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# the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 36, ISSUE 14 April 11, 2025 \$1<sup>50</sup>

## TRANSITIONS

### Acclaimed photographer Jim Brandenburg dies at age 79

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Jim Brandenburg, one of the world's most celebrated nature photographers, has died at the age of 79. That shocking news was shared by members of his family, who were with him when he passed away peacefully at his home in Medina on April 4. Brandenburg had been undergoing treatment for anaplastic thyroid

The Boundary Waters was a frequent subject of his most compelling work

carcinoma for the past seven months and recently developed pneumonia, a further complication.

His passing came less than two months following the death of his son Anthony.

While Brandenburg lived in the Twin Cities suburbs, he was widely associated with his adopted home of Ely, where he resided at times

and maintained a Sheridan Street business, The Brandenburg Gallery.

Soft-spoken and intensely private, Brandenburg found seclusion and peace at his remote residence near Moose Lake, about 20 miles east of Ely. Dubbed Ravenwood, the tasteful home, designed by David Salmela, is nestled in the woods overlooking a small waterfall along

**Right: Jim Brandenburg**  
photo by J. Brandenburg

Judd Creek. Brandenburg, who was born and raised in Luverne, began his career as a photojournalist at the *Worthington Daily Globe*, but it was

See...BRANDENBURG pg. 9



## THE LEGISLATURE

### Lawmakers focusing on healthy aging

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- At a time when there are more Minnesotans aged 65 or older than there are school-aged children, lawmakers in St. Paul are taking a serious look at how to position state government to best deal with the many issues this growing group presents.

Last Thursday, a House committee heard testimony on HF2725, a bill authored by Rep. Ginny Klevorn, DFL-Plymouth, that would establish a Healthy Aging Subcabinet within Minnesota Management and Budget to assist with the design of a statewide planning process to identify opportunities to improve the quality of life for older adults.

"Minnesota is one of the healthiest states in the country, evident through the high rates of civic participation, volunteerism and other health metrics," Klevorn told the committee. "That success, coupled with the falling birth rate, will create a permanent demographic transition to an older state, which requires rethinking as to how our state and its communities plan to address issues associated with the growing numbers of adults living longer."

See...AGING pg. 9



## GROWING OPPOSITION

### Nationwide outpouring

Over 200 turn out in Ely as part of multi-city protest over Trump and Musk assault on federal government and economy

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY — More than 200 area residents brought a wide range of concerns over the Trump administration's recent actions to Whiteside Park on Saturday, part of a national day of protest organized by a coalition of organizations. Across the country, an estimated 5.2 million Americans took part in the event, held

**Above: Protesters gather with signs along Sheridan Street, garnering mostly positive responses from passersby.**

**Right: Protestors march along Sheridan Street.**

photos by F. Schumacher at over 1,600 locations, including nearly two dozen communities in Minnesota. The largest, at the Capitol

See...PROTEST pg. 9



## FEDERAL CUTS

### Low income heating aid may be lost

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The abrupt termination of the entire national staff overseeing a \$4.1 billion federal energy assistance program last week left more than 10,000 Minnesota households uncertain about whether they'll receive critical funds to help pay their energy bills.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, typically supports 6.2 million Americans annually by helping cover heating and cooling costs. But the Trump administration's recent decision to lay off all employees administering the program has thrown its future into question.

"They fired everybody. There's nobody left to do anything," Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, told the *New York Times* last week. "Either this was incredibly sloppy, or they intend to kill the program altogether."

The layoffs were part of brutal cuts at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), where 10,000 workers were terminated, gutting a program that monitors lead exposure levels in children, axing researchers working on birth defects, and sharply reducing food and drug inspectors. Another 10,000 employees had already been let go earlier this year.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy

See...LIHEAP pg. 9

## BUSINESS

### New Jersey-based Cherry Road Media buys Albertson newspapers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — A New Jersey-based media company has acquired two more northeastern Minnesota newspapers. Cherry Road Media, which now owns 94 newspapers across 18 states, has purchased the *Cook News-Herald* and the *Tower News* from owner Edna Albertson. Albertson had been running

*Tower News* building to be sold; *News Herald* print plant to be upgraded

the two papers for years with her husband Gary, who died last year. The future of the papers had been uncertain since his passing.

Cherry Road CEO Jeremy Gulban has been bullish on the



Jeremy Gulban

future of small market newspapers since he bought the *Cook County News-Herald* in Grand Marais several years ago. It was his first venture into the newspaper business and it proved a successful start. Ever since, he's been focused on buying small papers and opening new ones in markets like Two Harbors and International Falls, that had seen

**Right: Printing facilities at the Cook News-Herald office in Cook will be upgraded in order to print several papers now owned by Cherry Road Media in northeastern Minnesota.**

long-established newspapers fold in recent years.

"I still think there is a need for

See...SALE pg. 10



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Community notices

MDHA Feed and Seed dinner in Britt on Monday, April 28

BRITT- The Sturgeon River Chapter of the Minnesota Deer Hunter’s Association is holding their second annual Feed and Seed on Monday, April 28 at the Wooden Table Inn in Britt starting at 5 p.m. Cost for the dinner is \$10, served at 6:30 p.m., and raffle drawings will be held at 7:30 p.m. Three hunting rifles will be raffled off, three apple trees, and many other giveaways. This event is for members only, and memberships can be taken at the event. After the event, each member will be given a dozen white spruce seedlings and a five-pound bag of clover seed.

CANCELED: Presentation on Finnish names in Ely on Tuesday, April 15

ELY- The event planned by the Ely Finnish Kaleva group at the Ely Senior Center on Tuesday, April 15 at 1 p.m. has been canceled. The event will be rescheduled sometime in the fall.

Gardening presentation by renowned author on Saturday, April 12 in Embarrass

EMBARRASS- Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 12 from 10 a.m. to noon, as Jackie Clay, a renowned author, homesteader and owner of Seed Treasures, open-pollinated and heirloom seeds in Angola, will share her expert insights on gardening successfully in northern Minnesota. The presentation will be at the Embarrass Town Hall, 7503 Levander Road. Jointly sponsored by Embarrass Township and Embarrass Flower & Garden Club.

White Elephant Sale at Hibbing Memorial Building Arena on Saturday, April 26

HIBBING- Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Hibbing will host their annual White Elephant Sale on Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hibbing Memorial Building Arena. The hockey floor, bleachers and hallways will be filled with gently used items from toys and clothes to dishes, furniture, tools, holiday decorations and much more. Sloppy Joes and dessert lunch will be available to purchase. Gently used items can still be dropped off all day Wednesday and Thursday and until 11 a.m. on Friday the week of the sale. For more information, contact the church office at 218-263-7422 or osclhibb@mchsi.com

Peace Circle in Ely on Mondays

ELY- A Peace Circle is forming in Ely, starting on Monday, April 21, the day after Easter. The meetings will be held every week, on Monday, from noon to 12:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Ely starting on April 21. “We want to join together in positive silent meditation. Our theme is ‘Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.’ Usually in groups like this, people feel strengthened and comforted,” says Jean Gendreau, the leader of the circle. “It just means sitting in silence with others, with peace as our intention. It’s not a class or a teaching. It’s not religious. We simply sit together in positivity. People can come in quietly and leave when they want to.” Everyone is invited to join us.

History Happy Hour in Ely on Wednesday, April 16 at the Boathouse

ELY- Join host Jess Edberg, executive director of the Dorothy Molter Museum, for the next History Happy Hour on Wednesday, April 16 at 5 p.m. at the Boathouse Brewpub Lookout Lounge. History Happy Hour delves into the rich history of the Ely area with pint-sized stories that are informative and entertaining in less than a half an hour. April’s theme is the interesting and perhaps strange history of Ely’s water treatment for drinking and household use. Sound like a weird topic? It isn’t! Water is an integral part of our daily lives and this is the story of how Ely took lake water from miles away and brought it to residential taps. This program will also highlight a new exhibit on water in Minnesota hosted by the Ely Folk School this spring. Check out the pre/post-show playlist on Spotify for a curated experience coming soon. This program is offered as a free, in-person, 30-minute or less presentation October through May, typically on the third Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. at the Boathouse Brewpub & Restaurant in Ely. History Happy Hour is supported in-kind by the Boathouse Brewpub, Ely’s Heritage Preservation Commission, the Dorothy Molter Museum, Boundary Waters Connect and the Ely Folk School.

STAY SAFE

Stay clear of downed power lines during storms

REGIONAL— Severe Weather Awareness Week, April 7-11, is a great time for Minnesotans to prepare for unpredictable and extreme Midwestern weather. Great River Energy and its member-owner cooperatives and customers are always working to keep the power flowing to homes, farms and businesses.

“Though most end-use members experience very little time without electricity, we do see an increase in disruption of electric service during severe weather,” said Great River Energy’s Mark Peterson, director, system operations. “When there is an outage, it’s important to be aware of your surroundings, and stay away from downed power lines. Our crews work hard to restore power as quickly as possible while staying safe.”

If you see a downed power line, there are things you should keep in mind.

➤ Keep your distance and call 911 to report it immediately. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized just by looking at it; always assume it can carry electrical current strong enough to kill.

➤ Never drive over a downed power line if it is blocking your driveway or road. Call 911 to report it and find another route.

➤ Never touch anything



that is also touching a power line, including trees with limbs caught in a power line.

➤ If a power line falls on your car or otherwise contacts your vehicle, stay in your vehicle. Use your cell phone to call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

➤ If you must exit your vehicle (due to fire), jump clear of the vehicle without touching it. Land with your feet together and shuffle away.

When severe weather causes widespread damage, sometimes outages can be extended. When this happens, Great River Energy and its 26 member-owner cooperatives and customers

work hard to restore power quickly and safely. The first focus is on removing any threats to public safety, then following established priorities for making repairs that will restore the most members first.

For more information and videos about how your power is restored, how to prepare an emergency kit, how to keep food fresh and more, visit [greatriverenergy.com/restoringyourpower](http://greatriverenergy.com/restoringyourpower).

Flooding danger

Also, when severe weather comes with heavy rain, be aware of possible flooded roadways. People underestimate the force and power of water. The Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous floodwater. Many of the deaths occur in cars swept downstream and are preventable. Never drive around the barriers blocking a flooded road. The road may have collapsed under that water.

➤ Six inches of fast-moving floodwater can knock over an adult.

➤ Twelve inches of rushing water can carry away most cars.

➤ Twenty-four inches of rushing water can carry away SUVs and trucks.

HEALTH CARE

Residents are invited to join the Walk to End Alzheimer’s volunteer committee

CHISHOLM— The Alzheimer’s Association MN-ND Chapter is currently seeking volunteer committee members to assist in planning the Walk to End Alzheimer’s® - Range Area, scheduled for Oct. 5, 2025.

This hopeful, casual event helps the Association keep its local education classes, support groups, 24/7 Helpline and resources free for individuals and families. Funds also advance critical

dementia research for treatments and a cure. It will take place at Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm.

Walk volunteers can choose from several meaningful options that focus on planning the event, growing community support, or helping with event day logistics. Volunteering is a way to fight for a different future, honor someone you know or have lost and connect with others. It is also an opportunity to

build personal leadership, fundraising and event planning skills. Anyone interested can reach out to senior walk manager, Mike Ryth, at 218-302-5563 or [meryth@alz.org](mailto:meryth@alz.org).

Registration for the Walk to End Alzheimer’s - Range Area is now open, and community members are encouraged to register early and fundraise to help the Alzheimer’s Association reach its \$82,000 goal.

Sign up is free at [act.alz.org/rangearea](http://act.alz.org/rangearea). After signing up, walkers receive their own fundraising web page that is easy to personalize and share. In the U.S. today, 7 million people are living with Alzheimer’s. Additionally, more than 11 million family members and friends provide unpaid care to people living with dementia. In Minnesota, there are nearly 102,000 people living with the disease.

Comic opera to be performed in Ely and Tower this week

REGIONAL- The Ely State Theater will hold a performance of comic opera, “La Serva Padrona,” on Tuesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.

Lake Vermilion Cultural Center will be hosting a second performance of the comic opera on Wednesday, April 16 beginning at 7:14 p.m. Yes, it really does start at 7:14.

This presentation of “La Serva Padrona” is a Modern English version of the comic opera by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, revised by Steve Solkela. The performers in this production are Jessica Moss- Soprano, Steve Solkela- Bass, and Branden Taus- Mute.

Steve Solkela is a talented, northeastern Minnesota musician and professionally-trained opera singer. Tickets are available in advance for \$20 by contacting Steve Solkela at [ssolkela49@gmail.com](mailto:ssolkela49@gmail.com) or 218-290-5453. Tickets at the door will be \$25.



