can happen. And no one can deny the psychological impact when up against Nature's awesome power to bring us to our knees. We get knocked off balance when these events are happening more often, unpredictably and with greater intensity. Perhaps there are meaningful lessons in this. One might be, never to take this precious and fragile existence for granted. Remind ourselves that this life is but a gift, one for which we should give thanks, make the most of, and then give back. So my final thoughts are these. Take care. Notice. Share, and help others. Oh, and by the way, Stay warm!

Letters from Readers

Save our local

health care facilities

The potential impact of the immediate federal spending freeze on Scenic Rivers is alarming. However, there is an even greater threat to our ability to receive health care in our community; the Republican budget being advanced in the House of Representatives. This budget plan calls for crippling cuts to Medicaid and Medicare.

To give you an idea of the magnitude of these cuts, the proposal seeks to cut \$880 billion dollars from such programs, with the biggest portion affecting Medicaid, while the entire 2023 federal Medicaid budget was \$860 billion.

This would not only be devastating to our family members and neighbors, but could deal a death blow to every hospital, medical clinic and nursing home in the region. Rural health care facilities depend on the flow of Medicaid and Medicare dollars to keep the doors open. This is so because they have fixed costs of staff, equipment, building maintenance and much more. These costs have to be paid whether a facility serves one patient or 1,000 patients. Scenic Rivers employs the doctors who staff the Cook Hospital and is highly dependent on Medicaid dollars and reimbursements from programs on the chopping block. Because our area is rural and largely poor, many of the patients whose fees help pay these costs are on Medicaid. Many others are eligible for Medicare. Some people simply brush off such cuts because they do not believe these programs impact their lives. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Just try to go

to a hospital that can't make payroll because of a lack of Medicaid and Medicare revenue. Just try to go to a hospital that has no doctors because the clinic that employs them can no longer function. It's impossible to get care at a hospital that's closed, see the doctor at a medical clinic that's closed, or get your mom or grandparent care at a nursing home that's closed even if you have private insurance. These drastic cuts don't just affect the other guy; they affect you and your

family. Why would Congressional Republicans do this to us? House Republicans are going to close our hospitals, clinics and nursing homes so they can give Elon Musk and his billionaire buddies a tax break. They propose to steal from you to give money to the world's richest people. I don't know about you, but that doesn't seem fair or wise to me. I'm sure that Republican consultants will put out fancy sounding statements to try to convince voters these cuts are justified, but we know better. When you take away money hospitals need to keep the doors open, the doors close. It is as simple

> office a call and tell him so. Kelly Dahl **Linden Grove Township**

False charges were leveled against me

as that. It's time to tell Rep.

Stauber that he works for

us, not Elon Musk, and that

we will not be robbed or left

without hospitals, clinics,

nursing homes and health

care. That is not acceptable,

and everyone should give his

At the Feb. 11 regular Greenwood Town Board meeting, Paul Thompson and Steve Bradach, both candidates for elective office in next month's township elections, lodged accusations against me and called for my resignation because of my actions regarding a misfiled affidavit of candidacy.

The very first sentence on the affidavit of candidacy says all information on the affidavit is available to the public and may be published on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website. Once a candidate provides proper identification (driver's license) and proof of residence, the filing officer (Clerk Deb Spicer) initials a box on the affidavit confirming the actions were completed

I wanted to alert how this mistake could be fixed since Spicer did not initial the box on the affidavits. I emailed the clerk one of the four affidavits to inform her of the error and seeking information as to the seriousness of the missed step. The clerk informed Mr. Thompson, who most likely informed Mr. Bradach: they showed no concern about the misfiled affidavits, but instead spent their time concocting a story accusing me of breaking into the clerk's files and obtaining the affidavit. They did so without presenting a shred of evidence to that end- Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bradach must have consulted their bag of "dirty tricks" since they presented a totally false imaginative scenario – fiction writing at its "best." Thompson claims:

- 1. It was in a locked file since it was filled out - obviously not true.
- 2. I somehow broke into the clerk's files and - not true, checked the surveillance tape.
- 3. I posted it online not true I sent it only to the

- 4. It may have been a criminal act. Great, do your civic duty and contact the county attorney. I would love to tell this one to the judge.
- 5. Mr. Thompson surmised I was doing it for a political purpose.

I contacted the clerk. It was Mr. Thompson who brought it into the public arena by enlisting a partner (Mr. Bradach). In the past, I have advised him to heed a most appropriate quote from JFK: "Too often you use the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought."

John Bassing **Greenwood Township**

Who's in charge?

Elon Musk bankrolled Trump's presidential campaign. Musk moved into Mar-a-Lago and became almost a member of the family. He invited Trump to the historic launch of his starship just after Trump won the election. Musk was not on any ballot. Now he's been given the keys to the data centers of every federal department including Treasury and IRS. He has access to your private information, your medical information, your financial information. It's the biggest data breach imaginable!

Elon Musk has been shutting federal workers out of their offices and getting rid of many of them. He has shut down the independent USAID which provides humanitarian food and medical care, building gratitude and good will around the world.

He has been stopping payments that have been fully authorized, without review or due process. Many of these departments have a relationship with the businesses Musk owns, including contracts with him and his competitors. Getting access to this data could be self-serving. No president has ever had such broad federal access. We need to get Musk out of our government.

Sue Dailey Rice Lake

America is now openly displaying its decline

The death of human empathy is one of the most telling signs of decay in a society. Over the years, the United States has produced dozens of organizations that have resources and talent to aid people. Their organizations need a myriad of people to provide health care, nourishment, education, safety, and shelter.

According to U.S. Aid for International Development, the organization seeks to empower all people to use their voices to build a more just world. None of us are equal until all of us are equal.

The U.S. has many private and public small and large institutions operating throughout the world. They focus on one or more aspects that generate anxiety due to famine and physical deterioration of body and soul. This condition, if continued without help from the care institutions, will lead to civil unrest, resulting in chaos and wars with people fighting for their survival.

Trump is oblivious to the needs of others and without a conscience. With the flick of his pen, he abruptly gutted the U.S. Aid for International Development. Other departments and agencies have had new leadership now under Trump's control.

Many of the people that he has installed have no background knowledge of their new responsibilities. They are inexperienced, unqualified puppets controlled by strings manipulated by Trump.

Are we Americans going to be the side-stepping bad Samaritan as we walk

through life? **Gerry Snyder**



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COMMUNITY...Cont. from page 4

raise money, buy supplies, and donate where needed. The Trinity Lutheran Church opened their doors and hearts to flood victims with regular community meals and coordinated emotional support, with Deacon Carrie leading the way. Also mentioned in the Cook area were the ongoing community involvement and support of the fire department, hospital association, city council, school, farmer's market and many individuals. Some of the less formal places that bring people together are McDonald's and the library, where some groups meet regularly; Rose Cottage; and the Montana Cafe, which is closed and missed, with residents hoping it will be rebuilt.

A perk of small towns is that we run into people all the time on our daily errands, making quick

connections, passing information, and catching up with people we haven't seen in a while. It often happens that I run into someone who's on my mind to contact. Sometimes that person is driving by and pulls over to chat. I love that about a small town! (Granted, there is the flip side, that you're going to run into people you'd rather not or when you just don't have time for a chat, but that also is part of small town joy.) I'm always impressed

with how much is going on in Tower that requires community involvement and cooperation in that very small town. How do they get all that done? Of course, it comes down to the people with big spirits, willing

hearts, and skills to share. Leah Rogne, a key leader in Northern Progressives, described it as a group that

focuses on social justice, civic education, and political action, which has been meeting every two weeks face-toface for over nine years with members from Orr, Cook, Tower, Ely, and surrounding areas. The frequent face-toface gatherings serve to build relationships and a sense of common purpose. Leah feels that meeting in person is critical to that process, which is not as easily created with virtual meetings. I can speak personally to how my involvement has built connections with people I might never have met otherwise. One of the toughest hur-

dles for many groups is just getting the word out that they exist and what their programs offer. I spoke with a young woman yesterday who has been homeless at times and has been without social services that she is entitled to. She was not aware of the help available to her just by making a phone call. So, please, do your part when you can, spreading the word about resources and activities in your area. A potter that I follow

sent a lovely message in a recent email: "No matter who the president is, I will always believe in the power of art to heal and bring joy into our everyday lives. I also know that we need to take care of each other, to build community, to listen to each other, to smile at a stranger, to share a laugh with an old friend. We need to find a way back to each other, and build a world we ALL want to live in – full of art, love, music, and dancing, delicious food and drink - and of course, we always need more handmade mugs."

Week of Feb. 24

Monday

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

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf-Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5 p.m. New location in the old St. James Church bulding. Next food shelf day is March.

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 23 Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize is Tom Larson of Elk River, Minn.

In a March 26, 1915 Tower News article, the burning of the Vermilion Hotel was placed on the front page. "The Vermilion Hotel burned to the ground Friday, March 19, at three o'clock in the afternoon. It was doomed from the first and the firemen turned their attention to the saving of adjoining property. Plate glass windows in the Mrs. Naslund millinery store building were cracked almost a block away. The Ted Wheeler livery barn had a close call: horses and vehicles were taken out with anticipation that it would go, but this was saved. This was the second hotel to go up in smoke on the same spot. It leaves Tower in bad shape for a big hotel and the firemen's tournament will now no doubt be given up from the fact of the burning of this splendid hostelry."

Chimpy's Skating Party set for Feb. 22 and 26

SOUDAN- The Soudan Skating Rink will host a skating party on Saturday, Feb. 22 from 12 noon - 3p.m. and on Wednesday, Feb. 26 from 3-5 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.

These parties are being sponsored this week by TS Joint Powers Recreation Board, Coke Company, Vince Vesel, and Country Hearth Bread Company.

Zack Schroeder named to University of Minnesota Duluth Fall 2024 Dean's List

DULUTH - Zack Schroeder, of Soudan, has been named to the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) Dean's List for Fall Semester 2024. Students on the Dean's List have achieved a grade point average of 3.50 or higher while earning a minimum of 12 letter-graded

Schroeder is a senior, majoring in Psychology.

SCENIC RIVERS

Caring for patients; creating fun along the way

Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- The staff at Scenic Rivers in Tower celebrated Valentine's Day a day early with a staff "galentine's party and chili cookoff. Staff sampled six varieties of chili and voted on their favorite. Other staff brought in chili toppings, corn bread, and corn chips.

The winner of the chili contest was Michelle Kosnitch. She said she doesn't use a recipe, but does make it in a crock pot using burger, onions, beans, tomatoes, celery and peppers...and she won a bag of gifts.
"We had such a good time

going as a group together to the TSAA Fall Auction," said Michelle Kosnitch. "We wanted to plan more events, both at work and in the community."

Pictured (from left) Rachel Beldo-Rosa, Mimi Rautiola, Erin Thielbar, Michele Palo, Celin Williams, Peggy Ziegler, Laylee Brunner, Kenna Villebrun, Val Turnbull, and Michelle Kosnitch. photos by J. Summit

Chili contest builds teamwork for medical and dental staff in Tower





Staff prepared six styles of chili for the contest.

One staffer brought a gift basket full of over-thecounter stomach meds, in case of indigestion or excess gas!



TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Tower-Soudan girls take consolation trophy at Pacesetters

GRAND RAPIDS- The Tower-Soudan fourth grade girls basketball team took home the consolation bracket trophy at the Pacesetter Tournament on Feb. 15 in Grand Rapids. The team faced Clearbrook-Gonvick in their first game, losing to the team that went on to take the champion-

But the Eagles went on to win their next two games, beating Greenway 14-8, and then Chisholm 12-10 to become the consolation round champions.

photo by T. Trucano

Bookmobile stops

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: Feb. 26; March 19; April 9 & 30 May 21; June 11; July 2 & 23; Aug. 13; Sept. 3 & 24; Oct. 15, Nov. 5 & 26; and Dec. 17.

Stops include: Britt (Sand Lake Storage): 9 9:30 a.m.; Bois Forte (Boys & Girls Club): 11 - 11:30 a.m.; Greenwood (Town Hall): 12 - 1 p.m.; Soudan (Post Office area): 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.; Tower (Civic Center): 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.; and Embarrass (Hwy 135 & Hwy 21): 5 - 6 p.m.

For more information on the Bookmobile or Mail-A-Book services, contact the Arrowhead Library System, 218-741-3840, email at als@alslib.info, or website at alslib.info.





Be my Valentine...



Elementary students celebrated Valentine's Day with cards, candy, and fun. Pictured clockwise from top left: Rosalie Drift, Payton Edwards and Cody Chavez, Neiko Stellmach and Bravden Purkat. Delonnie Dupree, and P.J Goodsky. photos by T. Trucano



ST. MARTIN'S

St. Martin's community Mardi Gras festival set for Friday, Feb. 28

TOWER- St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower is once again hosting a family-friendly Mardi Gras celebration on Friday, Feb. 28 from 5 - 8:30 p.m. It's an open house style event - come when you want and stay as long as you

We have planned an evening of fun for all ages.

Children's activities include games, art projects, kids-only bingo, and pinata breaking at 7:45 p.m. All children's events are no free.

For the adults, there will be

a cribbage tournament beginning at 5:30 p.m., teams must sign up by Feb. 14. Cost is \$10 per participant and the winning team takes half of the money collected. Adult bingo begins at 6 p.m. Cost is \$5 for 10 games, businesses.

and prizes will include gift certificates and gift cards for local A cash bar will be open from 5 - 7 p.m. There will be bucket raffles (with items for adults and kids), a silent auc-

tion, 50/50 cash drawing, and

a meat raffle. Winners will be

announced at 8 p.m.

Of course, this Mardi Gras celebration includes There will be much to choose from: jambalaya, chili, a variety of appetizers, Mardi Gras meringues, moon pies, and éclairs. The cost is a free will offering.

The community is invited to stop by for this evening of fun and great food before the start of Lent.

Costumes are optional, and masks will be available, at the Mardi Gras festival on Feb. 28. file photo



OPERA IN ELY

LOONy opera at Washington Elementary



Above: The cast of Dvo ák's "Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale." Front row, left-to-right: LOON mezzo-soprano Hannah Wheeler, Lillian Rudesill, Jukka Ojala, Anna Cao, Lily Yahnke, Jade Peace, Jojo Myers, Zoe Forsman, Kayla Larsen, LOON tenor Felix Aguilar Tomlinson. Back row, left-to-right: Rune Lunn, Rowan Buecksler, Allie Vesel, Lyla Holthaus, Sammy Petersen, Kensi Lovich, Mae Jedlicki. LOON soprano Laura McCauley, LOON baritone Robert Riordan.

Below: The mermaid Rusalka, sung by LOON soprano Laura McCauley (left) meets and runs off with the Prince, sung by LOON tenor Felix Aguilar Tomlinson (right). photos by C. Clark

by CATIE CLARK

ELY- The Lyric Opera of the North, better known as LOON, visited Washington Elementary on Thursday. Feb. 13, where it once again put Ely students on stage to perform alongside professional opera singers.

The opera was an abridged version of Antonin Dvořák's opera, "Rusalka." The plot is almost the same as the "Little Mermaid" the Disney version, not the Hans Christian Anderson version. The opera was sung in English and took an hour, including a question-and-answer time after the performance when the opera singers answered students' questions.

Every year, LOON takes to the road to bring an opera adapted for elementary school students to northern Minnesota schools. Each year's production is designed to include up to 16 student singers. Music teacher Mike Rouse taught his Washington Elementary students the music and words for the "Rusalka" chorus pieces. Then he picked two to three students from each grade to perform with the LOON opera sing-The students who per-

formed last Thursday in the opera were: Rowan Buecksler, Anna Cao, Zoe Forsman, Lyla Holthaus, Mae Jedlicki, Kayla Larsen, Kensi Lovich, Rune Lunn, Jojo Myers, Jukka Ojala, Jade Peace, Sammy Petersen, Lillian Rudesill, Allie Vesel, and Lily Yahnke. The students played different roles, first as a chorus of singing sea urchins, then as members of the prince's court. In several scenes, the students provided dancing as well as

The students sang with the four LOON opera singers: soprano Laura McCauley as the mermaid Rusalka, mezzo-soprano Hannah Wheeler as the Sea Witch, tenor Felix Aguilar Tomlinson as the Prince, and baritone Robert Riordan as the Sea King.

When LOON visits a

Minnesota school, the company brings everything it needs to stage the opera with 16 students, including costumes and props. LOON also provides teaching materials and music to prepare students for performing. The yearly trip to Ely is the cost. Last year, LOON's travel to Ely was underwritten by a private donation. This year, a grant from the Donald G. Gardner Trust funded a return trip for LOON. To help raise money to bring LOON

ent-Teacher Organization held a fundraiser "A Winter's Eve Opera Cabaret," starring the LOON vocalists and their pianist. The Ely PTO collected donations at the door. All the proceeds will be committed to future programming in Ely by LOON.



Breathing Out

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

to order lunch.

Group speakers:

inick Olivanti

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

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-

Upcoming Tuesday

➤ Feb. 25: Jacob White, director of the Ely Film

➤ March 4: Arrowhead Regional Transit with Dom-

➤March 11: Meet New

by Cecilia Rolando © 2025



the cold, the furnace smoke languidly rising out

right at 68

<u>lbraries</u>

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

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 WOMEN'S OPEN

AA - Monday at noon at Ledgerock 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 **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.

AROUND TOWN



Folk School beaver hat class on Saturday. The class was part of the second weekend of the Ely Winter Festival.

Right: Emilia Brent (with roller) paints part of the set for the Ely Memorial High School musical, "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," last Saturday while her sister Teagan, who is in the play, and father Brent look on. photos by C. Clark

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES brary Book Club will meet color painting class every the Babbitt Public Library,

Ely Public Library ELY- On Tuesday, Feb.

25, at 10:30 a.m., the library will hold a Move and Groove for Preschoolers event, for kids accompanied by an adult. This event features simple dances and stretches to a dance beat. The Get Crafty group

for all ages will make sticker art by number on Wednesday, Feb. 26, at 2 p.m. Please register in advance so the library can order enough supplies for participants. The Curiosity Cohort

for adults will make pet toys on Thursday, March 6, starting at 1:30 p.m. Please register in advance so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The Friends of the Liwill hold a free adult water-

on Monday, March 10, at 3 p.m. The book for discussion is "Hamnet" by Maggie O'Farrell. You do not need to be a member of the Friends of the Library to at-The library scientists

group for all ages will meet on Thursday, March 13, to investigate magnets. Please

register in advance so the library can order enough supplies for participants. Preschool Storytime is held every Friday from 10:30- 11 a.m. All library

BABBITT- The library

events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St. unless otherwise noted. **Babbitt Public Library**

Tuesday through March 25, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. No experience necessary. All skill levels welcome. Call 218-827-3345 or stop by the library to sign up. Participants are encouraged to attend all sessions but only sign up for the ones you can attend please. The library will hold

a free art class with chalk pastels for kids on Tuesday, March 4 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Preregister at the library or by calling 218-827-Walk-ins are welcome

at both art classes if there is

room available Preschool story time is every Wednesday at 10:30

a.m. All library events are at

71 South Dr., unless otherwise noted. **Reflections Dance**

Company ELY- Spring 2025 reg-

istration is available online at www.northernlakesarts. org for dance classes. Classes start on Feb. 24 and end May 7. Payments can be made via credit card, check, ballet, tap, and swing.

or cash. Payment is due by the first class. A variety of styles are offered including **Poetry Night** ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association will host its monthly Call of the Wild Poetry Night on ThursThe theme for March is "The Thawing Truth." Come and read your own poems, read a poem by someone else, or just come and listen. Poems are not required to stick to the theme. This is a no-cost event; all are welcome. **New Resident Social**

ELY- Boundary Waters Connect will host an free Ely-area new resident social on Friday, March 7, at 4:30 p.m. at the Ely Folk School, 209 E. Sheridan St. This is a casual gathering where both new and old residents can meet. A variety of beverages and light appetizers will be provided. The event will be open-house style conversation until 5:30 p.m., when new residents will be toastday, March 6, at the Ely Folk ed, followed by a game of School, 209 E. Sheridan St.

JeopardELY.

GROWING FUTURE VOLUNTEERS

North Woods Leos all about fun and service to others

Club's explosive growth to 70+ students driven by recruiting and pizza

FIELD TWP- For many in the Cook/Orr area who hear the name "Leo," the first person who comes to mind is the gregarious and prolific local author Leo Wilenius

and his popular works about

life in the North Country. But there are a whole bunch of Leos, 72 of them, who are vying for top-ofmind status with their good works and concerned citizenship – those are the members of the North Woods School Leos Club, affiliated with the Cook Lions Club.

Lions Club President Steve Kajala talked about the club's origins.

"The North Woods Leos transferred from the Cook High School Leos," Kajala said. "A number of our Lions had started with Elder Metza, who was very active with getting it going back in maybe the early 2000s. They always had 12 to 15 good Leos, mostly upperclassmen, and they did a lot of things in the city of Cook."

Kajala joined faculty sponsor DeeAnn Sandberg, Leos Club Vice-President Talen Jarshaw and Secretary Mya Kinsey at the school recently to talk about the club's explosive growth and what

Sandberg said that Will Kleppe was the club's first advisor.

"He was the advisor before my mother, Barb Boutto, helped," Sandberg said. "She was a Lion before I was. I was in the school and she used my room - I was just here because I was a teacher. And then I started helping her and became a Lion." In addition to Sandberg, Boutto continues to serve as an advisor, and Lions Kari Hultman and Rhonda Taylor have been added to the mix as well. Kajala said he helps out, too, as it takes many adults to look out for such a large group of enthusiastic



Lions Club member stand out in a crowd with their gold-colored vests, and the North Woods Leos are hoping these new blue service shirts will make people take notice as well. This stage in the North Woods commons area would have trouble accommodating all club members at once, as pictured are approximately 40 of the club's 72 members. courtesy photo

So how did the Leos Club grow so big?

"About two years ago, we started to recruit," Kajala said. "You build it and they will come, and they did. We went from 20 to 32 and now we're at 72, and we've included from seventh grade on up." And apparently if you serve pizza they will come, too, and join. Kajala said that the club's end-of-the-year pizza party has been a great way to introduce the club to sixth graders and to get them to join in the fall. They've also used the TeamReach phone app, and at the urging of Stephanie Burckhardt, set up a booth at the school's fall open house for students to

"That was huge to get people in the door because you had parents coming in, too, and they maybe didn't even know that Leos existed," Kajala said.

It wasn't family connections with the Lions or pizza that drew Kinsey to join Leos - it was what they were do-

much about the Lions Club -I knew they helped with Family Fun Night when I was in elementary school, but that's about it," Kinsey said. "I just heard about Leos through the school. Other people were doing it, my friends were doing it, and I was like, 'That sounds like a good opportunity to get involved with my school and the community in a very good way to give

"I'm kind of in the same boat," Jarshaw said, with a nod and a smile toward Kajala. "His kids, Evan and Vince, they always talked about how much Steve pushed with the Lions and how much they enjoyed it. I thought the Leos sounded like a pretty cool idea, and this was just a good start for me to hopefully one day do what the Lions do."

And what do the Leos do at the school and in the community? Well, for Jarshaw and Kinsey, Leos is just a different way to spell help. "Every year we do ditch

cleaning out on Highway 1, and that's always great -"I didn't really know you get pizza after," Jarshaw said. "We planted trees at the Veterans Park there in Cook. Around here, we did sledding with the kids and made gingerbread houses with them. The kids love to be with us, so it's always cool to add the elementary in with us, and then we're good role models to them.'

"When we go and hang out with them and do these activities with them, they light up because the big kids are in their classroom,' Kinsey said. "It's a big deal to them. And then just giving back to things, like the trees in Veterans Park - it's really important to make sure that we're involved in the community that brought us up our whole lives."

Kajala added the Leos always host the school's Halloween party for the elementary students, and staff the track and field day at the end of the year. "Those were kind of the basics when we started to expand," he said. This year the club has

taken on a new and different kind of project, getting a "real sign" for the school, Kajala said. "If you go to any other county school, everybody has a sign and we have a little two by two sign that somebody made in wood shop," Kajala said. "That's going

to change. We don't know

exactly what it will look like

yet, but it's going to change.' Kinsey and Jarshaw were students who lived through the COVID pandemic and its negative effects on student relationships and mental health. They believe Leos is helping to build community in the school again after several difficult years. "It brings all the grades together from seventh to twelfth, and it's just like all of us connecting to make one big impact on the school,' Kinsey said. "And when we include ourselves with the elementary that makes them feel like everything's back to normal. It gives us the opportunity to mesh and use those shared experiences to push through and make it even better than it was before." Sandberg said a key element in building cohesiveness among such a large group

of students with a wide age range is something as simple as just having a good time.

"I think they just enjoy having fun," she said, "so giving them some downtime to have fun and be together and monkey around - and usually there's pizza involved, so they enjoy that."

The Leos Club also brings added visibility in the community to the Lions Club, Kajala said, and it's actually given a boost to Lions membership, he believes. "When I joined the Lions six years ago, there were two of us under age 40 and everybody else was over age 55," he said. "And now if you look at our club, we have Lions from age 19 through age 87. Most of the members we're getting now are from 40 to 55 rather than 55 plus. The awareness has helped everybody.' And it's not uncommon at all for Leos to join in with the older Lions for service projects, like during the flood, Kajala said.

Jarshaw and Kinsey were asked to give a sales pitch they would give to seventh graders to join Leos, and they were both enthusiastic with their responses, though each took a slightly different

"There's lots of fun in everything we do," Jarshaw said. "The highway pickup, the Halloween parties, words can't even describe it. It's just a fun time and you're helping everyone. It's a great opportunity for everybody.' "I would say the experience, all the volunteer hours and all the stuff you get to do to give back to the people and community that raised you, that's really important to the people that surround you," Kinsey said. "Getting that experience and getting involved is going to open up so many more doors for you in the future, and it just feels really good knowing you're making an impact on more than just the school."

Cornelius scholarship chili cook off will be on Saturday in Orr

Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- If you're looking for great tasting chili, look no farther this Saturday than the community center in Orr, where the fourth annual Tony Cornelius Chili Cook Off will be back bigger and better than ever.

"We have 16 cookers registered, which is awesome," Tony's mother and chief event organizer Kay Cornelius said. "That's the most we've ever had. And we've got probably about 30 big raffle basket prizes, anywhere from gift certificates to a Blackstone grill. We're doing a lot of good stuff."