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BUSINESS

# Ely Chamber hosts annual awards night

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- Pirates, scavenger hunts, rubber duckies, and “Iron Jen” McDonough combined for a memorable evening here as the Ely Chamber of Commerce held its annual Celebrate Ely dinner and awards event last Thursday, April 3. Five outstanding individuals and two organizations went home with special recognition for their efforts to benefit and promote the community.

The theme for the night was pirates, and many of those in attendance dressed the part. Even the subject of the night’s speaker, “Calming the Chaos – Navigating Stormy Seas and Steering Your Ship to Resilience” seemed in keeping with the theme. “Iron Jen” McDonough, a nationally known motivational speaker who now lives in Tower, recounted her own story, highlighting the valuable lessons she’s learned on surviving hardship and concentrating on the meaningful things in life. McDonough and her family pulled themselves out from under more than \$200,000 in medical debt in four years, a recovery story featured in national and international news stories. Jen later wrote a book about the experience, which put her on the Amazon best-sellers list and opened the door to speaking engagements nationwide. She and her family now operate the Tower Café and bed and breakfast.

McDonough’s talk was punctuated by her experiences as a national champion weightlifter and top ironman competitor. Her stories, both uplifting and humorous, told of working hard to make it across the finish line. Among the most



memorable was her story of the day her family learned that one of her sons had a chronic illness, a day that her son told her later was one of the best days of his life.

“I couldn’t believe that,” McDonough said. “How could it be his best day when it was one of my worst? And then he said to me, ‘It’s the best, Mom, because it was the day the whole family was together.’”

### Jackpine Bob Cary Spirit Award

The Jackpine Bob Cary Spirit Award was established in 2009 in honor of Bob Cary to celebrate an individual or group for their unselfish giving and promotion of Ely, which has a positive impact on the

Ely area and tourism.

This year’s award went to both an organization and the individual who has helped it grow. “The organization is dynamic and growing and its programs draw visitors from locations across Minnesota, the Midwest, and beyond,” recounted presenter Tanner Spicer from the chamber’s board of directors. “Of course, these programs have a hard-working and creative soul behind them. We are excited to announce the 2025 recipients of the Jackpine Bob Cary Spirit Award are the Northern Lakes Arts Association under the leadership of Ian Lah.”

The Celebrate Ely event was scheduled against a performance of the NLAA production of the musical “Matilda,” where Lah was busy



Left: Brian and Andrea Strom of Brainstorm Bakery.

Below: The Anderson sisters. From left-to-right: Sandy Nickolson, Cindy Nickolson, and Sue Anderson.

Far left: Jen McDonough was the evening’s keynote speaker.

photos by C. Clark



running the lights for the show.

The *Timberjay* spoke with Lah after the event, who said he was unaware that he and the NLAA were up for the award. “I wish I had known because I would have found someone to run the lights for me that evening,” said Lah, who said it’s nice to be recognized, even if that’s not a motivating factor for him. “I do what I do because I love my job. I never once thought about

anyone ever giving me or my organization an award for this labor of love.”

### Good Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award

Spicer also gave out the Good Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award. “We are fortunate to live in a place with many civic-minded

See CHAMBER...pg. 5

CRIME

## Orr repeat offender back in court; charged with driving without a license

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Tate Jordan Cly, 21, of Orr, was scheduled to be arraigned in St. Louis County District Court on Friday on a charge of driving while his license was revoked, the third such offense in a record of offenses dating back to 2022.

Cly was serving two years supervised probation for an Oct. 28, 2024, driving while intoxicated conviction when he was pulled over in Virginia on March 2 for a burned out headlight. He was cited for driving without a valid license and for operating a vehicle without a required ignition interlock device.

Cly was arrested on Oct.

14 for the DWI offense, just nine days prior to being convicted and sentenced for domestic assault by strangulation committed in Duluth in April 2024. Judge Teresa Neo sentenced Cly to 18 months of incarceration but stayed the sentence and ordered three years of supervised probation.

But Cly was already on three years’ supervised pro-

bation for a conviction handed down in January 2024 for felony threats of violence in connection with a September 2023 knife fight incident in Ely. Cly’s attorney negotiated a plea deal in which a more serious charge of assault with a dangerous weapon was dismissed. Cly was subsequently found in violation of his probation and ordered to spend 60 days in St. Louis County

Jail.

Cly’s previous arrests for driving without a license were in March 2023 and November 2022, both stemming from a license revocation tied to an August 2022 conviction for careless driving, which was originally filed as a driving while intoxicated charge and converted to the lesser charge.



Tate Jordan Cly

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# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

## Editorial

### A purpose to the chaos

Trump’s reality TV presidency masks real dangers to the nation

For most humans, chaos is unsettling, even disturbing, but for those with unpopular agendas, it provides opportunity — and that is why President Trump and his South African sidekick are so focused on keeping Americans off-balance with their daily dose of policy whiplash and abuses of federal law.

For the thousands of federal workers in Minnesota, the last two-and-a-half months have been like living under a guillotine, with no control at all over when the blade might fall.

If you’re an Iron Range family that’s relied on the Low Income Heating Assistance Program to heat your home in winter, you live with the uncertainty that you won’t be able to rely on this financial lifeline starting later this year.

If you’re a family with young children who has relied on the SNAP program, formerly known as Food Stamps, to keep decent food on the table, you live with the daily worry that the job of feeding your kids will become that much tougher. Add to that the likelihood of brutal cuts to the Medicaid program and there’s a very real chance your kids won’t be able to see their doctor or get the dental care they need.

If you’re a teacher or school administrator, you live with the uncertainty that federal funds that help your school provide extra support to students from poor or dysfunctional families, or students with mental or physical disabilities, will disappear, leaving students to fall through the cracks.

We all live with the uncertainty that if our governor stands up to President Trump, who work range of federal funds allocated to our state will simply disappear with an imperious wave of Trump’s hand. He’s already threatened as much to the state of Maine because their governor refused to kowtow to Trump’s threats.

For the millions of legal immigrants in the U.S., those with active work or student visas, or green card holders, who work and pay taxes in our country, life now holds the daily uncertainty that they can be snatched off the street by masked men and disappeared without due process into some horrific detention facility for something they once wrote or said. This is now happening in Minnesota and every state in the country.

Families across the U.S. live with the uncertainty that their jobs could be lost from the economic disaster most economists expect will result from President Trump’s global trade war. The higher costs for everyday items,

from bananas to shoes, which most analysts say will add nearly \$4,000 annually to the average family’s bill for basic items, will create further uncertainty about the future. The Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index has plunged in recent weeks as most Americans now live in real fear over the effects of the trade war on their daily lives.

In the midst of the endless uncertainty, it’s easy for the public to overlook the fundamental dysfunction behind the chaos — namely the overturning of the rule of law in America. The rule of law has been a bedrock of the American system, premised on the idea that when we govern ourselves by a set of rules that apply to all, we enjoy the predictability and stability that makes it possible for all of us to plan our lives. The rule of law protects us from arbitrary governmental action.

When the president and his administration is allowed to act outside the law, which this administration does on a daily basis, it robs us of the stability we used to enjoy. We may not recognize that at first as we focus on the endless chaos of an administration that operates by random daily decrees. The randomness is intentional because it keeps the public focused on the disorder, rather than what’s happening behind the scenes, which is the systematic dismantling of the U.S. Constitution through Trump’s repeated violations.

While some Trump supporters may be relishing the destruction of the federal government, the demise of America’s global reputation, the destruction of our important alliances, and Trump’s cozying up to Vladimir Putin, that’s certainly not why many voters opted for Trump last November.

Many felt he was better suited to run the economy and bring inflation down. Instead, he’s running the economy into the ground and enacting tariffs guaranteed to push inflation higher.

Trump’s first term was tempered by the so-called adults in the room, those staff members who came with experience, a sense of duty to the country, and loyalty to the Constitution. Those individuals are now gone, replaced this time by sycophants, incompetents, and the complicit, who facilitate, rather than temper, Trump’s worst impulses.

America, as a result, is beginning to recognize what autocracy feels like, because we’ve gotten a taste over the last seven weeks. It’s an unsettling feeling in the pit of your stomach, a recognition that it can happen here. Will Americans be able to see through the clutter before it’s too late?



## Letters from Readers

### Ask local, shop local— help Ely thrive

In the age of the internet — where things are instant, fast, and cheap — small towns like ours are feeling the strain. Local shops and small businesses that provide goods and services can’t always compete with the convenience of online retail. It might seem like you’re saving money when you click “buy now,” and sometimes you are — but each time we bypass our local economy, we chip away at the health and vibrancy of our community.

Before making your next online purchase, consider this: you might be surprised to find that a local store already carries what you’re looking for. And if they don’t, many Ely businesses are more than happy to order it for you, often with a personal touch you won’t find online.

Shopping locally does more than meet your needs — it keeps our town alive. It supports jobs, contributes to public services through sales tax, and helps preserve Ely’s one-of-a-kind character. It sustains the people who live here, work here, and show up every day to offer something of value to this place we all call home.

So next time you’re tempted to order something online, pause. Walk into a local shop. Ask a local business owner. You may just find what you need — and in the process, you’ll help Ely thrive.

Abby Dare  
Ely

### Amerika is a front for corporate interests

The American government is a farce-a fraud. It is cowardly, greedy, criminal, corrupt, and run by the criminal elements in the White House, Senate, and House. They call themselves democratic so that the citizens will remain thinking that the government is god’s gift to the world. There is

nothing decent about killing of the three million Vietnamese, the 100s of thousands of East Timorese, the 50,000 Nicaraguans, the list is endless. There are few people in Washington that do other than represent the rich corporate interests.

American people are mostly not aware of what the U.S. government truly stands for, many believing that it is democratic and fights for our freedom and for democratic causes around the world. The opposite is the reality.

In the last year the U.S. puppet in Israel killed over 50,000 Palestinians. Our “good” Minnesota senators are supporting Netanyahu in Israel — especially Sen. Klobuchar, who should be impeached and tried for war crimes. I taught English in Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine. The Islamic University of Gaza where I taught was destroyed by Israel. Most of the 50,000 dead are women and children. Palestine has a right to defend itself but it’s hard to defend against American war machinery. Biden is definitely a war criminal — no doubt. Trump is the same.

The U.S. government causes never ending worldwide misery for the sake of corporate profits and we are duped into paying for it thinking that Amerika is right.

Steve Johnson  
Ely

### Other nations now questioning American voters

In the last three weeks, the stock market lost five trillion dollars in stock value. There are many “barometers” that indicate the direction of the economy is heading, but the stock market is one that people can easily understand because it impacts directly or indirectly on the financial stability of many people.

Due to the inconsistency and incompetence of Trump and his people, the U.S. is facing a se-

vere and long-lasting economic decline. Our trade partners are seeking new and permanent trade contracts with other countries due to Trump’s quixotic implementation of tariff taxes. In addition, foreign governments are selling their holdings of U.S. securities which raises interest rates and makes it more difficult for the U.S. to fund its ever-increasing national debt.

The fact is that our former long-term partners will not think this is a one-time exception of a one-man maverick administration, but recognize it is fact that the American voter cannot be counted on to make good decisions in electing presidents or members of Congress. We elected an individual knowing he was a constant liar, exaggerator, felon, had many business failures, bankruptcies, a huge number of lawsuits, and an inability to make good decisions even when provided with massive reputable information. For example, he thinks Climate Change, despite all the recent weather-related destruction and deaths, is a “hoax,” though 195 nations think otherwise.

Despite all negative information on Trump, the majority of our voters voted for him and his supporting congressional members. All of which makes other countries question the judgment of future American voters, and hence they are looking for new trade and military partners and are unlikely to come back even under a new Administration.

Gerry Snyder  
Ely

### 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](mailto:marshall@timberjay.com). We ask that letters be limited to 300 words. Letters are subject to editing, primarily for length and clarity.

## COMMENTARY

# Where is Waldo, and more importantly where is Pete Stauber?

As the token conservative at the Timberjay — really be missing. As evidence, just look at all the missing person signs kindly and charitably produced by the Minnesota DFL in February. A call to the DFL convinced me that the party is concerned that if Stauber isn’t found before the next election, the Republicans may find a better candidate who actually shows up to attend sessions of the U.S. House of Representatives. That would be bad news for the DFL and



CATIE CLARK

Democrats in general if a Republican politician showed up in Washington and did some real governing for a change.

I know that detractors may want to point out that Stauber was on the floor of Congress just last month, supporting legislation to allow mining in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters. What I’m here to tell you now is that after a deep investigation, this may actually be a scam and Minnesota’s voters may have been misled about Stauber’s missing status, though we are currently unsure who is behind it.

My investigation has me convinced that what looked

like Stauber in C-Span coverage was really a Tesla-brand Optimus robot in a suit and a latex Stauber mask. The C-Span coverage may also have been hacked by malefactors who we trace to an IP address on the internet with a .ru domain, indicating the involvement of a Russian intelligence operation. The hacking of the C-Span coverage used sophisticated Chinese AI to hide the obvious defects in the robot’s disguise.

A deeper review of C-Span coverage showed an even more disturbing trend: that we could not authenticate the actual presence of the real Pete Stauber on the floor of Congress since 2023,

and even then, he wasn’t there a lot, especially since he’s been absent from his seat on the House Committee on Small Business for the last two years.

Concerned that something sinister may have happened to our local congressman, I engaged in some good old-fashioned gum-shoe journalism in order to ascertain Stauber’s whereabouts. I started with Minnesota’s missing person registry — only to find, to my shock, that Minnesota doesn’t have one. No, really. Not only does the state not have one, Minnesota also has not mandated that missing persons be reported to the National

Missing and Unidentified Persons System, or NamUs, like many other states.

Regardless, I did dive into the NamUs database but could not find Stauber anywhere. Just to be thorough, I have confirmed that Stauber is not a transgender individual. That’s important because ever since Trump started his second term as president, many missing person records in NamUs for transgender people have vanished. The U.S. Dept. of Justice, which manages NamUs, has not made any comment on the missing transgender records despite multiple inquiries by

See STAUBER...pg. 5

## The silent majority needs to rise

To my good neighbors and friends who have been conned: Please, please, take a second look at what you're backing.

We're all vulnerable to being conned. When it's your turn, it's your turn. But we must not throw people under the bus because of how they vote or their ethnic background. This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. Every congressman, senator, and governor works for the same home team —

America. The misplaced loyalty we have given to party membership is another form of prejudice.

Please step out of your comfort zone. When you do, you'll be on the right side of history. No one has free rein to break all the rules. The quicker it stops, the less damage to repair later. You'll be able to stand tall and feel proud of yourself as an American.

My bet is that if Trump's followers had realized at the beginning how low the bar would go, how bad it was going to get, they never would

have done this. But millions of Americans, including some of my closest friends, people I respect, have moved their moral compass to the point where they betrayed their own values.

A grassroots movement must be an earthshaking uprising. And yet, only politeness, courtesy, and respect will win the day. What I am asking you to do is politely tell people that you disagree. We need to speak against this wrongdoing. Let it be known that you are not willing to give up this great democracy. We are not willing to give up

the castle.

The language coming out of the White House belongs to the bully on the local playground. This newspaper does not have enough capacity to print all the immoral, unjust, illegal things coming out of the White House.

Instead, we should celebrate ethnic diversity. We have always been the melting pot. It's our strength. It's who we are.

Kiekegaard said, "Once you label me, you negate me." We are not labels. We are all individuals. In both political parties, there are

wonderful people. It takes an effort to look at individuals as individuals.

Society does what society tolerates. On Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor roared. We knew who the enemy was, and we knew what we had to do. It was that urgent. The roar coming out of the White House today is no less threatening to our democracy.

Now, the silent majority must roar like a lion.

Thoughts from the Happy Camper named:  
**Andy Hill Ely**

## Their corruption is showing

Just in case you have been wondering, what we are seeing unfolding in America, is "Citizens United" manifest. The corruption of unfettered wealth skewing the political process in our republic.

Corruption so patently obvious in the Trump administration. If it is not overturned, we truly are skewed.

**Tim McKenzie Ely**

## Commentary

# When the light comes...reflections for Easter

Forty-one years ago on Easter weekend, I was holding a baby. I was trying again. I had a new life after crawling out of the shame of my divorce and the griefs of my first baby's death and my ex-husband's alcoholism. For me, this laughing, easy-tempered, pretty baby proved rebirth.

As mothers do, I had fallen deeply in love with her. She had a fairy-like quality, a magical way of moving softly through the days. My older girl had a sister. And my new husband's surprise and wonder was holy. His own mother had given him away to an abuser. When he held this little girl, you could feel his shock and joy. He had never imagined that such love existed.

On that same Easter weekend, my little nephew died from neuroblastoma. None of us will ever forget the sound of my brother's voice when he called on that day. A few days later, when everyone else went to the funeral, I chose to stay home.

What was real to me was Easter. It's not that I wanted to avoid the pain of my nephew's death. I had had a baby die. I knew that the light can disappear completely. Sometimes darkness wins.

But even after total defeat, after irreversibile destruction, something can happen that makes no sense at all.

At Christmas, as blackness comes close, we dream of the future. We strain to see any flicker of light. But in the days before Easter, we admit despair. Did the baby even matter? It's over. There's nothing left to hope for — The body is already cool.

This isn't about religion, although people think it is. Hope is not a Christian proprietary brand. All of us need to manage despair. The Christian texts work for many. I go to church every

week, but my version of the teachings might not work for others. Many people can no longer stomach their church's version of "the only way to heal." Hope comes to "nature is my church" people and atheists too.

Think instead of a paddler in the wilderness. He's a bit lost and he paddles hard. Storms come and go. He finds his way along rivers, portages through thick forest, discovers lake after lake and then gets lost again. He never knows the end. One day, he's paddling along a rocky shoreline. There are rocks ahead, but he can't quite make out what's there. Working hard, he pulls close enough to see. It's a point, a rocky point. There's a corner to turn. The wind and waves push at the canoe, and he has to paddle hard. His arms ache, but he's got grit. He keeps going. Finally, he makes it around the corner. Goosebumps ripple down his arms. Awe. Wonder. Mystery. This lake is flat and brilliant and easy. He's never seen such light. And it has no end. It's easy and it has no end.

On that Easter weekend, I held joy in my arms. This

wasn't Christmas. It wasn't about the darkness that might come. This was Easter. This was after the darkness had won — and that was the whole point.

There are times when we have howled until we are empty. We cannot cry harder or louder or longer — And still it isn't enough. Nothing is enough. Then there is a quiet that comes. It's a kind of peace, but you can't call it easy because getting there is the most brutal road in all human experience. Yet, finally we come to the silence, the emptiness.

It's a terrible, beautiful openness in which everything is possible.

Even though it makes no sense at all, there can be something beyond the rocky point. The paddler turns the corner. My nephew let go of this body to open into the wonder.

We think we "know" that the world is a terrible place. We hunker down in despair. Like nightmares, our busy brains mutter thousands of examples of suffering. We might pride ourselves on being mature adults who know for sure that nothing much is

possible. "Life's a bitch and then we die." We firmly lock the door. Hoping just hurts too much.

But we have no idea what's really possible. Our safe guesses are miserable versions of reality. What's coming? We don't know.

Rebirth is as old as life. But how it happens is way above my pay grade and yours.

We could allow the word "maybe." Many wisdom teachers tell of a reality, a quality of awareness that underlies everything we think is real life. It's a veil, a sheer curtain, a wisp of breath right under our noses. This is where "maybe" comes from.

In the winter, a seed has no choice but to lie in the blackness deep under the ice. A caterpillar knits its chrysalis without hope. It has no plan for how to make wings.

I can't out-think this mystery. I have no choice but the next step, even though I have no idea what the next step is. I do not know the deep magic because thoughts and beliefs confuse me. I worry, hope and fret. I fail to trust what I cannot imagine.

The mystery requires

utter blackness. Thinking doesn't work. We cannot plan or understand. There has to be the release of giving up. That's when we finally relax into the emptiness.

That's when the deepest magic, the power, the tenderness can take us over, knowing us better than we know ourselves. It shatters the seed's shell by trusting the softness of a seedling's leaves. It tears the chrysalis open by loving the joy colors of wings.

On Easter, even though the body is cold, we raise our heads from the ground. We look up because we hear something, a wisp of song. Yes, sometimes everything really is lost — jobs, marriages, lives. The destruction is complete. For a time, despair is true.

And yet — and here's the surprise — in that openness where there is nothing, something new grows. We have no idea what is possible. A wisp of a song, a loving touch, a feeble flickering light that grows. We cannot know. We do not understand. It makes no sense. But it is good.

## Lake Country Power seeking volunteers for GreenTouch™

SIDE LAKE— Lake Country Power is calling on volunteers of all ages to lend their "green touch" to McCarthy Beach State Park near Side Lake on Thursday, May 8 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The volunteer work will be directed by the state park, which may include outdoor activities such as clearing hiking trails, raking leaves and pine needles, collecting litter, cleaning camp sites, gathering downed limbs, and cleaning the shoreline.

Youth groups, service

clubs and other organizations are welcome to participate in GreenTouch™. You need not be a Lake Country Power member to volunteer. Lunch will be provided for volunteers by the co-op.

GreenTouch™ is a statewide cooperative, environmental and community outreach program sponsored by Minnesota's Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. Lake Country Power's goal for this year's GreenTouch™ program is to enhance the quality and appeal of a state park

within the cooperative's service area. McCarthy Beach State Park is a popular tourist destination for camping, birding and other activities. The sandy beach on Sturgeon Lake was rated one of the top 17 beaches in North America by *Highway's Magazine*.

If you would like to participate in GreenTouch™, please contact Tami Zaun at Lake Country Power by calling 1-800-421-9959, extension 7152, or email tzaun@lcp.coop. RSVPs will help ensure an accurate count for

lunch and allow the park time to organize its work plans. Volunteers do not need a state park vehicle pass on May 8. Please RSVP by May 1 to tzaun@lcp.coop.

Lake Country Power, www.lakecountypower.coop, is a Touchstone Energy® cooperative serving parts of eight counties in northeastern Minnesota. The rural electric cooperative provides services to more than 43,000 members and has offices located in Cohasset, Kettle River and Mountain Iron.

## CHAMBER...Cont. from page 3

ed people," Spicer began, "who are those who give of themselves without expecting anything in return. One of the most difficult things is selecting just one person, so this year, we picked three.

"These three ladies were nominated for their unwavering commitment to service and making the world a better place. These three women continuously give their time, energy, and love to their community without ever seeking recognition, and their impact is felt in many areas of life in Ely. They have devoted their time supporting the Ely Food Shelf, Ruby's Pantry, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Carefree Living — and the list goes on. Each woman is a dynamo, but put them together, and they are a powerhouse for good. Congratulations to

the Anderson Sisters — Cindy Nickolson, Sandy Nickolson, and Sue Anderson, who are our Good Citizen Volunteers of the Year recipients."

### The Good Neighbor Business Award

David Sebesta, the chair of the chamber's board of directors, presented the Good Neighbor Business Award. "This year's Good Neighbor Business Award is a local success story. As a community, we are fortunate to have these entrepreneurs in our midst. They give back far more than they receive. They are passionate about sponsoring and donating to Ely events and organizations, including the Ely Marathon and Ely Community Resource. According to the individual who nominated them for the award, she has

never heard them turn down an opportunity to support their community ... Congratulations to Brian and Andrea Strom from Brainstorm Bakery."

### Excellence in Customer Service Award

Sebesta also gave out the Excellence in Customer Service Award, just in time for National Library Week.

"Business owners know the importance of customer service," Sebesta began. "Well-trained staff create positive encounters and relationships with customers and clients. Those efforts create customer loyalty, too. We had several great nominees for the Excellence in Customer Service Award. This year's recipient goes above and beyond every day. She

is cheerful, kind, and considerate to each and every person that she encounters. She treats every customer like they are one of a kind and strives to meet their needs to the best of her abilities. She provides each customer with a positive experience from the moment they walk through the door and greets many customers by name.

"Our recipient puts 110 percent into everything she does. Whether helping children find books, reading stories at storytime, or even running a fun program for all ages, she displays an excellent example of what an A+ employee should be. Congratulations to Jessica Dunn from the Ely Public Library."



the  
**TIMBERJAY**

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



Week of April 14

Monday

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

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on April 14

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5 p.m. New location in the old St. James Church building. Next food shelf day is April 15.

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

Breitung Town Board- 6 p.m. on April 15

Greenwood Town Board- 6:30 p.m. on April 15

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](http://vermilioncountry.org).



TSHS weekly winners

TOWER- The \$100 winner of Week 30 Charlemagne's 52 Club is Cindy MacDiarmid, of Babbitt.

**History Tidbit:** Monsignor Joseph Francis Buh was an area pastor who served in both Tower and Ely between 1889 and 1918 before moving to Duluth. He traveled the state, building churches and meeting the local natives to both teach them and learn from them. He's also instrumental in creating some of the area socialist worker's clubs, one of which (the KSKJ) is still alive today.