Doing good stuff is what the cook-off is all about, as all proceeds from the event go to fund college scholarmemory of Tony Cornelius, who died in 2017.

"Last year, we gave away four \$1,000 scholarships, which was the most we've done in one year so far," Cornelius said. "Tony celebrated living in a small town. He was a two-year college guy, so he would celebrate that we get together and have a good time, have some shenanigans, cook some chili and pay it forward. You know, it's all about, how can we help."

And you can help them by helping yourself to a voting kit and lots of delicious "You get in the door for

ten bucks and you get your voting card," Cornelius said. "And if you try every single chili, and you were to eat

ships for career education in every amount that's in each three-ounce cup, that's 48 ounces of chili.

> And it's not just any run-of-the mill chili. This competition is not for the weak, as past champions will square off against a crop of chili-savvy newcomers focused squarely on claiming this year's honors, which include Peoples Choice, Not Your Mother's Chili, Fire In The Hole and A Round Of Applause. The festivities at the

> community center, the former American Legion building, will get underway at 5 p.m. Kids five and under get in free, kids from six to 11 get in for \$5, and admission for those 12 and older is \$10. A cash bar will be available.

LIONS CLUB DONATIONS









bers of the Cook Lions Club have been busy doing what they love best, making donations to worthy causes. Recently they put youth in the spotlight, making donations of \$1,000 to the North Woods Archery program (top), \$500 to North Woods Community Education for their upcoming production of "Alice in Wonderland" (middle left), \$1,500 to the North Woods Robotics team (middle right), and \$500 to the North Woods One Act Play group. submitted

NWFA photo contest entries due March 1

COOK- Don't miss your chance to grab that photo you took on the spur of the moment and loved and enter it in the photo contest at Northwoods Friends of the Arts, "A Shot In The Dark!" Photos you planned, practiced and love are equally welcomed for this March photography showcase. There are two prizes in this photo contest,

Viewers of the photo exhibit at the NWFA Gallery will vote for their favorite

photos beginning Thursday, March 6 and continuing through March 28. The winner will receive \$100, with The entry fee is \$10

\$50 going to the runner-up. Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m and Saturdays,

per photo, and you may enter more than one. The fee includes a display mat and sleeve to make the exhibit look uniform for voters. Students (18 or younger) may enter three photos free of charge. Photos must be

in two sizes, either 5X7 or All entries need to be at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S. River St. in Cook by 1 p.m.

on March 1. The contest ends at noon Friday, March 28 with a re-

ception at the gallery that day from 5-7 p.m. where the winners will be announced. Registration materi-

als are available at the gallery during gallery hours on 9 a.m.-1 p.m. or online at www.nwfamn.org. Contestants may mail their photos with registration forms to NWFA, PO Box 44, Cook MN 55723 or you may drop them off at the gallery during gallery hours.

Koch receives academic honors ORR- Orr native and

North Woods graduate Helen Koch has been named to the Dean's Honor List at Minnesota State University, Mankato for the fall 2024 semester.

To qualify for the academic honor, students must earn a GPA of 3.5-3.99 and

be enrolled in at least 12

credit hours.



Letter to firefighter blog gives insight into federal layoffs

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

The Hot Shot Wakeup, a blog on Substack by a former hotshot crew supervisor, reposted the following letter from a U.S. Forest Service manager that he received this week. From what we are hearing, it is reflective of the situation being experienced by forest service staff throughout our region, although local agency officials are unwilling to speak publicly for fear of retaliation.

"Yesterday was a terrible day where we had to terminate coworkers and the only reason provided was a lie. We are hurting and being hobbled by people who have no authenticity or interest in knowing anything about the consequences of their decisions. Since January 20th the federal civilian service have been under assault and slandered by the new administration. We anticipate change with every new administration but this has been different.

"The USFS employs approximately 35,000 employees. 11,300 of which are considered primary fire employees. Yesterday we were required to begin the termination of 3,400 employees

or nearly 10 percent of the overall USFS workforce.

"While generalizations about reducing the workforce have been made there has been no clear explanation for why they are being terminated.

"The language on the ter-

mination letter being issued to these employees states, "The Agency finds that you are not fit for continued employment because your ability, knowledge and skills do not fit the current needs, and your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment with the Agency,"

"This is not why these employees are being termi-

The expansion of

Medicaid as part of the Obama-

nated. I can vouch for several being outstanding employees and their loss is an impact and setback to the agency. As one high level manager stated after having to terminate multiple employees, "this makes me sick, it's a lie, these are outstanding employees and individuals and we are being forced to fire them and the only reason provided is an absolute lie."

"No clear communication has come down from above on what is happening. In addition to these terminations we have had funds frozen, in a hiring freeze, and offers rescinded. We have been hearing for over two weeks that fire personnel

will be deemed exempt under public safety but we have yet to receive that officially and nationally new hires are being delayed in able to report to work and we cannot say whether they have a job or not. Currently 20% of our units fire program is stalled in on boarding primary fire personnel including critical positions with crucial qualifications. Delays in onboarding significantly impacts our planning process and staffing.

"Yet tonight we receive our first communication from newly appointed Secretary Brooke Rollins of the USDA. It was a letter from Secretary Rollins that stated, 'The U.S.

Department of Agriculture has the largest and most sophisticated wildland firefighting workforce in the world, and I am honored to serve and support you.'"

On the day we are starting termination of 10 percent of our workforce that is what our Secretary has to say to us yet never address the actual issue at hand. It is tone deaf and divisive. It fails in the most basic test of leadership."

You can subscribe to the Hot Shot Wakeup blog, which focuses on wildfire, fire tech, and wildfire policy, at https://substack.com/@thehotshotwakeup

HEALTH CUTS...Continued from page 1-

Centers." Watson, who was in Washington, D.C. earlier this month, has been watching most closely the work of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has been tasked with finding \$880 billion in cuts under its jurisdiction, which includes the Medicaid program. Watson said those reductions, which would be implemented over ten years, could come in several forms, such as changes in the funding formula that would force states to pay more of the cost. They are reportedly also considering work requirements, which have the effect of dropping coverage for the least capable individuals. "It becomes a 'how good are you at filling out paperwork?' issue," he said.

The impact of the cuts currently under consideration would almost certainly be felt most dramatically in places like Tower, Ely, and Cook, which are served by federally funded community health centers or area nursing homes that rely heavily on Medical Assistance to fund care for the elderly.

In St. Louis County, for

example, approximately 21.2 percent of non-elderly patients rely on Medical Assistance or CHIP, and it's as high as 21.8 percent in Itasca County. By contrast, only about 14.2 percent of non-elderly patients in Hennepin County rely on Medical Assistance or CHIP. That's according to the recent analysis put out by the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy.

Many rural patients on Medical Assistance or CHIP rely heavily on community health centers, like those operated by Cook-based Scenic Rivers for their primary care, be it medical, dental, or behavioral. Across the state, about 180,000 Minnesotans rely on community health centers for their care, according to Watson. These centers serve patients on Medical Assistance and other types of insurance, as well as the uninsured, who are typically served with minimal or no charge. Of patients served by community health centers in Minnesota, about 46 percent have coverage through

era Affordable Care Act, sharply reduced the number of Americans living without health insurance and it allowed for the spread of community health centers, since it meant they served fewer patients who lacked the ability to pay. While Medical Assistance typically pays less than the cost of providing care, it still provides substantially more in terms of reimbursement than those who are uninsured.

Such facilities operate

Such facilities operate with minimal margins, so the loss of coverage by Medical Assistance or CHIPS, which will push more patients into the ranks of the uninsured, has the potential to devastate these clinics.

"In a short time, community health centers would not be able to stay in existence," said Wende Nelson, of Ely, who serves as board vice president for Scenic Rivers. Nelson also served as CEO of a community health center in Duluth for many years before her retirement.

While community health centers will likely be the first

to see the impact of cuts to Medical Assistance and CHIP, Nelson said rural hospitals would not be far behind.

would not be far behind.

"Everything is hooked together in the health care system," she said. "The kind of impacts we're likely to see with community health centers will also impact rural hospitals. The whole health care system would be massively impacted. We would lose rural hospitals and rural clinics. It would be ugly."

Nursing homes would be hit hardest of all

While Medical Assistance is often associated in the public's mind with poor families, the bulk of this federal spending, in fact, goes to keep elderly residents in nursing homes. According to Kaylee Hoard, the CFO of the Cook Hospital and Nursing Home, about 60 percent of the nursing home residents there rely on Medical Assistance to pay their cost of care.

"Funding cuts of any kind would be detrimental to our facility, as the care center already runs at a loss per resident day," said Hoard.

The Cook nursing home

is hardly an exception, notes Nelson. Of all the pieces of the health care system, said Nelson, nursing homes are the most fragile financially, and that's particularly true of nursing homes in small communities, where a relatively limited number of residents often fail to cover the overhead costs of maintaining a facility. The Cook nursing home, for example, is a 28-bed facility that currently serves 23 residents.

As the Timberjay reported last August, both the Cook nursing home and the Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely received emergency state funding for the next two years to help keep their doors open. But those extra funds were approved by the Legislature at a time when the state budget was flush. With much tighter budgets predicted in the next few years, Cook Hospital and Nursing Home CEO Teresa Debevec said she isn't optimistic about any extra help in the near future.

Minnesota, like other comparatively wealthy states, already pays a higher percentage of Medicaid costs than most states, particularly states in the South where the federal government picks up a much higher share of the cost. That makes it less likely that the state can be expected to backfill federal cuts in any meaningful way.

Local economies would

be affected While the prospect of deep Medicaid has, to date. focused most of the attention on patient impacts, Nelson notes that the loss of health centers, hospitals, or nursing homes could be economically devastating in small communities. The health sector is by far, the largest employer in many rural regions, including northeastern Minnesota, where one-out-of-every-four workers is employed in the health care sector. "This could seriously affect the rural economy," said Nelson, as facilities begin to layoff staff or shutter completely due to the cuts from Washington.

SCHOOLS...Continued from page 1 -

governmental bodies. The second has to do with the district's contract with its teachers' union. Proposed cuts for full and part-time teaching positions had to be locked in by February, and district administrators used all the available data on enrollments, course offerings, and alternative arrangements to determine what they believed to be the most appropriate cuts by the required deadline. While no more cuts can be made after the deadline, Superintendent Reggie Engebritson assured the board at its last meeting that administrators would continue to closely monitor the data and that they would be able to perhaps restore some positions if it was financially viable to do so.

But for now, with uncertainty about what the future holds, parents and many students are frustrated and want to see the changes reversed. And some are considering taking their children out of North Woods and enrolling them in the Rock Ridge district.

Suzie Holter, of Cook, was one of the first to take to social media to encourage parents to attend next week's board meeting.

"North Woods parents, a school board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 25 in Tower," Holter said. "Please attend if you can! We must demonstrate to our superintendent and school board that we oppose the ongoing cuts. Our school's limited

resources will only decrease with further cuts, causing us to lose students. Each student is valued at \$10,000, so losing 10 students to Rock Ridge would be substantial. Maybe it's time to close underutilized schools with few graduates or those that financially burden our district. We need to fight for our kids and community!"

Medical Assistance.

A couple of days later,
Holter posted that she was
compiling a list of parents
to present to the board who
would consider transferring
from North Woods to another
district.

One of those parents
who has considered leaving

One of those parents who has considered leaving the district is Jennifer Herdman, although she told the *Timberjay* that because of the logistics involved, homeschooling may be a more viable option for her family. Herdman has a seventh grader and a fourth grader who attend North Woods.

Herdman said she learned about the staff dismissals through her seventh-grade

"(Head boys basketball coach) Andrew Jugovich let his basketball players know at practice, and he also works with the junior high," Herdman said. "He let the team know that he was being cut and my son came home and he was really upset about it."

As a middle school science teacher, Jugovich has also facilitated STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) for younger grades.

"Then my daughter heard and he's her STEAM teacher, so she was upset about it," Herdman said.

Herdman is worried that the cuts to teaching staff will lead to an increase in class sizes, which she believes will hurt the quality of education children receive and amplify her longer-term concerns about behavioral issues and communication at the school.

"If they can't control a class of 17 students because of a couple bad eggs, if you have 32 in a classroom, what's going to happen then?" Herdman said. "I don't see how they'd actually be able to sit and learn without being constantly distracted from their lessons. So that will go towards even lower test scores. which North Woods is not doing so great in anyway. The larger classroom is just not okay with me, and I foresee people pulling even more

students because of this."

Music teacher Lorenda
Daugherty also won't be
back next year. Herdman is
concerned about elementary
teachers being assigned to take
over music instruction, something that was mentioned as a
possibility at the last school
board meeting.

"They have no idea about music. They've never taught music," Herdman said. "Why would you ask them to step into a music position? That's very frustrating."

A look at the curricu-

lum of one elementary education degree program, at Minnesota State University – Mankato, lends some support to Herdman's concern. There is not a single course dedicated to music. Rather, it appears to be incorporated into a course focusing on integrating the arts, physical and health education into the curriculum.

A grandmother's concerns

Tammy Palmer, of Cook, has six grandchildren who attend North Woods, five of them in the elementary grades. She also believes that classrooms will be combined, and that children's education will suffer as a result.