Cemetery cleanup day on April 26

VERMILION LAKE TWP- Vermilion Lake Township is set for Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 1 3 p.m. in Vermilion Lake Township. Please bring shovels and rakes. In the event of inclement weather, an alternate date/time will be announced. Please call the township at 218-248-2731 to sign-up.

St. Martin's Holy Week Mass schedule

Holy Thursday, April 17  
St. Mary's - 5:30 p.m.  
There will not be a Mass at the Cook Care Center.  
Good Friday, April 18  
Holy Cross - 3 p.m. and St. Martin's - 6 p.m.  
Holy Saturday, April 19  
St. Martin's - Blessing of Easter Baskets: 12:30 p.m.  
St. Mary's - Easter Vigil Mass - 9 p.m.  
Easter Sunday Mass, April 20  
Holy Cross - 8 a.m. and St. Martin's 10:30 a.m.

Easter coloring contest at Scenic Rivers

Scenic Rivers Medical Clinic in Tower is sponsoring a coloring contest for Easter. Children can pick up a coloring page at the clinic. Drawings should be returned by April 18. All entries will be entered into a drawing for a boy's Easter basket and a girl's Easter basket.

Lunch Bunch to meet on April 17

GREENWOOD TWP- The Lunch Bunch will meet on Thursday, April 17 at the Tavern in the Bay at 12:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Linda at 612-916-1918 or Kathy at 218-753-2530. Everyone is welcome to join us.



EASTER

Embarrass and Tower hosting children's Easter events this weekend



REGIONAL- Area families have two chances for Easter fun this weekend with an Easter egg hunt in Embarrass on Saturday and another in Tower on Sunday.

The Embarrass Fair Board event is on Saturday, starting at 11 a.m. at Timber Hall. There will be pictures with the Easter Bunny, a petting zoo (last year there were live bunnies to pet), a cake walk with plenty of delicious prizes, games with prizes, face painting, and more. The egg hunt, this year featuring over 3,000 eggs, will start promptly at 12:30 p.m. The event runs from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

On Sunday, the Tower Firemen's Relief Association is hosting their annual

Easter egg extravaganza. If past year's hunts are a guide, there will be as many as 8,000 eggs out on the Lamppa Civic Center lawn. The eggs contain candy, small toys, or coupons which are exchanged inside for larger prizes.

The Tower egg hunt starts at 10 a.m. sharp, so families should arrive a little earlier to be ready. Once all the eggs and prizes are collected, there are games, food, and fun inside the civic center, lasting until 1 p.m. And hopefully the Easter Bunny will be stopping by for photos and more fun.

Both events are free of charge and open to all families.

EMBARRASS

Pancakes for firefighters and lots of fun too



Above: Lisa Gibson expertly and effortlessly flipped pancakes in the kitchen. She honed her skills when working in the kitchen at the now-closed (and sorely-missed) Four Corners Cafe.

Left: Four-year-old Matthew Wagoner was on pancake number three with his grandparents Terry and Jill Wagoner.



by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- The Embarrass Fair Association's monthly pancake breakfast fundraisers always draw a full house, but this month's event, in honor of area firefighters, filled Timber Hall all Saturday morning. A dedicated all-volunteer kitchen crew flipped pancakes for four hours straight, serving up perfectly-cooked flapjacks, ham, sausage, fruit, juice, and coffee to well over 250 visitors.

But there was a lot more going on at Timber Hall. While the breakfast was in honor of area fire fighters (who got to eat free), therewere informational booths from the Embarrass and Babbitt Fire departments, Friends of the Embarrass Fire Department, DNR Forestry, FireWise,

Northern St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, and State Farm Insurance agent Lindsey Keen.

Sparky the Fire Dog, the official mascot of the National Fire Protection Association, was on hand, courtesy of the Embarrass Volunteer Fire Department. Friends of the Embarrass Fire Department recently purchased the Sparky costume for the department to help with outreach and fire safety education efforts.

Friends of ERVFD is a volunteer group that supports the department by providing assistance with events, fundraising, and community outreach. They also provide logistical support during emergencies, such as providing food for firefighters during firefighting efforts, and for training events. To learn more about Friends of ERVFD, find them on Facebook or email [FriendsofERVFD@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsofERVFD@hotmail.com).

com.

Embarrass Fire Chief Eric Garman said the support by this group has really helped the department, which is working to recruit new members as well as a constant need to raise funds. The fire department currently has 12 members, but some are aging. Garman said their longest-serving member, Randy Schroeder, a 42-year veteran, is still responding to calls.

"We need people, and we need money," Garman said.

The Babbitt Fire Department also was on hand with three members and "honorary member" Avryl Chamberlin, Little Miss Embarrass and daughter of the chief Tony Chamberlin. Tony said their department is currently 28 members strong, with a good mix of experienced and younger members.

Other professionals



Above: Cindy Scherer shared a smile with her granddaughter Emmy. Emmy was there with her older sister, mother, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

Left: Brooks Eloranta gave a reluctant hello to Sparky the Fire Dog from the Embarrass Fire Department.

Below: Avryl Chamberlin dons her father's fire chief hat. photos by J. Summit



were on hand to give advice on making one's home safe from wildfire, caring for woodlands, and more.

FireWise is offering several upcoming classes on beginning chainsaw safety and the art of pile building (and safe pile burning). Classes are on May 31 and

June 1. The day-long chainsaw class has a \$125 cost, but the May 31 evening pile burning class is no charge. Both events are at the Hubachek Wilderness Research Center in Ely. For information, email Gloria Erickson at [gloria@dovetailinc.org](mailto:gloria@dovetailinc.org) or call 218-365-0878.



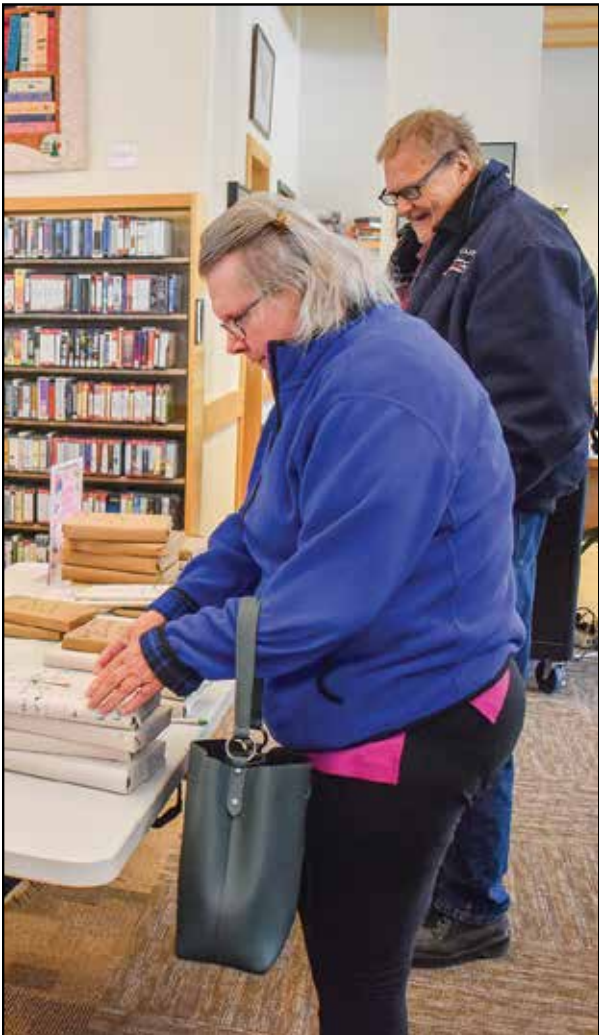
NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Chamber of Commerce honors librarian

ELY- It's National Library Week and the timing couldn't have been better because last Thursday, the library's Jessie Dunn received the Ely Chamber of Commerce's Excellence in Customer Service Award at the annual Celebrate Ely dinner on April 3 at the Grand Ely Lodge.

Dunn has been with the library for eight years and has lived in Ely for 24. She moved here from the south half of the state to marry her husband Kevin, who already lived here.

Outside of the library, Dunn can be spotted dancing with the Refections Dance Company or on stage with Kevin or one of the five Dunn family kids at Northern Lakes Arts Association shows.



National Library Week at the Ely Public Library got off to a puzzling start as the library held a jigsaw puzzle competition. Six teams of puzzlers met at the library on Monday afternoon to do a 503-piece puzzle featuring Amelia, the library's pet western painted turtle. On Tuesday, the Friends of the Library was giving away wrapped-up "blind dates" with books that patrons could take home and keep. Above: Librarian Jesse Dunn received the Ely Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Customer Service Award. Uppert right: Sue and David Leino looking over the blind date with a book table. Below: from left to right, the puzzle team of Keiko Williams, Lynn Evenson, Nina VanGelder, and Susan Laine. Bottom: from left to right, the winning puzzle contest team of Jordyn Stocks, Eleanor Nyquist, Connie Stocks, and Jaymie Stocks. The team finished their puzzle in one hour, fifty minutes. photos by C. Clark



Trail Flagging

ELY- The Ely and Kekekabic chapters of the North Country Trail Association are looking for volunteers of all levels of hiking prowess on Saturday, April 12, to help with flagging trails in the Ely area. The chapters have three areas to target: flagging for the less strenuous hiking trails starting at the new Ely Trailhead Building and the Kawishiwi Falls area, and for the more difficult trail conditions at the Snowbank and Kekekabic trailhead area.

Volunteers for the Snowbank — Kawishiwi Falls area will meet at 10 a.m. at the Snowbank Lake Rd. trailhead. Volunteers for the two less-strenuous trail projects will meet at noon at the Kawishiwi Ranger Station, 1393 Hwy. 169. Volunteers should bring water, lunch, and snacks; they should also wear sturdy footwear, dress in layers, and bring a smartphone with the Avenza maps app already installed.

Volunteers, please sign up at [ely@northcountrytrail.org](mailto:ely@northcountrytrail.org) or use the event link on the Kekekabic Trail Hikers group page.

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – Hosted by Boundary Waters Connect, the Tuesday Group community educational luncheon gathering meets every Tuesday at noon at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch.

For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at [ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com](mailto:ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com) or call her at 218-216-9141.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

►April 15: 1854 Treaty Authority Natural Resources Program with Darren Vogt

►April 22: Answering the Call of the Loon with Steve Maanum with Rachel Hedlund

►Aprile 29: We Are Water Exhibit

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2025



pigeons on rooftops  
enjoy the radiant warmth

their's a rare viewpoint

Libraries

Ely library

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

Babbitt library

Monday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Tuesday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Friday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Phone: 218-827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous  
OPEN AA - 7:30

p.m. Wednesdays and  
Saturdays, in-person,  
First Lutheran Church,  
915 E. Camp St., Ely.  
AA FRIDAYS - 7 p.m.

Fridays, First Presbyterian  
Church, 262 E. Harvey St.,  
Ely.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN

AA - Monday at noon at  
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 sus-  
pended 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.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Contented Critters

ELY- Contented Critters will hold an open house on Saturday, April 12, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Ely Flower and Seed, 145 W. Camp St. Come pet a farm critter, meet cats available for adoption, purchase some merchandise, grab a cupcake, learn about the animal shelter's spay and neuter program, and more.

100 Ely Women

ELY- The 100 Ely Women Who Care giving circle will hold its spring meeting at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E. on Sunday, April 27, starting at 4 p.m. The giving circle is a group of women who meet twice a year to choose and support a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and to enjoy a potluck of appetizers and desserts.

If you are curious or interested in supporting Ely's nonprofits, please call 651-303-1094 for more details.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The library will be closed on April 18.

The Friends of the Library book club will meet on Monday, April 14, from 3-4 p.m. The book for discussion will be "Born on a Blue Day," by Daniel Tammet.

You do not need to be a member of Friends of the Library to attend.

On Wednesday, April 16, from 1-2 p.m., the library will host Susan Hawkinson as she tells raucous and entertaining lumberjack and settler stories and equally astounding tales of the Joyce lumber baron family from her co-authored book, "Timber Connections: The Joyce Lumber Story," a past Minnesota Book Award finalist. If you miss Ely's Timber Tales event, Hawkinson will also be at the Babbitt Public Library at 3:30 p.m.

The Curiosity Cohort for adults will meet on Thursday, April 17, from 1:30-3 p.m. to pursue the old-fashioned art of silhouette cutting to capture likenesses. Register in advance for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The Get Crafty group will meet on Wednesday, April 23, from 2-3 p.m. to make spring-themed crafts at craft stations. Register in advance for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The Move and Groove for Preschool group will meet on Tuesday, April 29, from 10:30-11 a.m.

The library will host a

presentation for adults on Wednesday, April 30, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. The talk will be by Joanna Swanson from the Northwoods Volunteer Connection, who will speak on Superior National Forest, the work required to maintain the forest, and how people can get involved as volunteers.

Preschool Storytime is held every Friday from 10:30-11 a.m. All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St. unless otherwise noted.

Babbitt Public Library

BABBITT- Book bingo will be on Monday, April 14, at 1 p.m. and on Thursday, April 24 at 1 p.m.

The Friends of the Library will host a bingo fundraiser on Saturday, April 26 at 1 p.m. in the Babbitt Municipal Gym, 71 South Drive. Bingo cards will be \$5 apiece, cash only. Cards must be purchased before gaming starts. Prizes will be split equally among multiple winners.

The library is holding a sealed-bid silent auction through Wednesday, April 16 at 5 p.m. Items are on display at the library. Photos of items are on the library's Facebook

page. The library reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

The library will host Timber Tales on Wednesday, April 16 at 3:30 p.m. Timber Tales will be narrated by local author Susan Hawkinson, relating the history of the lumber industry and how it opened the Northwoods to settlement. The hour-long program is for adults and high school students.

The Friends of the Library is now accepting applications for table space from crafters and vendors for the Up North Craft Fair on Saturday, June 7. To reserve a table, contact the library at 218-827-3345, or email [babbittlibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:babbittlibraryfriends@gmail.com).

The April take-and-make kit for kids is mixed media collage. Pick one up while supplies last. The kit for May will be tissue paper art, available starting on April 30.

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

Ely Community Education

ELY- Ely Community Education will hold a free

class on health care directives on Wednesday, April 16. A health care directive is a written document that informs other of your wishes about your health care if you are unable to make medical decisions. The class will cover what a health directive is, how to draft one, and why it is an important document for people to have.

Attorney Kelly Klun will teach a free Ely Community Education class on Wednesday, April 23, on estate planning. Anyone with assets, no matter how small, should plan on how to pass those on. Klun will walk attendees through the documents and steps needed for your estate.

Ely Community Education will hold a free class on "Five Keys to Retiring Fearlessly," about planning for retirement, on Wednesday, April 30.

The above classes are all at 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ely Public Schools Media Center, 600 E. Harvey St. Enter the campus buildings through the center door (door No. 1), pass through the foyer and second set of doors, and turn right. The media center is on the right, across from the new gym.



HELPING HANDS

# Kajala conveys flood recovery report to LCIF donors

## Lions-related philanthropic group's \$10,000 gift facilitated quick local response

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Ever since last summer’s devastating historic flood in Cook, the words “thank you” have been on the lips of Cook Lions Club President Steve Kajala as he’s expressed his gratitude to all of those who donated their time, effort, and donations of money and goods to those who supported the club’s flood recovery efforts. Kajala took that thank you tour on the road on Saturday, March 29 when he and other club members traveled to St. Cloud for the Lions Club International Fund (LCIF) “Go for the Gold Gala” to share what a \$10,000 LCIF emergency response grant and donations from regional Lions clubs meant for the Cook club’s efforts.

While Lions International is the umbrella organization under which local Lions clubs operate, LCIF is a separate entity administered by the Lions that provides financial aid for humanitarian projects and is fully funded by voluntary donations, Kajala noted. Kajala began with a slide depicting Cook in drier times, and then switched to flood photos, with an aerial shot of the flood drawing gasps from the crowd. Kajala showed a picture of his office at River St. and Vermilion Dr.

“The water was about 18 inches higher than this – this

was taken when the water was already coming down,” Kajala said. “Our watershed received about six to ten inches of rain upstream from us. The river that comes through town is about 30 feet wide and three feet deep, so it just didn’t work and it rose by about ten feet, cresting on Thursday, June 20 and causing the worst flood that we’ve ever seen. Everybody talked about the great flood of 1970 and that was a foot lower than what we had. About 40 percent of the town was underwater, anything from sheds and garages to businesses and homes.”

Kajala immediately turned to LCIF with a request for help.

“I’m going to give credit to this to District Governor Bob Woodke, I think he said it, that the Lions are the first humanitarian group to arrive and the last to leave, because they live there,” Kajala said. “And that was true.”

Kajala said it took just 57 minutes to get a response from LCIF that they would be sending \$10,000 to help.

“I was swept away,” Kajala said.

And although no one in the club had experience in disaster response, Kajala described for the crowd what happened next.

“We got on social media because there wasn’t a lot of communication – the city workers and leadership, they didn’t know what to do, either,” Kajala said. “Two days later we had an

emergency meeting and it was the most attended Lions meeting our club has ever had. We established a flood committee. We got spending protocols opened up so we could spend money more quickly, and obviously to have that grant money was just amazing. What did we need? Dehumidifiers, shop vacs, sump pumps, pressure washers, protective equipment, cleaning supplies, especially disinfectants. Cleaning equipment, toiletting supplies, food, beverages. So we planned a shopping trip for the next day.” The next morning, a Cook Ambulance led a convoy of four pickup trucks and a large enclosed trailer on the trek, spending out the LCIF donation and additional donations for the needed supplies.

“If you’ve never followed an ambulance, it is really something special,” Kajala smiled. “It’s good when you’re not following it for bad reasons.” Kajala estimated that there were as many as 100 volunteers at the Cook Fire Hall to help unload and organize the supplies. “This was really just a special day,” he said. Kajala noted that the Cook club made an additional \$5,500 donation for food.

“When you have 120 residences displaced, you’ve got businesses, workers, emergency staff, the burn rate (for food) is pretty high – it’s about \$1,000 a day



Cook Lions Club President Steve Kajala talks to a group in St. Cloud about the club's flood recovery efforts. submitted

feeding all those people,” Kajala said.

With an account at North Star Credit Union established to receive monetary donations, the club turned to collecting the many different items homeowners would need for their recovery efforts.

“We rented an empty building (the former Franks Pharmacy building that had been damaged by the flood) and turned that into the Cook Lions Flood Recovery Center,” Kajala said. “We ran that for two hours in the morning and two hours at night for two months straight every day. As things started to taper down we ran it for eight hours a week. We had refrigerators and beds and couches and chairs and everything. Ruby’s Pantry, a regional food shelf, gave us a whole bunch of stuff because it was easier for us to handle because we were always open. Everything in there

was free to flood victims, and I don’t think anybody took advantage of that. At the end, we had two rummage sales, sold everything, and put that money in the flood fund.” Kajala summed up the results of the club’s efforts, including the donations made to the flood fund.

“Today, we’ve put \$130,000 back in that town of 590 people,” Kajala said. “We spent about \$32,000 on relief supplies, and LCIF covered the first \$10,000 of that. We spent another \$11,500 on food for everybody. And when we were done we had \$76,000 left over.”

That money was distributed to 29 homeowners who applied for assistance, and also to the Cook Public Library.

“So, thanks to LCIF, thanks to the Lions, we were able to get those supplies quickly,” Kajala said. “The other organizations had a

place, but the fact that we were able to act quickly (was essential). When you have a building that’s underwater, it’s kind of in suspended animation, and when the water comes out mold and mildew start right away, and with swift action and all those volunteers we were able to get things dried out. Of the 120 buildings, only five of them were not able to be re-occupied, and all but one of our businesses has or will reopen soon. So, to LCIF and the number of local people we got checks from and from Lions Clubs everywhere that sent checks, thank you.” The Cook club is also looking ahead to help prepare for the next disaster. Kajala said they want to help the Cook Fire Department get a generator so that they won’t be hampered by a power outage when they serve as a command center for the response.

“Right now, if the power goes out, they can’t even open their doors,” Kajala said. “That’s the next step.”

Kajala also told the gathering that the Cook club stands ready to share the expertise it gained with other Lions clubs in communities that may experience a flood.

“We figured it out,” he said. “If there’s ever a need, I want people to call us. We will get on a Zoom, we’ll drive down, we’ll help in any way we can.”

# Voyageurs National Park kicks off 50th anniversary

REGIONAL- Tuesday was the official golden anniversary of Voyageurs National Park, and a monthslong celebration kicked off with a reception at the park’s headquarters in International Falls, where the public was given a glimpse into the park’s extensive archive of the carefully preserved treasures of Minnesota’s only national park.

But park lovers who couldn’t be there were able to take a virtual stroll through the park’s complicated past and rich archives through a Zoom presentation facilitated by Voyaguers Conservancy Education Specialist Jesse Gates. In a relaxed and revealing presentation, Park Ranger Erik Ditzler and Archivist Catherine Crawford led viewers through a story that began more than a century ago and continues to evolve. Ditzler appeared live, while he and Crawford put together a video tour of the archives that was shown during the session.

## Birth of the park

“Most people think (the park) started 50 years ago,”

Ditzler began, “but the idea was actually born in 1891.”

That year, the Minnesota Legislature formally asked President Benjamin Harrison to consider establishing a national park between Crane Lake and Lake of the Woods. The idea lay dormant until the 1960s, when serious surveys began. In 1971, President Nixon signed legislation authorizing the park, but the official designation didn’t come until April 8, 1975.

## Why the delay?

“There were nearly 100,000 acres of state and private lands that needed to be sorted out before we could open the gates, so to speak,” Ditzler said. “And it wasn’t just bureaucratic paperwork, it was emotional.”

Ditzler read from a heartfelt letter written in the ‘70s by cabin owner Jenny Wiley to President Gerald Ford. In it, she lamented the loss of a dream cabin built over years, only to be swept into the park boundary. “How would you feel?” she asked the president. No reply came.

Some lands were tied up in school trust funds, others



A video featuring VNP Ranger Erik Ditzler and Archivist Catherine Crawford showing part of the park's historical collection was shown during Tuesday's Zoom presentation. screen capture

held by logging companies like Boise Cascade, and many still belonged to local families and resorts.

Compromises were necessary to address local concerns about the park infringing on traditional uses of the land and lakes. Recreational fishing, motorboats, and snowmobiles were ultimately allowed, but hunting was not, at least not within park boundaries. To appease duck hunters, a prime area, Black Bay, was transferred to the state in 1983 for continued use.

Creating a national park, Ditzler emphasized, “was no home run for everyone.” Yet today, Voyageurs boasts over 10 million visitors since its opening, more than 170 campsites, and four visitor centers, one newly opening this summer in Crane Lake.

## Inside the archive

Following the history lesson, attendees were treated to a rare tour behind the scenes of the park’s collections room, what Ditzler called “the secret room,” though Crawford was quick

to clarify, “It’s not really a secret. It’s everyone’s history.”

Crawford oversees an impressive and eclectic collection.

“Everything here tells a piece of the park’s story,” she said, standing among artifacts ranging from fish scale records to Native beadwork, from weathered logging tools to an old wooden fishing boat once owned by a Rainy Lake local.

There’s also presidential flair – one of the original pens used by Richard Nixon to sign the authorizing legislation now rests safely in the park’s collection, donated by local sportsman Wayne Judy, who was also one of the founders of the forerunner of the Voyageurs Conservancy, the Voyageurs National Park Association.

Perhaps most visually stunning is a large mining pulley wheel from the Little American gold mine, salvaged from the days when Rainy Lake echoed with picks and steam engines.

“It used to lean against a wall in the old HQ,” Crawford said, “a hazard waiting to happen.”

The park’s maintenance crew eventually built a custom support cart to protect both the artifact and anyone who comes near it.

Beyond relics of industry and recreation, the collection includes oral histories and archival documents, many not on public display.

“It’s not glamorous,” Crawford admitted, gesturing toward shelves of archived reports and microfilm, “but it’s the backbone of how this park was built and how we operate.”

## Looking forward

As the park enters its next half-century, Ditzler and Crawford hope to continue expanding both the story and the stewardship.

“Our mission is long-term,” Ditzler said. “We’re preserving this place not just for us, but for the kids and grandkids of the future.”

“We’re here to share it,” Crawford said. “It belongs to all of us.”

For a full slate of ongoing anniversary events, visit [voyageurs.org/fiftieth](http://voyageurs.org/fiftieth).

## Community items

### Easter party will be on April 19 at Cook Community Center

COOK- The Easter Bunny welcomes one and all for a children’s Easter party at the Cook Community Center on Saturday, April 19 from 9-11 a.m.

For kids ages 0-10, there will be games, Easter bags, and boys and girls bikes to be given away.

This event is sponsored by the Cook Lions Club, Cook VFW, Zup’s Grocery Store, the Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club, Cook Fire Department, Cook Building Center, and the *Cook News-Herald*.