"One (of her grandchildren) is already in a combined class of 31 students," Palmer said. "And to think that they're going to be doing this to all the classes is absolutely ridiculous. They're so scrunched in those classrooms already, and talking with the teachers there's no one-on-one time with the students and the teachers have difficulties getting through their lessons, let alone helping kids who need additional help. I think you're definitely going to see teacher burnout. I'm just concerned for the teachers and the students to get the quality education I think they need.'

Palmer also questioned why the district chose not to go to a four-day school week, a plan that was initially estimated to save the district \$500,000.

"It just seems like it may have been the way to go," she said. "You have a shortage of bus drivers, teacher retention would be higher and you'd keep your classroom sizes. I have three grandchildren who go to a school now that has a four-day school week in Virginia, and the kids love it. The teachers love it They, too, had concerns at first, but you make it work." However, as the Timberjay has previously reported, a survey of parents found that the loss of state aid from the number of children parents said they would pull out of the district if a four-day week were implemented would wipe out the projected savings, leaving the district with the same budget problem it has now.

Palmer emphasized that she just wants to find some way that the teacher cuts can be avoided. "I'm just trying to be proactive here," she said. "I'm very concerned for the education, and our school is a major part of our community. So, if our school is going to be hurting, our whole community is going to be hurting. And I just absolutely believe we're losing some great teachers. I just want answers, and I'm looking into this as a grandma and a concerned community

It's important to note that the above comments are not based on any formal specific plan that's been presented to parents. School

board members at their last meeting were presented with a more generalized set of talking points about the budget cuts that emphasized reasons for the cuts and various options likely to be included in the final plan. Engebritson stressed that the plan is still a work in progress as district staff continue to monitor enrollment data, developments in the Legislature, and other information. While the cuts are set, specific plans for dealing with them at each school are not yet set in stone, and the board will continue to consider them at upcoming

"This is a moving process as we continually look at the numbers and any staff changes retirements, resignations or requests to transfer to another school in the district," Engebritson said. "We are doing everything in our power to keep as many people whole as possible. We are applying for grant dollars and if we receive those dollars that will allow us to hire staff to be in those positions and they can continue working for the district."

meetings, Engebritson said.

Those wishing to speak at the Feb. 25 board meeting at the Tower-Soudan School should arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the 5 p.m. start time and request to be put on the list for public comment. The board has no obligation to allow anyone who arrives after the meeting begins to speak.

HARBOR...Continued from page 1

plagued for years by economic challenges, such as the fallout from the 2008 financial crash, which was followed by the discovery of title issues that delayed progress for another three years as conflicting claims were unwound. The site has been considered at various times for the development of town homes and,

most recently, a hotel. Back in 2023, TEDA had

declined an earlier proposal from Newman and his occasional partner Larry Gensmer for townhomes in favor of a hotel proposal, but the TEDA board cooled to the hotel concept over the past few months, at least at the harbor location. The hotel developers had suggested they were leaning toward a five-acre site on Marina Drive as a better location for the hotel. When Newman and

location for the hotel.

When Newman and the architect Ron Hommerding proposed a new concept, with mixed development, the board took greater interest and notified the prospective hotel

developers that the board was

opting for a new direction at the harbor.

Newman was slated to be in Tower later this week, after the *Timberjay's* Wednesday deadline, to discuss the project in more detail. He hopes to get the project underway this year.



PUBLIC CONCERN

Protestors gather to oppose Trump administration actions

ELY- In contrast to the "Not my President" day protests on Monday around the nation, a quiet, "Minnesota Nice" protest took place here on Saturday in Whiteside Park. A crowd that came and went over the course of a few hours, voiced support for federal employees and opposition to the anti-diversity and slashand-burn tactics of the Trump administration.

The event, which appeared to be spontaneous, lacked a clear leader or theme.

No one advertised it on social media. Instead, word of the gathering spread through email, phone calls, and word of mouth. Disturbed by the tactics of the Trump administration, concerned people just showed up. Many came with their own homemade protest signs. Others made signs on the spot at a table someone brought with donated markers and posterboard. One person came with a big commercial coffee urn and donuts. Someone else brought cookies, giving the event a party-like atmosphere.

The protesters took their smorgasbord of signs and strategically placed them



The small forest of signs planted by protesters on Saturday morning so they would be visible in the city of Ely's Whiteside Park webcam. photo by C. Clark

so they were clearly visible by Ely's Whiteside Park webcam, which has thousands of viewers every month. The most prominent were in support of the employees of the U.S. Forest Service in danger of losing their jobs at the already understaffed Superior National Forest. The biggest sign was made by Peta Barrett of Ely, which read, "USFS Thank you for your dedication and service." Another read, "Save Ely USFS

Other signs read, "Let's

support our VA staff," "God created diversity," "DEI matters,""We "heart"Federal Employees," "My body, my choice," and "Love your black, brown, immigrant, disabled, religiously different, LGBTQ, fully human

"These are our friends and neighbors," said one unidentified protester with a "Save Federal Agencies" sign. "Every job lost hurts our local economy and our tourism."

This coalescing of protesters started at 11 a.m. with a gathering crowd of about 30 people. How many ultimately turned out may be impossible to estimate as participants came and went over the course of a few hours.

City council tie-in?

The growing grassroots movement in Ely concerned over what is happening in Washington, D.C. first raised its head when local business owner Ozzie Reif addressed the Ely City Council on Feb. 4. Reif suggesting that the city made a statement to show and express community support of

everyone in the city, especially Ely's immigrants, LGBTQ+ residents, educators, and federal employees.

The protesters were aware that the city council had been approached by Reif. It is unknown whether the protest swayed the city council on Tuesday, when city council member Emily Roose proposed that the city publish a public statement on a twice-yearly schedule, saying: "The city of Ely is committed to be a community that welcomes and values diversity.

We will work to be a place where all people, citizens and visitors alike, will feel safe and confident that the city of Ely respects the rights and dignity of all people. Please read the full mission, vision and values statement on the city of Ely Website." The measured was approved by the city council at its Tuesday meeting.

Fear of retaliation

More than one of the people who gathered at Saturday's protest requested that they not be quoted in this article. One was concerned for his job, where he is the face of his recreation-based organization. He was worried that his stance on issues could negatively affect the volume of his employer's business.

"[My business] has professional relationships with organizations in town and I am the face of many of those relationships, politics are unrelated to our local ... I would hate for someone to misunderstand my role as anything greater than someone who wanted to bring people together in the park to build community."

OUTAGE...Continued from page 1

served by the city's municipal utilities, which is supplied by Minnesota Power. The outage in Ely did not affect the entire town, with islands of power in places like on the 100 block of Pattison surrounded by no power on surrounding streets.

The line break occurred sometime after 3 a.m. Tuesday morning, about one-third of a mile west of the Dollar General store on Ely's west end, where the line crosses Hwy. 169.

John Stodola of Hoyt Lakes, who drives an early morning delivery route, witnessed the downed line around 3:30 a.m. and called it into 911. He was eastbound into Ely but had to turn around to take County Road 88 (Grant McMahan Blvd.) to make his Ely deliveries.

"I believe I was the first on the scene," Stodola told the *Timberjay*. "When I first got there, it was burning in the snow on the side of the road. After the police showed up, that's when it started burning on the road."

Power came back in Ely at

8:56 a.m., which delayed the opening of some businesses in the community. It also prompted the closure of the Vermilion Country School, in Tower. "We actually canceled school today because so many of our staff live in Ely and needed to stay home to try to keep their houses warm," said school board chair Jodi Summit.

Ely power outage hit and miss

The early morning outage in Ely struck many as random, as one block would be blacked out while the next block never experienced an outage. Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski noted that the city is served by two substations, designated as "A" and "B" and only A experienced a partial outage.

"It all depends on whether the alley behind your house is getting its power from substation A or B," Langowski said. "But if you're looking at the lights in the house across the street when you don't have any power, then it can look random."

Reckless driver sought

Langowski said he'd like to talk to the driver of a pickp who drove through a law enforcement blockade of Hwy. 169 set up around 3:30 a.m. That's when a dark-colored Chevy truck drove through the blockade and over the still-burning power line.

'We're looking for that vehicle. It was a newer pickup, three-quarter to one ton. It had flashing emergency lights in its windshield ... I just want them to be aware of how close they came to probably losing their own life or causing somebody else to lose theirs.' Langowski said the scene

should have alerted anyone to the potential danger. "There were fireballs burning on the surface of the blacktop," he Stodola echoed

Langowski's take. "When I first got there, it was just burning on the side," Stodola said. "Then this vehicle with flashing lights drove right over the line and that's when it started burning on the road."

COUNCIL...Continued from page 1 –

statement as a press release

"The city of Ely is committed to be a community that welcomes and values diversity. We will work to be a place where all people, citizens and visitors alike, will feel safe and confident that the city of Ely respects the rights and dignity of all people. Please read the full mission, vision and values statement on the city of Ely website."

The vote to approve the measure was 5-1, with Forsman dissenting.

"This is a waste of city tax dollars to publish what we already know and believe," Forsman argued.

Emily Roose countered, stating, "Statistics show you don't hear things if you hear it just once. This would put our value statement on the forefront of people's minds, helps them know that we are here, that we care, and that we do see them."

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Debeltz noted that publishing the values statement on a schedule could help in bring more visitors to Ely.

"They would see this when considering coming up here and would feel welcome and invited to our city," he

In other business, the

- ➤ Directed city staff to pursue grants from the Housing Trust Fund and Small Cities Housing Aid Programs and the Federal Recreational Trails Program.
- ➤ Approved a grant application to the Federal Recreational Trail Program to purchase trail maintenance equipment for the Prospectors
- ➤ Approved the purchase of used hockey boards for the city's outdoor rink to replace the current boards, pending funding sources and Ely Pickleball Club commitment. The club is considering a

build pickleball courts for fair weather use at the rink and the installation of replacement boards affects the pouring of a surface for the new courts.

- ➤ Approved the hire of Nils DeRemee as a fulltime police officer, pending background investigation, psychological exam, and medical examination, and contingent on the resignation of another officer who has a conditional job offer from another department.
- ➤ Approved the second and final reading of the ordinance revision for secondhand goods dealers, which fixes misleading language in the city's code. The council also approved the second and final reading amending the city's code to allow the revision of land use permit and platting fees by simple resolution. All three changes were covered in detail in the Feb. 7 edition of the *Timberjay*.
- ➤ Approved the atten-

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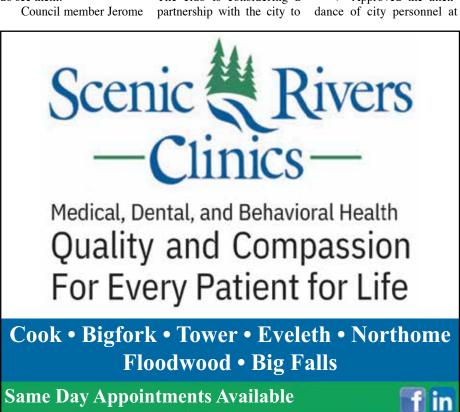
the Iron Range Brownfields and Land Redevelopment Conference on April 3 at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center. Langowski is one of the speakers at the conference.

- ➤ Approved claims for payment for the city and Ely Utilities Commission of \$199,538, and for a pay estimate from Max Gray Construction for \$153,199 for work on the Ely Regional Trailhead Building, currently under construction.
- ➤ Approved the appointment of Gillian Fitzgerald to a

resident seat and Molly Roske to a non-resident seat on the tree board. The council also approved the appointment of Nathan Baseman to the airport

- ➤ Approved a \$17,500 commercial renovation loan for Andrea Kannas at Kannas Real Estate LLC at 224 E. Harvey St. to install new energy efficient windows, pending proper paperwork and fees. City council member Emily Roose abstained from the vote.
 - ➤ Ely Clerk-Treasuser

Harold Langowski shared a reminder that though warmer weather is coming next week, if tap temperatures are 41 degrees or lower, residents should still drip their faucets with a stream about a pencil lead thick. Langowski explained that the city's public works staff has seen frost penetration down to six feet, which won't thaw immediately even if the air temperatures are warmer, and that can still freeze the supply lines into buildings.





Masloski honored for "Outstanding Leadership"

ELY-Adam Masloski has just gotten what he deserves: an award. LeadingAge Minnesota, a senior care trade association, honored Masloski with its Outstanding Leadership Award during their annual conference in Minneapolis on Feb. 12.

As the Executive Director of the Boundary Waters Care Center, Masloski's commitment to quality care helped increase BWCC's Medicare 5-Star Quality Rating from one to four stars in just two years. Under his leadership, the BWCC received a 100 percent resident and family satisfaction score, and his fundraising efforts kept the doors open as federal pandemic aid dried up.

Masloski thanked the organization for the award and gave much of the credit to his care center crew. "My team at BWCC and I are devoted to providing residents and families with an enriched senior living experience. I could not do what I do without their skills and support, and I am thankful to have the opportunity to help our residents confidently live their best lives.'

For more than 17 years, Masolski has been the face of aging services at BWCC, having served in multiple roles through the years.

"Adam's leadership is a huge part of what makes Boundary Waters Care Center thrive," said Amber Rogotzke, president of the Health Dimensions Group,

GREENWOOD

Board fires **Jeff Maus**

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP-After the second of two lengthy closed sessions, stretching over seven hours on Feb. 7 and 18, the Greenwood Town Board voted 3-2 to fire Chief Jeff Maus from the fire department. He is no longer chief, a firefighter, or first responder.