### Orr Fire annual Easter drive through is on Saturday

ORR- This Saturday, April 12, is the time to hop

on over to Orr for the Orr Fire Department’s annual Easter drive-through at the Orr Tourist Information Center/City Offices from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Easter bunny will be on hand to help firefighters pass out the goodies for kids ages 0-10. Drive through and pick an egg for a chance to win a bike or Easter basket. The event promises “egg-citing fun” for all!

### Service dog group coming to Cook

COOK- Can Do Canines, an organization that works to enhance the lives of individuals with trained service dogs, will be in Cook on Tuesday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the Cook VFW for an informational presentation.

Come learn how dogs can become service animals for a diverse array of needs, including mobility, autism,

hearing, seizures, and diabetes. Can Do Canines also provides facility dogs trained to support individuals during stressful circumstances in hospitals.

This presentation is free and open to the public.

### North Woods School student art show and reception at NWFA

COOK- The artistic talents of North Woods School students will be featured at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook beginning Wednesday, April 16 in the gallery’s Wolfe Den.

The exhibit features the work of students who competed in the district’s art competition, including art by Selena Ramos, Mya Kinsey, Kathleen Doten, Susan Aderman, Rory Bundy, Anna Nelson, Cody Kirkman, Nia Gaskell, Tatum Barto, Sa-

die Spears, Amber Sopocci, Lydia Trip, Chloe Anderson, Josephine Carlson, Lauren Burnett, and Brittin Lappi.

A reception honoring the student artists will be held at the gallery on Thursday, April 24 from 5-7 p.m., and the public is invited to attend.

View the student exhibit from April 16-30 during the gallery’s open hours on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The gallery is located at 210 S River St. in Cook.

### NWFA sponsors 80 Sq. Inches of Art

COOK- It’s time to get your creative juices flowing and grab a canvas, or two or three, for “80 Sq. Inches of Art,” a celebration of the talent of local artists at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook.

Register at and take your

canvas home from NWFA Gallery, 210 S River St. through Saturday, June 28. The sky’s the limit for what you do with your canvas – paint it, draw on it, weave on it, glue on it, quilt on it, slash or felt on that canvas.

The artwork is your choice, your medium and your subject. Picking up a canvas now will give you plenty of time to strike the perfect creative spark for your work of art.



The mere presence of a camera is enough to bring out the fun from, left to right, North Woods sixth graders Maggie Flores-Leander, Libby Glass, Vera Bryson, Joselyn Pascuzzi, Elizabeth Trip, Estella Plimi, who participated in a Northeast Minnesota Band Directors Association Honor Band in Hibbing on Monday. submitted



## PROTEST...Continued from page 1

building in St. Paul, attracted 25,000 protesters according to the State Patrol.

Chilly temperatures and a brisk breeze didn’t seem to discourage protesters in Ely, who began gathering shortly before the official 11 a.m. start of the “Hands Off” protest. By just after noon, a count by this reporter found 203 protesters, who lined up along the Sheridan St. side of the park.

### Protesters

Ozzie Reif, a local resident and business owner, was one of the organizers of the local event. He said he decided to take a stand “because I love the Constitution.”

Reif used social media and sent emails and texts to bring people to the protest. “The demonstration was also added to the national Hands Off’s website,” Reif said, “and a fair number of folks found out about it through that avenue.” He spent much of the event thanking people for showing up.

Retired miner and steelworkers’ union member Bill Erzar, of Morse Township, said he was there to stand up for veterans and because, as a former member of the Air



Force, he “took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic and to obey a legal order.” He carried a sign with an American flag, that said “Respect Veterans. Hands Off the V.A.”

Others used music to push their message. A woman with a darbuka-style drum led a line of marchers up and down the sidewalk at the park, inciting the crowd with a call-and-response chant: “Tell me what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like!”

Brenda Tibbetts, of Cook, was there as well, wearing some of her religious vest-

ments. “People have been saying, ‘Where’s the clergy?’ at these events?” said Tibbetts, who is an ordained deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

“This is a lot more people than the last event,” said Suzanne Mades, a retired Methodist minister who lives in Ely. “The weather is better for this one,” she said, referring to the spontaneous local protest that coalesced at the Whiteside Park bandshell on a much colder and windier day in mid-February.

### Signs and flags

The protesters arrived with a mix of homemade

**Left: Some younger protesters turned out as well at the event in Ely.**

photo by F. Schumacher

and preprinted signs and four flags — the Stars and Stripes, an LGBTQ rainbow pride flag, a Palestinian flag, and a Ukrainian flag.

In keeping with the nationwide theme of the protest, many of the home-made signs referenced “hands off.” The slogan was applied to the many programs, federal agencies, and democratic principles currently under attack by the Trump administration, including veterans’ benefits, social security, Medicare, Medicaid, courts, museums, schools, libraries, education, clean water, federal workers, free speech, and democracy.

“Hands-off Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security! I worked 53 years for mine!” one hand-written sign stated. “Stop breaking things,” another demanded.

Many signs protested Elon Musk, rule by oligarchy, and DOGE. Other signs protested Trump and the MAGA movement. “Tired of Trump’s Toddler Logic!” one sign said. “Moscow Agent Governing

America,” another opined. “Democracy, Not Kings!” and “Trump’s tariffs will cost you big time,” said others.

Given that the protest was in Ely, it was no surprise that signs for saving the Boundary Waters had their place in the block-long line of protesters. Other signs expressed support for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service.

Several signs were in support of our neighbor to the north, including the one the Reif carried: “I feel like Canada is cool.” Robin Stenseth-Erickson carried a sign stating, “Our allies are not our enemies. The pro-Canada sign that stood out the most was bright green, saying simply, “Canada, we’re sorry.”

Some signs used laughter to convey their message. In the middle of March, the Minnesota DFL Party began distributing missing person-style lawn signs for U.S. Representative Pete Stauber and several made an appearance at Saturday’s protest.

“Missing Congressman,” the signs proclaimed. “Name: Pete Stauber ... Last seen: Trying to gut Medicaid and cut taxes for Billionaires. Have

you seen this man?”

One demonstrator carrying the missing person poster said he regretted voting for Stauber. As someone who had worked in law enforcement, he said he had voted for Stauber because the Congressman has also worked as a police officer. “But I was wrong,” the man said, lamenting the layoffs of federal workers and Trump’s attacks on labor unions for federal workers.

Saturday’s protest prompted considerable response from passers-by on Sheridan St.

Most vehicles slowed down past the protest and a large number honked or rolled down their windows to wave. That response wasn’t universal. A handful of drivers appeared to object to the protest, like the driver of an eastbound panel truck who shouted his opposition from his cab or the SUV driver who rolled down his window and stuck his thumbs-down sign as he drove slowly past.

*Leah Rogne contributed to this article.*

## AGING...Continued from page 1

The bill grew out of a bipartisan legislative task force that met from August 2023 to December 2024, when it published a detailed 60-page report presenting the scope of the need for a coordinated approach to services and policies focused on older adults, as well as an outline for the proposed Healthy Aging Subcabinet.

### Report findings

Through a series of 20 meetings held in St. Paul and virtually, task force members heard from a wide gamut of service providers and advocacy organizations about the characteristics and needs of older Minnesotans, both now and into the future. A summary of their findings follows.

### The gray wave

Minnesota has entered the “super-aged” era, with more than 1 million residents aged 65 or older, a figure that is expected to reach 1.16 million and remain steady through mid-century. Greater Minnesota is aging even faster than the metro, partly due to youth outmigration. Women dominate the state’s senior ranks, especially at the oldest ages – there are 25 percent more women than men at 65-plus and nearly 80 percent more at age 85 or older. Most in that group live alone, and 70 percent of women 65 and older reside in rural areas.

### Economic drivers

Despite outdated notions of dependency, Minnesota’s older adults fuel the economy.

Those 50 and older account for 57 cents of every dollar spent statewide, with that share projected to rise to 62 cents by 2050. They contribute \$154 billion to the state’s GDP and hold about 1.7 million jobs. Seniors also anchor the state’s largest volunteer workforce and are key caregivers – offering child care, staffing food shelves, and helping run elections and community groups.

### Growing health needs

Behind the longevity statistics lie serious health concerns. About 307,000 older Minnesotans live with a disability, and more than 100,000 have difficulty with daily activities. Chronic illness is widespread, with 84 percent living with at least one major condition. Dementia diagnoses are rising – nearly 100,000 residents live with Alzheimer’s or a related illness, a number expected to jump more than 20 percent by the end of 2025. Medicaid spending on Alzheimer’s alone could top \$1 billion in the state within two years.

### Caregiving needs

Minnesota’s elderly care system depends on its 640,000 family caregivers, who provide an estimated \$8.6 billion in unpaid support annually. Most are women, many balancing caregiving with paid work. Dementia care is especially demanding – 225 million unpaid hours were recorded in 2022, and nearly 40 percent of those caregivers experience depression. The

emotional toll is high, and burnout is one of the leading reasons families turn to institutional care.

### Barriers to staying at home

Roughly 96 percent of older Minnesotans live independently, but many do so in homes that need repairs they can’t afford. Nearly 16,000 low-income seniors require major fixes just to remain safely housed. Affordable, accessible housing is limited – especially in rural towns. Transportation is another major hurdle – about 20 percent of older adults no longer drive, and public transit options are sparse outside metro areas. Volunteer driver programs, once vital, are increasingly strained.

### Rise of older workers

Older workers are reshaping Minnesota’s labor force. Those 55-plus now hold nearly one-quarter of all jobs, and the number of workers aged 75-plus is expected to double by 2030. Yet, age discrimination persists – two-thirds of older employees report facing bias, and many can’t find comparable work after job loss. For many, work is a necessity, not a choice. Social Security is their main source of income, particularly for women, who tend to earn less and live longer.

### Hidden costs

More than 110,000 older Minnesotans live on less than \$25,000 a year, with nearly a third spending over 30 percent

of their income on housing. In 2023, food insecurity hit record levels, with over 47,000 seniors turning to food banks. The high cost of car ownership – around \$11,000 annually – adds to the burden. Nursing home care is out of reach for most, and many family caregivers spend a quarter of their income on support that’s often invisible in public policy.

### New office

With a budget request of only \$1.7 million, the Healthy Aging Subcabinet won’t be implementing any of the state’s supports for older adults – rather, it’s purpose is to serve as a focal point for coordinating those services and initiatives to be sure the huge financial investment necessary will be spent in an efficient and coordinated manner.

“This would ensure the voices and perspectives of older adults in the planning process can result in recommendations,” said Kathleen Kelso, a public policy advisor for Elder Voice Advocates. “It is time for the state to lead the way in planning with us, not just for us.”

### Sustainable resources

A key function of the proposed Department of Community Aging would be ensuring that older adults can age in place with the right mix of community supports and information. That includes collaborating closely with Area Agencies on Aging to coordinate services under

the Statewide Plan on Aging, building out robust tools like the Senior LinkAge Line, and securing partnerships with private organizations for funding opportunities. The department would promote caregiving education for families and friends, work with local governments on public communication around protective services, and tackle age discrimination in employment by pushing for inclusive hiring practices across sectors. At its core, this role is about strengthening the infrastructure that allows seniors to stay active, informed, and supported where they live.

### Long-term services

The department would also take on oversight of long-term services and supports – everything from licensed senior care facilities to the broader network of publicly financed support systems. It would coordinate across local, state, and federal funding streams, track care quality and life outcomes in long-term care settings, and make sure that public evaluations are available to families making care decisions. The department would also be tasked with forecasting future care needs based on population trends and local conditions, with a clear acknowledgment of the crucial role that family and informal caregivers already play in the long-term care system. This is about more than maintaining regulation – it’s about guiding the system toward better care and

greater accountability.

### Community development

The third pillar of the proposal focuses on building a healthier, more age-friendly state through strategic planning and data-driven policymaking. The department would lead the charge on a Statewide Plan on Aging, coordinating with public and private partners to define goals and measure progress. That includes conducting analyses of health care delivery and caregiving systems, assessing workforce training needs, and ensuring that aging policy reflects values of equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Tribal Nations and historically underrepresented communities would be part of ongoing planning conversations. The department would also work with the state’s economic development agency to create pathways for older adults to remain engaged in the workforce, particularly in caregiving roles where shortages are acute. Policies put in place to address aging today position our state to do better aligned with future populations.

“This bill is a step forward in addressing that call to prepare our state to promote healthy aging and help Minnesotans age with dignity and live in the community of their choice,” Klevorn said.

The bill did not require additional action by the committee. A companion bill in the Senate has not yet received a hearing.