Maus still has an open complaint with the Minnesota OSHA office against the township relating to previous retaliation after he reported the fire department for safety issues. The town board made an offer to Maus in the fall to settle the complaint for \$5,000, but Maus refused since the offer also would have required him to leave the department. Maus is one of the longest-serving members of the current department and is also a trained Emergency Medical Responder, and has taken advanced training in fire skills and department leadership. He was appointed as interim chief when the former town board fired the previous chief Dave Fazio and assistant chief Mike Indihar, and then was hired by the board as chief. He had worked to recruit new fire fighters to the department after the majority of members left after the Fazio and Indihar firings. He also implemented significantly more training time for department members. He recruited more EMRs and also worked to get the EMRs more advanced training. The vote went along the

predictable divide, with chair Lois Roskoski and supervisors Craig Gilbert and Paul Skubic voting in favor, and John Bassing and Rick Stoehr voting against.

The firing came after a lengthy complaint was filed against Maus by members of

the Tower Ambulance Service, which the township forwarded to an outside attorney who conducted an investigation on the allegations. Maus has said he was able to refute most of the allegations in the complaint.

The *Timberjay* will have more reporting on this issue in upcoming papers.



which manages BWCC. "He and his team help provide their residents with the ability to confidently live their best lives every day, and we can't thank him enough for his commitment to them. Adam

is deserving of this award, and we are immensely proud of him."

BWCC is a nonprofit skilled-nursing and rehabilitative care facility. BWCC's comprehensive transitionLeft: Adam Masloski, **Executive Director of** the Boundary Waters Care Center, received an award for outstanding leadership at the LeadingAge Minnesota conference in Minneapolis on Feb. 12. From left-to-right: Kari Thurlow, CEO of LeadingAge Minnesota, Adam Mašloski, and Jerry Carley, chair of the LeadingAge Minnesota Board of Directors.

photo submitted

al and long-term care services include 24-hour skilled nursing care, on-site physical, occupational, and speech therapy, as well as compassionate hospice care.

Babbitt man charged with felony gun possession

BABBITT- A Babbitt man was charged with felony possession of a firearm last week after a routine traffic stop. Babbitt police pulled over Richard William Ritacco, age 56, on Sunday, Feb. 9, at 11:23 p.m., for a failed license plate tag light.

At the time, Babbitt PD personnel observed that Ritacco had a Sig Sauer P365 9 mm handgun "on the front seat," which Ritacco claimed to own. The pistol had no bullet in its chamber but did have a partially loaded magazine. Ritacco cannot legally possess firearms because of a 1999 felony stalking and harassment conviction. The Babbitt police later removed several firearms from Ritacco's residence.

The St. Louis County prosecutor's office recommended a conditional release with a \$20,000 bail, noting that Ritacco had "a relatively clean criminal history over the last twenty-five years." The St. Louis County Jail released Ritacco without bail on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

Correction:

The Timberjay recently reported that the auditing firm Walker, Giroux, and Hahne had closed. While the

Virginia-based firm is downsizing its services to area cities, it remains in business. The *Timberjay* regrets the error.



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12 February 21, 2025 THE TIMBERJAY

NETT LAKE WINTER POWWOW

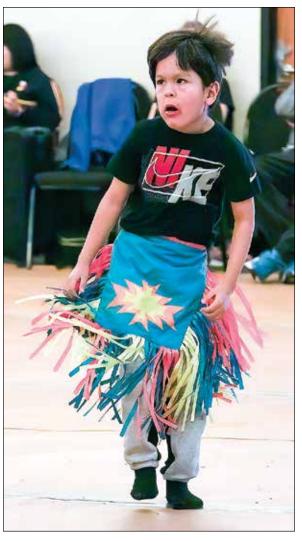


photos by D. Colburn

Bringing color to winter

The Nett Lake midwinter powwow is traditionally smaller than those at other times of the year, and that's the way it should be, a more intimate gathering to bring those in the Bois Forte community together at a time when winter blasts can heighten a sense of separateness. Winter, too, was for educating children in the ways of the band, and there were children aplenty at this weekend's powwow. The powwow included a special healing song for band members who have felt the pain from the tragic passing of both the young and elders in recent years.









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THE TIMBERJAY February 21, 2025 **1B**



SPORTS

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely throttles Grizzlies in second half

by DAVID COLBURN

FIELD TWP- The North Woods girls gave Ely a run for their money for a half last Thursday, but the Wolves took command in the second half and breezed to a 69-34 win.

North Woods got on the board first with a long trey from Tatum Barto, followed up with a deuce by Brynn Chosa, to take a 5-0 lead before Amelia Penke got the Ely

offense rolling with a trifecta. followed that with two more The Wolves were dialed in from long range early, as they got three more triples from Penke, Zoe Mackenzie, and Lydia Shultz in a 14-2 run to go up 14-7. North Woods got back to within four at 18-14 on a putback by Emarie Gibson and a fast break by Barto with 11:15 left in the half. Penke broke a three-minute scoring drought for the Wolves when she was fouled on a score and made the free throw, and she

baskets to give Ely a 25-14 lead. North Woods was within 10, 33-23, with 1:40 remaining, but a pair of Shultz free throws and a buzzer beater by Audrey Kallberg gave the Wolves a 14-point edge at the break, 37-23.

Penke had the hot hand coming out of the locker room, scoring two doubles and two triples in a 12-0 run that suddenly had the Grizzlies down 49-23. Barto finally drained Right: Ely's Maija Mattson battles North Woods' Emarie Gibson, left, and **Corra Brodeen for control** of a rebound.

photo by D. Colburn

a three to get the Grizzlies off the skids, but the Wolves continued the onslaught, dominating the second half 32-11 and coasting to the 69-34 win.

Penke was a scoring

See GIRLS...pg. 2B





2025 STATE NORDIC SKI MEET

Doys take second

by DAVID COLBURN

Cook-Orr Editor

GIANTS RIDGE-The Ely boys Nordic ski team capped a season of increasingly strong performances with a second-place finish at the state ski meet held here last Wednesday and Thursday.

Ranked fifth in a preseason coaches' poll, the Wolves came on like gangbusters as the season progressed, dominating the Marshall Sprints on Jan. 17, winning the Ely and Duluth East invitationals and claiming the Section 7 championship.

"I think the preseason rankings were pretty accurate to where we were coming into the season," said Ely Head Coach Todd Hohenstein. "The boys worked hard in the summer and had made some big gains in Wolves made steady progress throughout the season

their overall strength. They were a top five team in December. The first couple meets of the year though, Duluth East was getting the best of us - their top three boys were faster than any of our boys. As coaches we were wondering what are we missing? Our conversation just led us back to having confidence in our long-term plan. What wasn't calculated was how much the team would bond together over the season. There was an expectation to work hard at practice and no one wanted to be left behind. Each time someone found a new level of effort, it brought the rest of the team up. They climbed the ladder of success together."

Oliver Hohenstein and Eli Olson set the tone for the Wolves on Wednesday

with a stellar performance

Above: Ely's Dylan Durkin pushes hard at the start of the classic leg of Thursday's pursuit competition.

Right: The Wolves' **Aksel Skustad gasps** for air as he crosses the finish line.

photos by D. Colburn

in the team sprint, their time of 13:40.54 just twotenths of a second behind winner St. Paul Central.

"The challenge with the relay format is that it can feel like the team is being divided,' Hohenstein said. "It was a challenging process to select who would be on the sprint relay team. Earlier in the season, Eli came up to me after practice one

See NORDIC...pg. 2B



BOYS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies take two this week

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

HILL CITY- The North Woods boys scored double road wins by double digits this week, downing Mesabi East on Friday and Hill City on Tuesday.

In the Grizzlies' 86-61 win over the Hornets on Tuesday, defense was the driver in the big win. Two of the Grizzlies' first three baskets came off steals, with Aidan Hartway leading the break for the scores. Trajen Barto hit the first triple of the night for North Woods, staking the Grizzlies to a 13-7 early lead. Barto came to the fore again when the Hornets pulled to within two at 20-18, scoring five points on a triple and a fast break deuce to give North Woods some breathing room. The Grizzlies built a 16-point halftime edge, 44-28, with steady play rather than flashy streaks, showing good ball movement when they weren't running the floor with another Hill City turnover.

Andrew Hartway scored six points in a North Woods run to start the second half that bumped the lead to 53-32. Louie Panichi made sure the Grizzlies were never threatened, pouring in 26 of his team-leading 29 points in the second half, including five three-balls. But while Panichi had a standout half, North Woods did a good job of distributing the ball all night long, with three other players in double digits, including Talen Jarshaw with 18, Barto

See GRIZZLIES..pg. 2B

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies win one for their seniors, 66-44

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- On a night when the North Woods girls honored their three seniors, they made sure to send them out in style with a 66-44 thrashing of Littlefork-

Sierra Schuster, Nevada Gauthier, and Addison Burckhardt have all been key contributors in the regular rotation of Head Coach Liz Cheney's team, helping to keep the entire team motivated with their play and leadership in a tough rebuilding year. Coming off a loss against Ely last Thursday, the Grizzlies were determined to rebound against the Vikings.

Schuster kicked off the scoring by streaking down the lane and taking an

See NW GIRLS...pg. 2B

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HOCKEY

Ely bows out quickly in Section 7A tournament action

by Marshall Helmberger

Managing Editor

MOOSE LAKE— The Timberwolves hockey season came to a quick end in familiar form during last Saturday's play-in round to the Section

7A tournament. As they have for the past several weeks, the Wolves struggled to put points on the board in a contest in which they trailed the entire way.

After 11 minutes of score-

less hockey, the Rebels came alive, racking up three goals in the next five minutes to stake themselves to a 3-0 lead.

Ely sophomore forward Owen Marolt tried to light the spark at the 3:59 mark of the second period, with an assist from Rhett Johnson, but it proved to be the Wolves only point of the night in a 4-1 final score. Moose Lake added its final point late in the period, and both teams went scoreless

in the final stanza.

The loss ended any hopes of a post-season rebound for the struggling Wolves and the loss dropped Ely's final season record to 5-18. The Wolves had shown some promise

early, racking up a 3-4 record in the first seven games of the season. But they followed up with 14 losses out of their final 16 games, averaging just 1.06 goals per game during the stretch.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Timberwolves look good in 57-47 win over Deer River

ELY — Lydia Shultz worked the paint and Zoe Mackenzie prowled outside the arc as they combined for 31 points to lead Ely to a 57-47 victory over Deer River here

on Tuesday.

Shultz connected on five of ten shots from two-point range on her way to 16 points in the contest. She added a trey, went three-for-four from

the charity stripe, and added five rebounds along the way. Mackenzie notched 15 points, all on treys.

in the contest. She added a Audrey Kallberg had a trey, went three-for-four from strong outing as well, scoring

nine and notching 11 boards, just missing a double-double. Maija Mattson scored six points and grabbed seven rebounds, while Amelia Penke scored four and notched 11

boards. Clare Thomas added six points.

The Wolves, who improved to 15-8 with the win, were set to finish out their regular season at home this

week, with games on Thursday and Friday against Littlefork-Big Falls and South Ridge respectively. The first round of the Section 7A playoffs begin Monday.

GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

machine, going 14-of-26 from the floor with five treys and a game-high total of 34 points, scoring as much as the entire North Woods team. Clare Thomas was the other Ely player in double digits with ten. Chosa led North Woods with 13 points, followed by Barto with ten.

The Wolves' Head Coach Tomi Cole was pleased with how her team responded after the break.

"At halftime, we certainly had to take a deeper



Left: The Wolves' Amelia Penke gets hacked by a North Woods defender as she puts up a scoop shot during Thursday's game at North Woods. Penke scored 34 points in the contest.

photo by D. Colburn

look at our first half, and I thought we didn't play up to the standard that I know that we can," Cole said. "So the conversation was just go out and be aggressive, play a lot harder, and just have people

step up and be more leaders out there. We needed better production from all of them on both ends of the floor, and it all starts with the defensive effort, and I thought that was a lot better in the second half."

Grizzlies' Head Coach Liz Cheney thought the halftime deficit didn't reflect how well the Grizzlies played overall in the first half.

"We missed a lot of short shots that should've been right there," Cheney said. "On defense we tried to zone and we let Penke get a few three pointers, so then we went to man to man and we were doing really good on that. And then a 14-point deficit gets to 20 to 25 really quickly and we didn't score for quite a long time in the second half, and then you just feel deflated – it's hard to come back. But we played a great first half. We just need to put all the pieces together and play one complete game."

NORDIC...Continued from page 1B

day and said, 'I will ski in whatever role that is best for our team.' We never felt like the team split after the decision was made who would ski the relay. Everyone took on their role and performed to their best ability and the outcome was more than we expected. We asked Oliver and Eli to set the tone for the whole team by skiing their best on Wednesday and they did."

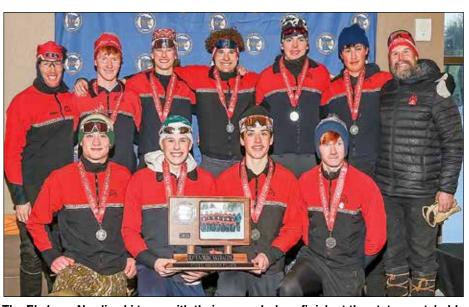
In the final tally, the points earned by Hohenstein and Olson for their second-place finish proved to be pivotal, boosting the Wolves past Mounds Park Academy for second place overall.