## BRANDENBURG...Continued from page 1

his nature photography during his many years with *National Geographic* that began to draw international acclaim.

In his early years, he trained his lens on the beauty of Minnesota’s southwestern prairie, but later ventured further north, where his work focused, for many years, on the wildlife and landscape of the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Becky Rom, of Ely, who was a friend of Brandenburg’s

since the 1980s, recalls visiting him one day at Ravenwood to update him on some of her efforts to protect the BWCAW. She recalls at one point he jumped up from his chair and printed off several of his images from the wilderness and gave them to Rom. “To this day, I take his images whenever I go to Washington,” said Rom. “They have been very effective in telling a story that words cannot tell.”

That was true throughout

Brandenburg’s prolific career and many of the stories he told through his images came from some of the world’s most austere landscapes, ranging from the Namibian Desert of Africa to the high Canadian arctic, which is where he captured some of his most iconic imagery. His image of a white Arctic wolf leaping between ice floes proved to be one of his most famous and enduring. It was later named one of the 100 most important photographs in Canadian history.

Brandenburg’s list of accolades for his work is global in nature and far too long to list more than a few highlights. In 1991, for his work with the Wolf Ridge Environmental Center, his creation of the nonprofit Concerts for the Environment, and his work with the Nature Conservancy, he received the United Nation’s 500 Environmental World Achievement Award, which was presented to him by the King of Sweden.

His work appeared in a col-

lection of the 40 most important nature photographs of all time, a work that included the work of Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and Eliot Porter. The collection, selected by members of the International League of Conservation Photographers, included four of Brandenburg’s images, the most of any other photographer. Two of them were taken in Minnesota, including an image of bison on a frozen landscape at Blue Mounds State Park, and his famous

“Brother Wolf” image, taken near Ely.

In 2023, Brandenburg received the Lifetime Achievement Award from *National Geographic* magazine, an honor he received years earlier from the North American Nature Photography Association.

Brandenburg is survived by his wife Judy, daughter Heidi, and her husband Nels Pierson. An obituary was not available as of the *Timberjay’s* weekly press time.

## LIHEAP...Continued from page 1

Jr. told ABC News that some of the cuts may be reversed.

“The part of that, DOGE – we talked about this from the beginning – we’re going to do 80 percent cuts but 20 percent of those are going to have to be reinstalled because we’ll make mistakes,” he said.

However, Kennedy did not clarify whether LIHEAP staff would be reinstated or when, and without staff running the program there is currently no plan as to if or how the remaining funds due to the states will be disbursed.

### State impact

As is the case nationally, Minnesota had already received 90 percent of its LIHEAP funding, about \$112 million for this past winter, last fall, but officials were expecting an additional \$12-\$13 million to support another 10,000 households before the heating season ends and also to transition into the summer months when some cooling assistance is also provided.

Federal law requires LIHEAP to target households with seniors, disabled

members, or children under age six. Roughly half of Minnesota recipients are over 60, and one in six households receiving aid includes a child under the age of 6. The average LIHEAP payment in Minnesota is about \$700, and those payments are sent directly to utility companies, not to the applicants.

The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency is the lead agency for the LIHEAP program in St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties. In 2024, the program processed over

9,000 applications and provided special crisis funds to over 3,000 households.

The Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota warned that even a delay in funds could leave vulnerable residents without heat or fuel. “Even a delay in funding will mean that eligible Minnesotans risk utility shutoffs or being unable to refill empty propane or fuel oil tanks,” said executive director Annie Levenson-Falk.

Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule protects eligible customers from utility disconnection through April

30, but only if they establish and maintain a payment plan with their provider.

Utilities such as Xcel Energy and Minnesota Power said they are monitoring the situation. “We want to assure customers that we will work with them,” said Amy Rutledge, a spokeswoman for Minnesota Power.

### Political pressure

Democratic Minnesota U.S. Sen. Tina Smith joined a bipartisan coalition of senators urging the administration to reverse the firings of LIHEAP staff. Smith called

the layoffs “thoughtless and cruel,” citing the more than 10,000 Minnesotans waiting for aid.

“I want answers. I fought for this funding for a reason, and I’m not just going to sit and watch it get ripped away from Minnesotans,” she said in a written statement. The letter to HHS was also signed by Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Jack Reed, D-R.I., Susan Collins, R-Maine, and others from both parties, reflecting the national concern, particularly from elected officials from cold weather states.



PROTECTION

Sen. Smith bill would prohibit sulfide mining upstream of BWCAW

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— U.S. Sen. Tina Smith has introduced a measure in the U.S. Senate that would make permanent the current prohibition on mineral leasing on 225,000 acres of the Superior National Forest, upstream of the Boundary WatersCanoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park. That so-called mineral withdrawal was enacted by the Biden administration,

effectively blocking development of the proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine near Ely.

The 20-year mineral withdrawal provides only temporary protection, which is why BWCAW advocates have been seeking congressional action to provide permanent



Sen. Tina Smith

protection. Sen. Smith’s bill does not restrict taconite or iron ore mining in any way. “Beginning with President Theodore Roosevelt, generation after generation of our state and nation’s leaders have wisely taken action to protect the Boundary Waters,” said Ingrid Lyons, executive director of Save the Boundary Waters. “Former Vice President Walter Mondale remained devoted to permanently protecting the Boundary Waters, calling it ‘the obligation of each generation.’ Today, Senator Smith is building upon this legacy.” While Smith’s measure stands little chance of passage in the Republican-dominated U.S. Senate, as the first legislation to protect the 1.1-million-acre wilderness to be introduced in the Senate in nearly fifty years, the measure has symbolic importance. Smith’s legislation is nearly identical to the bill that has been repeatedly

pushed in the U.S. House by Minnesota’s Fourth District Rep. Betty McCollum, which shows bicameral backing for the bill. The measure would essentially double the size of the mining protection area that was implemented around the Boundary Waters as part of the 1978 Boundary Waters Wilderness Act. That protection area was established to ensure that sulfide-based mining operations upstream of the BWCAW would not pollute the pristine water quality for which the canoe country is famous. But outstanding mineral leases that were still in effect in 1978 prompted Congress to exempt a large portion of the upper Rainy River watershed from inclusion in the mining protection area. Those leases have since been canceled, although it’s possible the Trump administration may seek to reissue them.

THE LEGISLATURE

Hauschild and Skraba advance bill to provide aid to rural fire, EMS districts

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

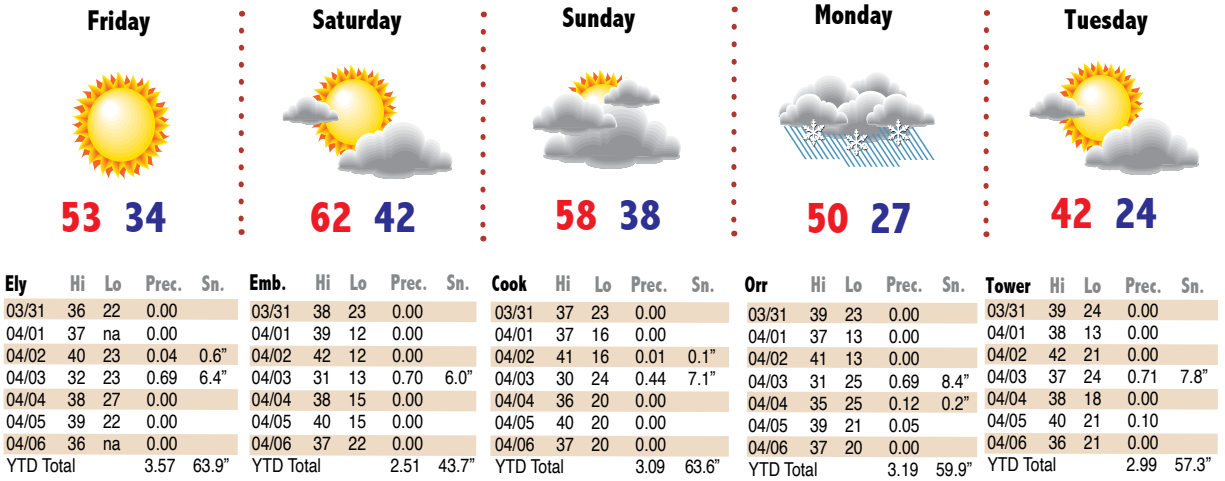
REGIONAL- A bill moving through the Minnesota Legislature could bring long-term relief to rural fire and emergency services by sending state aid to special taxing districts created to support them. The bipartisan proposal, HF526 in the House and SF1028 in the Senate, would provide annual state funding aid to fire and EMS taxing districts – regional cooperatives formed under a 2021 law that allows neighboring cities and townships to pool their resources and levy taxes specifically for fire and ambulance services. “This aid will lessen what can seem like an insurmountable economic barrier in establishing a new special district,” Cloquet Area Fire District Chief Jesse Buhs told a House committee on Tuesday. “We need to create long-term sustainability for fire and EMS

in our state.” In Cloquet’s case, consolidating into a special district allowed the department to eliminate five firefighting rigs, one station and several overlapping training and administrative systems – all while improving efficiency and the district’s insurance ratings. Cloquet fire and ambulance and Floodwood fire and ambulance are special taxing districts in St. Louis County that would immediately benefit from the aid program, but Buhs and others believe that providing additional state aid could spur the development of other partnerships. “When you eliminate municipal boundaries, they’re no longer a factor in the provision of emergency services,” Buhs said. “You can take a regional approach.” Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL-Hermantown and Rep. Roger Skraba, R-Ely, are co-authors of the bills in their

respective chambers. Qualifying districts would receive annual aid equal to half of their average property tax levy from the past five years. For newer districts – those under six years old – the state would use the average of all prior-year levies. In total, the bill would appropriate \$3.1 million a year. If total requests exceed the cap, each district’s amount would be proportionally reduced. The Department of Revenue would certify the aid by Aug. 1 each year, with payments made the following July. Rep. John Huot, DFL-

Rosemount, acknowledged the financial constraints facing lawmakers this session but urged his colleagues to prioritize emergency services during Tuesday’s hearing. “This is a really big, challenging thing,” Huot said. “Unfortunately, we’re in a bad year. But we, as legislators, really have to look at funding these sources. We have these failing all over the state. And we have to figure this out.” Both the Senate and House have laid the bill over for possible inclusion in a larger tax package.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST



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TRANSFER STATION

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CANISTER SITE

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Thu: 10 a.m.– 5 p.m.  
Sat: 12:30 p.m.– 4:30 p.m.

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Tue: 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m.  
Wed: Noon–6 p.m.

Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun:  
8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Mon-Fri: 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
Sat: 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Tues and Sat: 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

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Summer hours effective April 15 - September 30

SALE...Continued from page 1

that local community news,” said Gulban. “Our challenge is getting people to pay for it.” Gulban sees technology as a way to help small newspapers operate more efficiently and he’s leveraging his background as the CEO of Cherry Road Technologies to implement new approaches to newspaper production and printing. He sees the *Cook News-Herald* printing plant as an opportunity to shift to digital printing, which he said is far more efficient for tabloid-sized newspapers with limited press runs. “A lot of our runs are under 1,000, so that’s pretty inefficient for a web press,” Gulban noted. Gulban launched his first digital printing facility just last week down in Arkansas, where he owns five small newspapers. Since Gulban now owns at least five newspapers in northeastern Minnesota, he plans to consolidate printing at the Cook facility. Currently, Cherry Road’s northeastern Minnesota papers, which include the *Rainy Lake Gazette*, the *Lake County Press*, and the *Cook County News-Herald*, are printed at Cherry Road’s plant in Slayton, located in far southwestern Minnesota. Gulban said he has a new digital printing machine on order for the Slayton facility and depending on how it works out, he’ll look at bringing a similar machine to Cook, perhaps as early as next month. In the meantime, both the *Cook News-Herald* and the *Tower News* will be printed in Slayton. The ramshackle building that currently houses the *Tower News* is not part of Gulban’s plan and is now up for sale. Gulban said he doesn’t intend to keep the property and likely won’t maintain an office in Tower. The *Tower News* has experienced a sharp decline in circulation in recent years, with the newspaper’s most recent publisher’s statement showing just 275 paid subscribers. The look of the two newspapers is expected to change fairly dramatically in the near future, and will likely include a shift to color. In addition to planned printing upgrades, Gulban is planning a shift to an automated form of page layout which will have set templates that will be automatically filled with content, photos, and ads. The ad production and layout of the two papers won’t be done locally. That work is handled by a centralized facility that serves Cherry Road’s many newspapers.