In the pursuit competition, sectional champion Dylan Durkin crossed the line in eighth place to top the Ely contingent. Durkin had a time of 15:06.1 in freestyle and 14:44.7 in classic for a combined time of 29:50.1, almost a minute faster than his sectional win.

"Dylan did have a great end of the season push," Hohenstein said. "He gained a great deal of confidence during the Marshall Sprints race in mid-January where he was able to pull off the individual win. Dylan just kept challenging himself to stay on top and that brought the rest of the team along. That meet was a breakthrough event for the team as well. That was the day that the coaching staff smiled and said things are coming together.

"Our home meet was another high point when our boys took the top four places. One of our top sophomore skiers, Aksel Skustad finished second and had a phenomenal day, along with Eli Olson finishing third. It's hard to overstate the importance of the way these guys have helped each other reach new performance levels."

Skustad placed 19th in Otto Devine slotted in at 48th the state meet pursuit with with a time of 32:22, and Milo



The Ely boys Nordic ski team with their second-place finish at the state meet, held last week at Giants Ridge. Back row: Coach Fish, Otto Devine, Dylan Durkin, Milo McClelland, Eli Olson, Brooks Brenny, Coach Hohenstein. Front row: Tory Hughley, Oliver Hohenstein, Aksel Skustad and Wyatt Devine. photo by D. Colburn

a combined time of 30:34.3, Wyatt Devine came in 39th with a total time of 31:44.5, Otto Devine slotted in at 48th with a time of 32:22, and Milo McClelland finished 76th with a time of 33:55.5, with all but McClelland improving on their sectional times.

eir sectional times.
With 359 total points, Ely

finished just 11 points behind state champion Wayzata and 14 points higher than thirdplace Mounds Park Academy. Mounds Park won the pursuit competition, but finished far back in team sprint, placing 16th

Hohenstein also had high praise for senior Anna Dunn, who qualified individually for the state pursuit competition. Dunn finished in the middle of the pack in 65th place with a combined time of 39:36.3

"Anna started the season

with the goal of qualifying for the state meet and she reached that goal," Hohenstein said. "It took a great deal of effort and persistence to make that happen. She skied well and was happy with her performance. The girls team also met many of their team goals. Success as a team is not always measured by the times on a results page. I am very proud of what our girls team set out to accomplish this season and they have much to celebrate as well."

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

with 15, and Aidan Hartway with 12.

The Mesabi East Giants were indeed bigger than the Grizzlies, but not nearly as tough, nimble and clever.

The Grizzlies trailed early in the game, but a three-ball by Panichi ignited an 8-0 run to put North Woods up 16-11. The Grizzlies established some distance in the final five minutes of the half after

the Giants pulled to within 18-11. Buckets by Jarshaw and Panichi were followed by two consecutive Kalvyn Benner treys, and a bucket by August Peltier gave North Woods a 30-19 lead. In the closing seconds, the Giants called a timeout to set up a play,but Aidan Hartway foiled their plans by stealing the ball in the backcourt and flipping it to Jarshaw, who cooly hit

a three-pointer as the buzzer sounded for a 35-22 advantage at the break.

Lockdown defense kept the Giants off balance as the Grizzlies worked to solidify their lead, forginga 16-4 run that vaulted them to a 51-26 margin at the 11:50 mark. North Woods kept its foot on the gas, with the lead ballooning to 55-32 on another trey by Benner. TaySean Boshey-

Wilkerson came into the game with under four minutes to play and left his mark, knocking down a rainbow three and converting a turnover for a basket on consecutive possessions. After Grizzlies' Head Coach Andrew Jugovich sent in a platoon of reserves, a putback by John Carlson put the cap on the 39-point, 79-40

beatdown.

Panichi led the Grizzlies

with 24 points, Benner tallied 11, and the rest of the scoring was evenly balanced across the North Woods regulars.

The two wins brought the Grizzlies' season record back to the .500 mark at 11-11. The Grizzlies will have the opportunity to avenge two of those losses in their fourgame stretch to close out the regular season. First up was a Thursday road game

at Littlefork-Big Falls, who beat the Grizzlies 89-70 on Feb. 7. North Woods returns home for a Friday contest against Chisholm, and then hosts a rematch with Ely, who overwhelmed the Grizzlies 80-53 in January. A trip on Friday, Feb. 28 to Deer River will round out the remainder of the schedule.

NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

inbounds pass for a lay up, and followed that up with a 12-foot jumper in the lane. A pair of charities by Schuster sparked a 12-0 run by the Grizzlies, with baskets by Brynn Chosa, Corra Brodeen, and Tatum Barto lifting the Grizzlies to a 16-6 lead. That was the closest the Vikings would get for the rest of the game.

As they were against Ely, the Grizzlies were at their sharpest in the first half, playing smothering defense all over the court and smartly executing plays on the offensive end. With Barto and Chosa carrying much of the scoring load, North Woods extended its lead to 25-8 on a Barto drive with 7:01 left in the half. After a short scoring drought, Brodeen got the Grizzlies back on track with a ten-foot baseline jumper, and with an eight-point flurry in the last 90 seconds of the half on baskets by Brodeen, Barto, and Zoey Burckhardt, North Woods carried a 22-point, 37-15 lead

into the break.

While the scoring indicates the teams played to a 29-29 tie in the second half, in reality the Grizzlies were well in control for most of the period, taking a 32-point lead at 63-31 on a layup by Addison Burckhardt with just under seven minutes to play. With the Grizzlies' reserves seeing more playing time toward the end of the game, their shooting cooled off, giving the Vikings the opportunity to close the gap in the final minutes to account for the 66-44 final.

Barto led North Woods with 20 points, and Chosa was right on her heels with 19. Eight Grizzlies got into the scoring column.

The Grizzlies' sixth win of the season wasn't their largest margin of victory – that came in a 70-28 blowout of Cook County in December, but their style of play which notching their second win in the past three games is evidence of how this team has improved over the season. Half the team's wins have come in the past

six games.

It's likely that the Grizzlies tallied their last win of the regular season against the Vikings, as their Thursday finale was a home matchup against Class AAA Hermantown. The Hawks had a 15-8 record coming into the game and North Woods was the only Class A team on their schedule.

Currently standing 12th in the section, the Grizzlies would be on the road for the first game of the Section 7 tournament, which gets underway with a play-in game between the 16th and 17th seeds on Monday, Feb. 24 before a full slate of action on Thursday, Feb. 27.

READ the Timberjay!

Cook Thrift Shop

It may not seem like spring right now, but at the Cook Thrift Shop it is!

The floors in the shop need some TLC. To help clear inventory we will be having a half-off everything in the shop sale (except jewelry)

Starting February 20 through March 8
Shopping hours are 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
on February 27 – 28; March 6 – 8

The shop will then be closed until March 20 after which regular hours will resume. Come find some bargains at half the price!

Donations will be accepted during the posted shopping dates.

Follow us on Facebook at Cook Area Health Care Auxiliary for updates.

NPS cuts hit Voyageurs National Park staff

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The Trump administration relented on its hiring freeze of seasonal employees for the National Park Service last week, while at the same time dropping the ax on 1,000 NPS employees who were on probationary status, costing Voyageurs National Park one of its key employees.

The NPS directed all parks to not answer questions about staffing decisions, but to instead refer all media inquiries to the national office, which has not responded to an email request from the Timberjay sent on Jan. 28.

The *Timberjay* has been able to confirm that at least one VNP probationary employee, Program Manager for Interpretation, Outreach, and Partnerships Kate Severson, was terminated in the systemwide purge last week. Hired late last summer, it was Severson's responsibility to facilitate visitors' experiences in the park, including ranger-led programs, developing exhibits, maintaining the park web-

New interpretive, outreach lead Severson gets fired

site and social media, working with the visitor centers, and overseeing the park's curriculum-based education program, as well as to be the park's primary media contact.

It's unknown to the *Timberjay* at this point what other employees, if any, were cut, and as Superintendent Bob DeGross is prevented from talking to the media, any suggestions about possible impacts to park operations are speculative. At the very least, it can be assumed that Severson's many responsibilities will have to be reallocated to remaining staff members, ones who will likely have some familiarity with those functions while not necessarily possessing Severson's professional experience and expertise. But her responsibilities were wide-ranging, and it will surely take many to pick up the slack now that she's gone.

The firings, which have been dubbed the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre," have gotten swift condemnation from multiple NPS support organizations.

"Staffing cuts of this magnitude will have devastating consequences for parks and communities," said Theresa Pierno, president and CEO of the National Parks Conservation Association. "We are concerned about smaller parks closing visitor center doors and larger parks losing key staff including wastewater treatment operators. Years of budget cuts are already weakening the agency's ability to protect and preserve these incredible places. With peak season just weeks away, the decision to slash 1,000 permanent, full-time jobs from national parks is reckless and could have serious public safety and health consequences."

Seasonal employees

After freezing seasonal hires and rescinding job offers to many who had already gone through the hiring process, the administration will now allow parks to hire 5,000 seasonal employees.

But it hasn't yet been revealed

how those positions will be allocated, and the number falls well short of historical seasonal hiring practices. Traditionally, NPS hires between 6,000-8,000 seasonal staff, according to multiple sources. Shortages will undoubtedly further hamper park operations.

And, as of Tuesday, the hiring process had not yet resumed – only four seasonal NPS positions were listed on the USAJobs federal government jobs website. Among the tasks typically done by seasonal workers are greeting visitors, staffing visitor centers and information kiosks, patrolling trails, fighting wildfires, cleaning restrooms, and leading interpretive tours.

"Park staff work tirelessly to protect our nation's most treasured places, from Yosemite to Gettysburg," Pierno said. "They educate visitors, safeguard history and preserve what makes our country special. This isn't how we treat the places we cherish or those who protect them. We're calling on our



Kate Severson

leaders to prioritize our parks and the staff who keep them safe and running."

The *Timberjay* attempted to contact DeGross on Monday, and he responded that our email had been forwarded to the Midwest Regional Communications Office. The Timberjay had not received a response by press time.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

State considers higher fees for electric vehicles

by DAVID COLBURN

Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Electric vehicle owners may soon be paying more to drive their cars on Minnesota's roads if a new bill under consideration in the Minnesota House moves forward.

With the state seeing more and more electric vehicles (EVs) on its roads, lawmakers are struggling with how to maintain funding for road and bridge maintenance. Traditionally, those projects have been paid for through a combination of the motor fuels tax, motor vehicle sales taxes and registration taxes.

The motor fuels tax, or gas tax as its commonly known, is currently at 31.8 cents per gallon for gasoline and diesel, having gone up 3.3 cents per gallon on Jan. 1 because that tax rate is indexed to the rate at which

highway construction costs rise. As more drivers opt for EVs, the funds generated by the gas tax are expected to shrink.

"Right now, while we're moving to the EV model across the state and the country, our roads and bridges are funded by the gas tax," said Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar, R-Fredenberg Township, one of the bill's supporters, during a Monday committee hearing. "So, we're not go-

ing to have funds going into the roads and bridges like we have historically."

Under the proposal, the state's current \$75 surcharge for purchasing an all-electric vehicle would double to \$150. Additional annual fees would also be introduced for other types of electric-powered vehicles. Owners of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles would pay \$75 per year, while all-electric motorcycle owners would pay \$30. Plug-

in hybrid motorcycle owners would see a \$15 annual surcharge. These fees would be included as part of the motor vehicle registration process. Surcharges would also be indexed to increases in the gas tax.

Not everyone is in favor of the change. Nick Haeg, senior associate for electric vehicles with the renewable energy advocacy group Fresh Energy, spoke against the bill. He pointed to a report from the MnDOT released in Nov. 2024, which suggests that electric vehicle owners already contribute enough through higher sales taxes and registration fees to offset the gas tax revenue they are no longer paying.

The bill was laid over by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee for possible inclusion in a future omnibus bill.

Obituaries and Death Notices

Rodney K. Dunn

Rodney "Rod" Keith Dunn, 84, of Cook, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, with his loving wife by his side. A celebration of life will be held in June. In lieu of flowers, please direct memorial gifts to MAF (Missionary Aviation Fellowship). Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.

He is survived by his wife, Betty Clow Dunn; daughter, Lisa Kittleson (Jeffrey); grandchildren, Paige Syverson (Zac) and Noah Kittelson (Maddy); "adopted" grandchildren, Alex, Addison and Zoey Burckhardt; brothers, Duane Dunn of Northfield and Dale Dunn (Cheryl) of LaPorte; and sister, Susie Kasprowicz (Dean) of Hallock.

Kenneth R. Pintar

Kenneth R. Pintar, 68, of Babbitt, passed away on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, after a short battle with cancer. A celebration of life will be held from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 23 at Fish Tales Bar in Babbitt.

He is survived by his son, Travis (Tena) and grandsons, Aiden and Cooper, all of Pequot Lakes; sister, Lynne Nielsen of Ely; brother, Butch (Larry) of Nashwauk; and special friends, Jeannette and Lee Newton.

Kyle L. Gorecki

Kyle L. Gorecki, 35, of Babbitt, died on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, at his home. A celebration of life will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 8 at the Hideaway in Babbitt. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely.

He is survived by his parents, Beverly Tuura and Loren Gorecki; brother, Jeffrey Gorecki; sister, Ashley Gorecki; niece, Jayden Gorecki; nephew, Jackson Gorecki; grandmother, Virginia Tuura; and beloved dogs, Boone, Hazel, and Anna.

Carol L.H. Skala

Carol Lynne Helen Griese Skala, 84, of Ely, died on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, following complications of Alzheimer's. Thanks to the medical staff at Essentia Clinic - Ely, Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospice East Range Team, Carefree Living of Ely and Ely-Bloomenson Hospital for their wonderful care. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated privately at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely with inurnment at the Ely Cemetery. Memorials are preferred to St. Anthony's Catholic Church or donor's choice.

husband of 63 years, Joe; daughters, Vicky (Paul) Cherne of Shoreview, Valerie (Bob) Walker of Elburn, Ill., and Sarah (Stephen Brandt) Skala of Ely; grandchildren, Tony (McKenzie Hofmann) Cherne, Mary (Garett) Schoenfelder and John Cherne; great-granddaughter, Greta Schoenfelder; the Derus cousins, a nephew and four nieces; and very special friend, Vicki Wagner of Ely.

Robert Peyla

Robert "Robbie" Peyla, 63, of Biwabik, died surrounded by family on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025, at his home after a long and courageous battle with brain cancer. A Funeral Mass was held on Feb. 17 at Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church in Aurora with Father Daniel Hammer celebrating. Interment was in Lakeside Cemetery in Biwabik. Arrangements were by Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home of Gilbert.

Survivors include his wife of 42 years, Sally Mattson Peyla; children, Sean (Kristina) Peyla and Andrew (Shaina) Peyla, both of Lakeland, and Justin (Sarah) Peyla of Embarrass; eight grandchildren;

brother, Paul (Janet) Peyla of Elkridge, Md.; sisters, Susie (Tony) Licari of Embarrass and Cathy (Dan) Peterson of Tower; brother-in-law, Tom Mattson of Lakeland; sisterin-law, Sue (Rob) Kurak of Lino Lakes; nieces, Danielle Peterson of Lake Vermilion and Anna Peyla of St. Paul; nephews, Ethan (Julia) Kurak of Rochester, Reed Kurak of Lino Lakes, Adam (Sarah) Licari of Wadena, Brent Peterson of Tower, Vermil_ Bradley Peterson of V ion Township, James Peyla of Elkridge, Md., and John Peyla of Grand Chute, Wis.; and numerous aunts and un-

Leonard M. Cersine

Leonard M. Cersine, 77, of Ely, died peacefully on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025. A celebration of life will be held during the summer of 2025 in Ely with a date to be announced. Family services have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

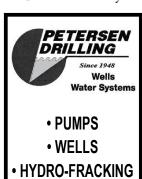
He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Devvie Booth Cersine of Ely; sons, Matthew (Deisy) Cersine of Orlando, Fla., and Stephen (Leah) Cersine of Chicago, Ill.; sister, Mary (Mike) Har-

ri of Ely; brother, Jack (Norma) Cersine of Babbitt; and nephews, Mike Harri and Leonard Harri, both of Ely.

JoAn M. Angell

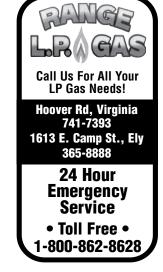
JoAn Marie Leseman Angell, 89, longtime resident of Babbitt, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025, at her residence. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by son,



1-800-662-5700 Spring Park Rd. Mt. Iron, MN 55768 daughter, Cindy and family; late son Charlie's daughters and families; sisters, Jeannette and Eleanor and families; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Tim (Leslee) and family;







Ron Castellano Ice Arena | 32 South Dr, Babbitt MN



HERE COMES THE SUN

The return of daylight ramps up in February



Managing Editor

REGIONAL — This February has been sunnier than usual, but the sunlight's return during the month is one thing that residents of the North Country can always rely upon. Day length in the North Country changes little for weeks on either side of the winter

But the sun's return hits its stride in February, when the North Country gains a whopping 86 minutes of day length during the 28 days of the typical month, an average of almost three minutes a day.

On Feb. 1, the sun rises at 7:35 a.m.,

but by the end of the month, it will be rising at 6:51 a.m., a gain of 44 minutes. The sun sets at 5:10 p.m. on Feb. 1 but doesn't set until 5:52 p.m. on Feb. 28— a gain of 42 minutes. That pace continues more or less unchanged through April and begins to slow again as the North Country nears the summer solstice.

As of this weekend, the North Country will be enjoying about ten hours and 38 minutes of daylight, or more than two hours longer than the eight hours and 24 minutes the region experiences on Dec. 21.

We'll be picking up considerably more light in the evenings starting on Sunday, March 9 when we shift to daylight savings



Two members of the Cranberry wolf pack make their way across a frozen beaver pond in Voyageurs National Park. The photos are among thousands taken as part of the ongoing Voyageurs Wolf Project.

Left:

courtesy Voyageurs Wolf Project

RESEARCH

Record mild winter was tough on wolves

Wolf study finds that limited snow gave white-tailed deer the advantage

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK - Last winter's record mild conditions presented an unprecedented challenge for gray wolves here, and a unique research opportunity for the Voyageurs Wolf Project, or VWP.

Researchers with the project closely monitored two of the seven packs they study to get a clearer picture of how effectively wolves can hunt white-tailed deer when the agile ungulates aren't weakened and bogged down by deep snow. The winter of 2023-24 was the mildest ever recorded across Minnesota, including at Voyageurs National Park, and the comparatively warm temperatures and very limited snow cover presented a challenge for wolf packs that rely heavily on deer for food in winter.

While it may not be widely known, extensive research shows that wolves in northern Minnesota kill few adult deer outside of late winter, when deer are typically most vulnerable due to the effects of normal winter conditions. They can be exceptionally vulnerable during winters with deep and prolonged snow cover, as the region experienced in the winters of 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Researchers with the VWP used GPS data to determine when the wolves from two packs, the five-member Thuja pack and the sev-

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER en-member Stub-Tail pack, free periods of the year. had brought down a deer, an event that is usually readily recognizable from pack movements, or lack of movement in the aftermath

of a kill.

During last winter's mild conditions, the research team found that wolves struggled to bring down deer and likely failed to maintain their body weights at a time when wolves are typically in peak condition.

"Indeed, the kill rates of wolves on deer we observed were some of the lowest kill rates of wolves on deer during winter that have been documented," wrote Tom Gable, the lead author on the study. "This result is unsurprising because numerous studies have shown that the magnitude of wolf predation on deer during winter is primarily modulated by winter conditions, in particular the depth and duration of snow cover.'

The researchers say the results suggest that most adult deer are not vulnerable to wolf predation during mild winter conditions.

While both packs studied struggled to bring down deer, the Stub-Tail pack went nearly a month, or 26 days, in March, without killing a deer. While the Thuja pack was somewhat more consistent, it typically went about five days between kills in February and March.

From April through May of that year, researchers reported no successful deer kills by either pack. According to the researchers,

that is not atypical for snow-

the end of March, the two packs killed a combined total of 23 deer, or an average of just under one deer per wolf per month.

The study found that scavenging comprised about a quarter of the calories that the wolves consumed during the two winter months, primarily in March. A moose calf, that apparently died of disease in the Stub-Tail pack's territory and a dead horse that had been dumped in the Thuja pack's territory provided an important supplement for the two packs under difficult conditions.

The implications

The research suggests that while adult white-tailed deer are a critically important food source for wolves in northern Minnesota from mid-to-late winter, wolves' ability to catch deer is largely dependent on winter conditions, and may be quite

-20

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02/16 10 -11

02/15

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1.66 47.8"

snow cover.

This finding, according to the researchers, confirms that the severity of winter conditions is the primary factor determining population trends among whitetailed deer in Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding area, which is on the northern fringe of white-

tailed deer range. The study also concluded that wolves, on average, appear to take fewer adult deer than is commonly believed. As the researchers noted, "wolf predation on adult-sized deer primarily occurs during October-April with predation generally peaking in February–April... notably, predation on adult deer from May to August

The two packs involved in the study showed limited success hunting deer outside the narrow window in the late

limited in mild winters, par- winter of 23-24, when the From February through ticularly winters with limited region still had some snow cover, even though it was

The study looked at the two packs' hunting success in the fall, beginning in October and found very limited success during that period. That could be a reflection of the difficulty of hunting adult deer during periods without snow cover as well as the relatively low deer density in and around Voyageurs National Park.

Even so, the study concluded that the two wolf packs likely took an average of 6.2 adult deer per pack member over the course of the entire year. That number could well have been much higher in a severe winter with abundant snow, but appears significantly lower than common belief about the impact of wolf predation on deer in the region.

Outdoors briefly



down a boat at Hoodoo Point on Lake Vermilion.

County board approves 2025 funding for **AIS fight**

REGIONAL - The St. Louis County Board has given preliminary approval to distribute \$709,992 in state dollars earmarked for the fight against aquatic invasive species, or AIS.

The approved projects and funding in northern St. Louis County include:

➤\$401,861 to the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District to manage watercraft inspections, decontaminations and public education on more than two dozen lakes, including: Bear Island, Birch, Burntside, Crane, Eagles Nest 2, Eagles Nest 3, Embarrass, Johnson, Kabetogama, Little Sturgeon, One Pine, Pelican, Salo, Shagawa, Side Lake, Sturgeon, Vermilion, and White Iron lakes.

➤\$111,000 to Wildlife Forever for marketing efforts for their Clean Drain Dry Initiative campaign aimed at public awareness and education, and behavioral change.

➤\$35.500 to the Vermilion Lake Association for continued watercraft inspections and cleaning, public awareness and education, habitat evaluation and threat assessment, early detection, and partnership development.

➤\$20,100 to Burntside Lake Association for educational outreach to boaters and smelt netters, to build early detection capabilities, and partnership development.

▶\$10,000 to Minnesota North College - Vermilion to create a program that monitors AIS and water quality within Shagawa Lake.

Final approval of the funding is expected during the board meeting on Feb. 25, in Virginia.

Each year, through the AIS Prevention Aid Program, the state Legislature allocates funding to counties to be used to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS. Through an application and proposal process, St. Louis County has sought out organizations to address AIS issues with multi-disciplinary, integrated solutions based on science, related to natural resources sustainability, and social and economic concerns.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

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from NOAA weather

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02/15

YTD Total

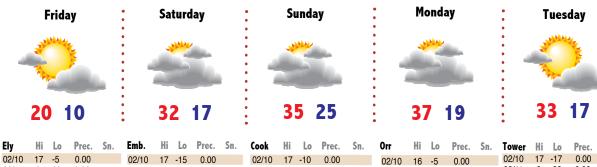
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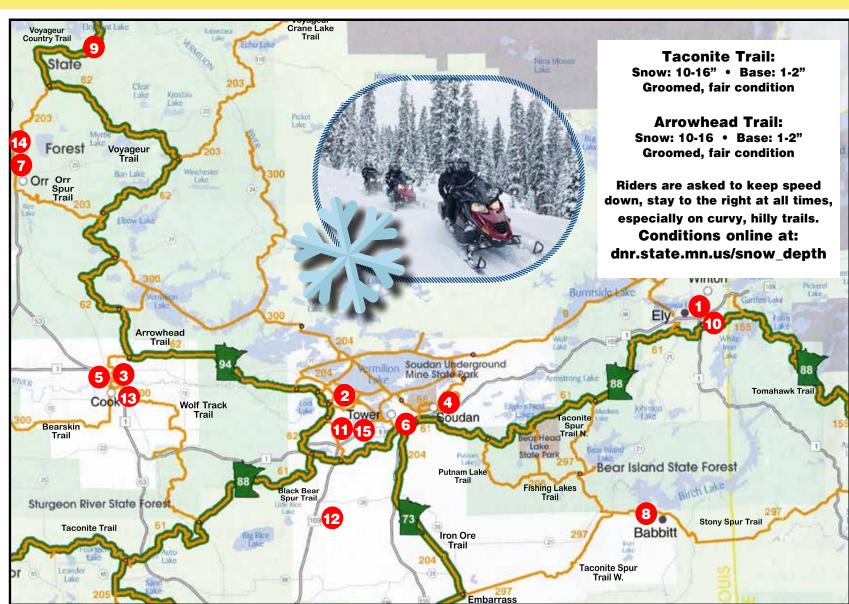
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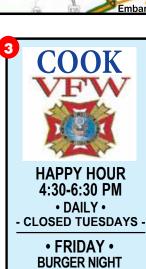
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PUBLIC NOTICE

FIELD TOWNSHIP **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING** AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Field Township, County of St. Louis, and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Please contact the Clerk at 218-780-7012 to arrange an Absentee Ballot or to return one. (This includes March 8 from 10 a.m. 12 noon, and March 10 until 5 p.m.)

The election poll hours will be from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot: One Supervisor for a term of 3 years One Treasurer for a term of 2 years

The Board of Canvass will meet following the polls to canvass the election results

The Annual Meeting will commence following the Board of Canvass to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meetings will be held at the Field Town Hall, 1627 Hwy. 25.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 18, 2025. Any questions, contact the clerk at clerk@fieldtownship.com.

The Reorganization Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 7 p.m. at the clerk's home (9998 East Lind Rd., Angora). In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on March 26, 2025.

Pat Chapman, Town Clerk, Field Township

Published in the Timberjay, February 21, 2025

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ELECTION MN 205.16, subd. 4.

THE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP ANNUAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD ON MARCH

POLLS WILL BE OPEN from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm AT THE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP HALL, 3000 County Rd 77, Tower MN 55790.

The March 11, 2025, Election will be for the following positions:

Supervisor 4 3- year term Treasurer 2-year term

Question #1 - "Shall Option B, providing for the appointment of the Clerk and Treasurer by the Town Board, be adopted for the government of Greenwood Township?"

The successful candidate for the Town Treasurer position shall take office only if Option B is abandoned at the election.

GREENWOOD ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025, AT THE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP HALL AT

THE GREENWOOD TOWN BOARD WILL MEET IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ANNUAL TO CANVASS ELECTION RESULTS and conduct regular business.

In case of inclement weather, the ELECTION, GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING will be postponed until Tuesday, March 18, 2025, AT THE GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP HALL with the Board meeting immediately following.

Debby Spicer- Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

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

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VERMILION LAKE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Vermilion Lake Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

The election poll hours will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot:

One Supervisor for a term of 3 years One Treasurer for a term of 2 years

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:15 p.m. to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meeting will be held at the following location: VERMILION LAKE TOWN HALL, 6703 WAHLSTEN ROAD

NOTE: Board of Canvass will meet following the Annual Meeting.

Frank Zobitz, Vermilion Lake Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21, 2025

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Notice of Annual Meeting and Election of Officers for Morcom Township, St. Louis County, MN

Notice is herby given to the voters of Morcom Township, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at the Bear River Community Center,12512 HWY 22, Cook, MN 55723.

In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the 3rd Tuesday in March (March 18, 2025).

The Election Poll hours will be from 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm at the Bear River Community Center. Voters will elect:

1 Treasurer 1 Township Supervisor

The Board of Canvass will meet on March 11, 2025 following the closing of the polls to certify official election results.

The Annual Meeting will commence at 8:15pm to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

Board of Audit and Town Budget meeting will be separate, and held at the Bear River Community Center on February 24, at 6:00 pm.

Sasha Lehto, Clerk 218-969-5812 Morcom Township

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

KABETOGAMA TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Kabetogama Township, County of Saint Louis, State of Minnesota that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 11, 2025.** In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the third Tuesday in March (3/18/25).

The election poll hours will be open from 4:00 to 8:00 pm, at which time the voters will elect: One **Supervisor** 3-year term, and one **Treasurer** 2-year term.

The Annual meeting will commence at

8:15 pm to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Board of Canvass will commence immediately following the Annual meeting.

Annual Election and Meeting will be held at the following location: Kabetogama Town Hall, 9707 Gamma Road, Kabetogama, MN 56669

Mary Manninen, Clerk, Town of Kabetogama

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS BOIS FORTE - NETT LAKE FOOD SHELF ORR. MINNESOTA

The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians will receive sealed bids for the "BOIS FORTE - NETT LAKE FOOD SHELF", until 2:00 p.m., TUESDAY, MARCH 11th, 2025, at the office the Nett Lake Triba Government Center, 5344 Lakeshore Drive, Nett Lake, Minnesota, at which time all Bids will be publicly opened, and read aloud.

All bids must be sealed and

clearly marked, "BID FOR: BOIS FORTE - NETT LAKE FOOD SHELF ", along with bidder's name, and must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond in the amount of five percent (5%) of the net base bid amount, payable to the order of Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians, as warranty that the successful bidder will enter into a contract and furnish the usual Bonds (Performance Bond and Labor and Material Payment Bond) as required by the Specifications within ten (10) days after Notice of Award of

Bid Documents (plans and specifications) will be available electronically beginning February 18th, 2025. Free access to the plans & specifications may be obtained contacting DSGW tects, Inc., (218) Architects, 727-2626. Bid Documents

may also be examined at the builder's exchang-es of: Minnesota Builders Exchange,Construct Connect, and Dodge Data & Analytics. Pre-printed plans and specifications will not be

No Bidder shall modify, withdraw or cancel their Bid or any part thereof for sixty (60) days after the date des ignated for the receipt of bids. The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities and informalities therein and to award the Contract to other than the lowest bidder, if in their discretion the interest of the project will be best served thereby.

MILESTONE DATES: 1. A Pre-Bid meeting will be held on February 25th @ 10:00 a.m., but contractors are welcome to visit side

conditions at the project site, 12831 Nett Lake Rd, Orr, MN 55771. Please check in with personal upon arrival 2 Receive Bids the week of March 10, 2025. 3. Award at March Tribal Council Mtg, March 22,

2025. 4. Construction to Start in March 2025.

Substantial Completion after Big Woods utilities are in, as we are tying the utilities to sewer and water

Published in the Timberjay,

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS BOIS FORTE -VERMILION **HEAD START** ORR. MINNESOTA

The Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians receive sealed bids the "BOIS FORTE VERMILION HEAD START", until 2:00 p.m., TUESDAY, MARCH 11th, 2025, at the office of the Nett Lake Tribal Government Center, 5344 Lakeshore Drive, Nett Lake, Minnesota, at which time all Bids will be publicly opened, and read aloud.

All bids must be sealed and clearly marked, "BID FOR: BOIS FORTE - VERMILION HEAD START", along with bidder's name, and must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond in the amount of five percent (5%) of the net base bid amount, payable to the order of Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians, as war ranty that the successful bidder will enter into a contract and furnish the usual Bonds (Performance Bond and Labor and Material Payment Bond) as required by the Specifications within ten (10) days after Notice of Award of Contract.

Bid Documents (plans and specifications) will be available electronically beginning February 18th, 2025. Free access to the plans & specifications may be obtained contacting

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS Notice is hereby given to the qualified

LEIDING TOWNSHIP

voters of Leiding Township, County of St. Louis and State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at the Leiding Town Hall.

In case of inclement weather, the election and meeting will be postponed until Tuesday, March 18, 2024. The election poll hours will be open

from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at which time the voters will elect by ballot: One Supervisor for a term of 3 years

One Treasurer for a term of 2 years

The Board of Canvass will follow the election.

The Annual Meeting will commence following the Board of Canvass to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

Regular Town Board Meeting The regular meeting of the Leiding

Town Board will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

LEIDING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF AUDIT

The Leiding Town Board will hold their annual Board of Audit on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Leiding Town Hall.

Marie Milan, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21, 2025

Notice to the Voters of the Town of Crane Lake

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Notice is

hereby given to the qualified voters of the Town of Crane Lake, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Crane Lake Chapel Fellowship Hall to set the levies, and conduct all necessary business prescribed by law. In case of inclement weather, the Meeting may be postponed until Tuesday,

Jo Ann Pohlman, Deputy-Clerk Town of Crane Lake

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

Architects, 727-2626. Bid Documents may also be examined at builder's exchanges of: Minnesota Builders Exchange, Construct Connect, and Dodge Data & Analytics. Pre-printed plans and specifications will not be

provided

No Bidder shall modify, with any part thereof for sixty (60) days after the date des ignated for the receipt of The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities and informal ities therein and to award the Contract to other than the lowest bidder, if in their discretion the interest of the project will be best served thereby.

MILESTONE DATES:

1. A Pre-Bid meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25th, 2025 @ 1:00 p.m., but contractors are welcome to visit side conditions at the project site, 1611 Farm Rd S, Tower, MN. Please check in with personal upon arrival 2. Receive Bids the week of

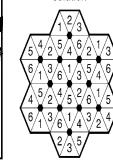
March 10, 2025.

3. Award at March Tribal Council Mtg March 22, 2025 Construction to Start in March 2025

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 21 & 28, 2025

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<u>Answers</u> S P O T O H M S O R B I T S A R R O W R O O T N O I S E S HARDEARNEDCASHEW IDIOTSTPAULS S C A R E R A R L E S I R S G E T Z C A R D I N A L S I N E W M A L I A L A S K A N O R D E R S G O T H I C R O B I N T O A S K E W T O O M U C H S E A B E E S E A L E D C O M P A R E

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N A A N E P I L O G A A D E P T N E S S

-**Super** Crossword

Timberjay!

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging

Weekly SUDOKU

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way

that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

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TIMBERJAY CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely.

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

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

TOPS- Meetings every Monday at 4:45 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church,

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

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

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

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

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

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

6

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

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

A L C O H O L I C S ANONYMOUS- East Range meetings and information call 218-749-3387 or www district8online.org

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

— **King** Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.



HAIR CARE

DREAMWEAVER SALON & DAY SPA- Open Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Evenings by appointment. 218-666-5594. tfn

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> > by Japheth Light

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puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6

around each of them. No number can

be repeated in any partial hexagon

shape along the border of the puzzle.

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107 Wallach of

110 Less typical

111 "Am not!"

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109 Intone

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41 Coffee type

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44 Old Italian

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45 Stops

46 Look for

48 U.S. naval

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50 Crazy caper

51 Small bird

56 Sailor's

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53 Lav, to Brits

58 Victory cries

60 Snug-fitting

59 Lacking frost

necklaces

63 Artistic work

65 "Riverdale"

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Up My Life"

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ACROSS

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- 21 They may
- with great
- 25 Nail salon
- job, in brief 26 — box (TV)
- London
- 29 Prohibits
- 30 Erfurt article
- shams with
- 35 Calf-roping
- 37 Link with
- 39 "Boo!"
- 49 Catholic
- **54** Juneau
- strength?
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- 87 Joan of folk 89 Climate that promotes

82 Navy

- the growth of 127 Syringe powdery
- fungus? 91 Pale-looking
- 94 "Get 'em, Fido!" 96 Model X carmaker
- 97 Runs after
- 98 Aussie leaper
- 99 Grand house **101** "You're –
- - 2 Luxury handbag
 - label
- **DOWN** 1 Polite title for an Indian
 - 3 Longtime

- 4 Big fusses 5 "... Mac — PC?" 6 Goofed
- photographer (around) 7 Quebec city 8 Stair unit
- Marceau's 9 At just the right time 10 Author Dahl 109 — -Cherry

Super Crossword

- (Ocean Spray 11 Actress Jacqueline 113 Pretty good
 - 12 "Kinda sorta" 13 Golf peg
 - 14 Detroit-to-Memphis dir. and tentacles
 - 15 Crawford of
 - the NBA
 - 16 In style 17 "Told ya so!"
 - **18** faire
 - 20 Soggy
 - 24 Pat gently 28 "Let's Get
 - Loud" singer, familiarly **30** 1996
- 125 Small vortex presidential candidate
 - iournalist Gav Bob **32** 2006
 - Nintendo debut
 - 33 Salon
 - service
 - man
- senator

- - 36 Thereabouts
- the OK"
- 35 Japanese
- "energy healing'
- 34 "We have

- - **39** Egyptian beetles

40 Dietary unit

11

- - shoe tip **80** "— and
 - the Night Visitors"

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- 84 Oscar Hoya
- 86 School org. **88** Galvanizing

element

- 112 Full of the latest info 115 Spacewalks. in NASA
- lingo 116 Mo. #10 118 Tennis unit
- 119 Air quality **120** — Mama
- (rapper) 121 School stat 16 17 15

19 21 20 22 23 25 24 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 41 39 40 42 43 44 45 48 49 50 52 53 54 59 56 61 65 62 63 66 68 70 l67 69 72 81 76 82 83 85 184 86 87 88 89 90

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FUNERAL SERVICES

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:

◆ Easv ◆ ◆ Medium ◆ ◆ ◆ Difficult

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Get Results!

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in the

Timberjay!

Weekly SUDOKU Answer

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125

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

57 Like Stoker's **5** Resistance "Dracula" 61 Steal from

55 Directives

62 Liking a lot

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68 Stock debut,

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71 Often-twisted

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72 Long-billed

wading bird

perching on

flexed arm

muscles?

78 Testing stage

81 Early 1960s

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engineer

83 Made airtight, 123 Literary

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66 Quite dry

64 Overly

70 "Nope"

- 9 Circular paths 15 Imprison
- yielding plant
- disturb sleep 22 — -Seltzer
- 23 Nut acquired
- effort?
- 27 Cathedral in
- 28 R&B's Brown
- 31 Sprinkle sofa
- water drops?
- sav 85 Liken (to) event 38 Casino cube
- shouter 43 French city
- on the Rhone 47 Tax org. 48 Stan of jazz saxophone
- dignitary's vigorous
- **52** West African
 - - pal!"

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8B February 21, 2025 THE TIMBERJAY



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King Crossword

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ACROSS

- **Actress**
- Hatcher Slender
- Venomous
- viper
- 12 Bator
- 13 Director
- Wertmuller
- 14 Cutesy-
- 15 Beau "Nova" airer
- 18 Oodles Media mogul
- Winfrey Brother of Moses
- 24 Concerning 25 Large amount
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- Comic
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- Hostel
- "Vogue" sing- 28 Air freshener

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- 10 Japanese noodles
- 11 Ritzy
- 16 Director
- Howard
- 20 Snoop
- 21 Sparkling
- Italian wine
- 22 Shakespeare title starter
- 23 Advise
- Cash received 24 Pen fluids 26 Cave crea
 - tures

target

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27 French article 46 Petty peeve

- 29 Vatican VIP suspect 31 Infant's outfit
 - 34 Napkin's perch
 - 35 Green tea
 - variety 37 — de deux

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- 38 Bridge fee 39 Director
- Kazan
- 40 Ump's ruling 41 Tolkien creatures
- 44 Trench 45 Oft-pierced
- body part
- 47 ER workers

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