Cook VFW

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TRAVEL

# Real ID deadline takes flight May 7

## What Minnesotans need to know before traveling

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- If you have a domestic flight booked for any time after May 6, you'll be turned away from airport security if you don't have a Real ID or another acceptable form of identification.

After nearly two decades of delays, the federal Real ID requirement is officially set to take effect May 7.

The Real ID Act was passed by Congress in 2005 as a response to security vulnerabilities exposed by the 9/11 attacks. It requires states to issue driver's licenses and ID cards that meet stricter federal standards. The compliant licenses or cards are marked by a gold star in the upper right-hand corner. Implementation of the requirement has been delayed numerous times.

Though Real IDs have been available in Minnesota since 2018, uptake has been slow. As of early February, only 41 percent of Minnesotans had a Real ID, according to the state Department of Public Safety (DPS). The national average is about 60 percent.

**What will happen?**

After May 7, Minnesotans without a Real ID or other federally approved ID will not be able to pass through

airport security for domestic flights using a standard driver's license.

In lieu of a Real ID, travelers may also use the following TSA-approved documents:

- A valid U.S. passport or passport card.
- Enhanced driver's license (EDL).
- U.S. military ID.
- Permanent resident card (green card).
- Federally recognized tribal-issued photo ID.
- Veteran Health Identification Card.
- For a complete list of acceptable documents, visit <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification>.

An enhanced driver's license or ID, which costs \$15 more than a standard license, meets Real ID requirements and can also be used to travel by land or sea to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and parts of the Caribbean. It is not valid for international air travel.

In Minnesota, Real ID cards currently take up to six weeks – about 42 days – to arrive by mail. If you submit in the next week, you are unlikely to receive a Real ID before Memorial Day weekend.

"You can still apply any time, even after May 7," DPS stated in a social media post.

"Plan ahead if traveling this summer to have your card before your trip."

**Applications**

To apply for a Real ID in Minnesota, individuals must provide:

- One document proving full legal name, date of birth, and U.S. citizenship or legal presence, such as a passport or birth certificate.
- Two documents proving Minnesota residency with the applicant's name and address, such as a utility bill or bank statement.
- Social Security number.

Applicants who have changed their name at any point must also provide legal documentation of each name change, such as a marriage certificate or court order.

Electronic copies of documents can be uploaded online for pre-verification, but printed copies must be brought to a DVS office for final processing. Digital versions on phones are not accepted.

The cost for a Real ID-compliant Class D license is \$46 for a new card or \$41 for renewals — the same fees as a standard license.

**Real ID uses**

A Real ID will be required for boarding domestic flights, entering military bases, and

accessing a limited number of federal buildings where identification is routinely required. Offices such as Social Security offices that do not require identification to enter will not require Real IDs.

A Real ID is not required for driving, voting, buying alcohol or tobacco, visiting hospitals or receiving health-care, or conducting banking transactions – a standard driver's license will continue to be acceptable for these uses. Children under 18 who are traveling alone domestically do not need a Real ID if accompanied to security by an adult who has a Real ID or acceptable identification. However, parents or guardians should check with specific airlines for information about possible restrictions or additional fees.

For complete information on how to obtain a Minnesota Real ID, go online to <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-and-id-card-information/real-id-dl-and-id-card>.

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Briefly

### Burning restrictions take effect on Monday, April 14

REGIONAL— If you have spring burning to complete, this will be the weekend to get it done. Burning restrictions go into effect across northern St. Louis and all of Lake, Cook, and Koochiching counties beginning at 6 a.m. on Monday, April 14.

With considerable snow melting expected over the weekend, conditions are likely to be conducive to wildfire in the coming days and weeks. Daytime humidity tends to be especially low during late winter and early spring and with last summer's dead vegetation now largely exposed, potential for fire is significant, particularly as most of the region remains in moderate drought. Escaped fire from burning vegetative debris is Minnesota's number one cause of wildfires, and burning restrictions help reduce that risk.

The DNR will not issue permits for the open burning of brush or yard waste in these counties until restrictions are lifted.

"People might not realize how easily a fire can accidentally get out of control when it's dry outside," said Karen Harrison, DNR wildfire prevention specialist. "By restricting burning during

periods of high wildfire risk, we've significantly reduced the number of wildfires Minnesota has experienced over the past decade."

If people need to dispose of vegetation or yard waste, Harrison said composting, chipping, or taking brush to a collection site are alternatives.

People cause more than 90 percent of wildfires in

Minnesota. If a fire rekindles or escapes, the person who set it is liable for any damage caused, as well as for wildfire suppression costs.

Burning restrictions will be adjusted as conditions change. For more information and daily updates on current fire risk and open burning restrictions, visit the statewide fire danger and burning restric-

tions page of the DNR website ([mndnr.gov/burnrestrictions](http://mndnr.gov/burnrestrictions)).

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## Annual Meeting Notice

Lake Country Power will hold the annual membership meeting on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at the Reif Center — located at 720 NW Conifer Drive, Grand Rapids, MN.

- Registration starts at 5:00 p.m.
- Dinner with chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, coleslaw, etc.
  - Visit with members, employees and directors
  - Live music by Due North
  - Chance to win prizes including an EGO wet-dry vacuum

- Annual Business Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- Lake Country Power updates
  - Great River Energy updates
  - Announcement of director election and other business

Director election ballots will be mailed to Lake Country Power members only in Districts 2, 4 and 8 between April 5 and April 9, 2025.

Members may vote electronically, in person at the annual meeting, or by U.S. mail to Survey & Ballot Systems using the provided ballot envelope and postage-paid envelope. Online polls open at 8:00 a.m. CST, April 9. Ballots will include detailed voting instructions.

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FELINE RESCUE

Ely cat now employed at Rick’s Relics in Tower

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY – A cat rescued here has found a new home – and a job – at a store in Tower.

Blockhead is a fluffy cream-colored kitty who was abandoned by his former owners.

“We believe Blockhead belonged to renters who moved,” Gwen Derr, owner of Prairie Fire Tobacco Shop and Chapman Street Books, told the *Timberjay*. “When he showed up, he was an intact male. He got into fights, but he would run and hide from people and dogs.”

Without anyone to take care of him, Blockhead started going downhill.

“By last summer, he was getting really skinny,” Derr said. “He had goo in his eyes and gunk in his ears. His fur was all matted. He just wasn’t doing well.”

Derr started feeding him in the alley behind the store. Then, she borrowed the live trap from the Ely Police Department. Blockhead was caught in the middle of October. Derr took him to the Ely Veterinary Clinic, where they fixed the many

things that ailed the homeless cat.

His treatment came with significant vet bills.

“He was treated for a parasite infection,” Derr said. “He was fixed, and he got all his shots. He needed a lot of care. But he was a real cuddle bug once he settled in.”

Word got out around, and people showed up to help with the vet bills.

“Folks really came through. Some gave me money directly. An anonymous donor put \$80 with a note through my mail slot in the door. The community stepped up and really helped out,” Derr said.

But Derr couldn’t keep the cat because he didn’t get along with fellow shop cat Simon.

“They fought all the time,” Derr said. She started looking for a new home for Blockhead.

Julie Petrzilka from Rick’s Relic’s in Tower contacted Derr about the cat.

“Julie was in the market for a shop cat. She retired the store’s previous cat, Sasha, a few years before,” Kenzie Spain, who works at the Tower business, said.

Blockhead, now renamed Mr. B, moved into his new home on



Mr. B on his perch. Formerly known as Blockhead before moving to Tower, Mr. B is currently employed at Rick’s Relics on Main St. photo by C. Clark

Jan. 6.

“It took about a week for Mr. B to warm up to us,” Spain said. “Then he came out of his shell.

Ever since then, he’s been a friendly, loving cat.”

Mr. B is available for scratches and adoration during normal business hours at Rick’s Relics, 405 Main St., in Tower.

GROWING FOOD FOR ALL

Ely’s Giving Garden featured on “Great Gardening”

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY – Nine months after the PBS “Great Gardening” program visited the Giving Garden last July, the program featuring the garden aired on April 3.

“Great Gardening” is a show produced by PBS Channel 8 in Duluth. It focuses on the challenges of gardening in zones 3 and 4, which are the plant-growing zones in northern Minnesota.

The half-hour program on Friday featured the Giving Garden in a three-minute spot at the start of the show, followed by a four-minute follow-up in the second half of the program.

Most of the footage is



The Outward Bound canoe planter at the Giving Garden next to the VA Clinic on Miners Drive. file photo

from an interview with Sally Koski, one of the six master gardener volunteers who work on the Giving Garden project. During the interview, she detailed how the garden got started and grew.

“The ‘Great Gardening’ show put out a call for gardeners,” Koski told the *Timberjay* last July. “We submitted and they contacted us. ... A. J. Larson from ‘Great Gardening’ visited Ely earlier this month to film the community garden for the show.”

**Surprise**

Channel 8 said they would contact Ely’s master gardeners before the clip on the Giving Garden ran, but Koski found out the show

had aired when she returned home from the Thursday evening performance of the Northern Lakes Arts Association’s production of “Matilda.”

“I got home after playing in the orchestra for the musical,” Koski said, “and my husband said, ‘Dear, I was watching ‘Great Gardening,’ and you know what? You were on it!’ I wish they had remembered to tell us because I would have posted it online so people in Ely could watch.”

**Giving Garden**

The Ely Giving Garden was started in the fall of 2022 with the aim of growing produce and giving it to the veterans visiting the VA

Outpatient Clinic and to local food shelves. The garden harvested its first crop in 2023.

“We had more produce than the veterans could use,” Koski said.

The garden expanded in 2024, adding planters and fruit trees while also laying a nature walk to connect the Happy Days child care center at the Community Hub Building to the garden.

**Grant**

Going into its third growing season, the Giving Garden has just received a \$2,000 grant from Lake Country Power.

“We applied in February,” Koski said, “and we just found out that we received it. It’s so new that we haven’t even met yet to figure of the specifics of spending the money.”

The grant will be for a pergola over the garden’s picnic table.

“Tim Hogan’s shop class will build the pergola as a project,” explained Koski. The grant will pay for the pergola’s materials, and the Ely Memorial High School shop class will donate the labor.

The April 4 “Great Gardening” show featuring the Ely Giving Garden can be streamed for free at pbs.org/video/ely-giving-garden-new-blooms-minnesota-growing-tips-4imer1/. The show is also available on YouTube.com/@Great-Gardening.

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Obituaries and Death Notices



**Robert Tekautz**  
Robert “Bob” Tekautz, 78, of Virginia, passed away peacefully on Friday, March 28, 2025, at home, with his wife and family by his side, after a lengthy illness with several health issues. He was strong and fought valiantly to the end. A gathering of family and friends was held before a Memorial Mass on Monday, April 7 at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Virginia. The family wishes to thank all the doctors, nurses and support staff at Essentia Health who provided excellent care to Bob over the years.  
Family services were provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.  
Robert was born on Oct. 11, 1946, in Virginia, the son of Charles and Gladys Axelson Tekautz. He married Paula Koski on Nov. 22, 1967, at St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower. Robert was raised in Tower and moved to Virginia. He worked as a welder at the Virginia Public Utilities. He was a one-of-a-kind man who was never boring. Bob enjoyed going hunting, fishing, and spending some time at the casino. His true enjoyment in life was spending time with his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.  
Robert is survived by his wife, Paula; children, Robert (Allison) Jr. of Lake Vermilion-Tower and Jamie of Mesa, Ariz.; grandchildren, Anna, Hunter (Ciera), Paige (Chase Pocrnich), Kayla, Gary and Tiffany;

great-grandchildren, Tim, Memphis, and Remi Tekautz and Ryder Pocrnich; sister, Melinda Berg of Eveleth; brother, Chuck (Nancy) of Soudan; numerous nieces and nephews, extended family and friends; sister-in-law, Judy Anderson; and brother-in-Law, Jerry Koski.  
He was preceded in death by his parents; son, Jon; sister, Pat; brothers, Tim and Edward; and in-laws, Kay and Bergy.



**Dean J. Esala**  
Dean Jacob Esala, 54, a cherished lifetime resident of the Lake Vermilion community, passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 30, 2025, at his home, following a lengthy illness, surrounded by his loving family and friends. His life was a testament to courage, dedication, and the joy of simple moments spent in the beauty of nature. A funeral service was held on Monday, April 7 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Pike-Sandy with Pastor Zachary Klumpp officiating. Military rites were accorded by the Virginia Servicemen’s Color Guard. Burial will be at a later date in North Sandy Cemetery in Sandy Township. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

Dean’s legacy will live on through the memories shared by his family and friends, and the stories told about his exceptional kindness, sisu, and deep love for life. He will be deeply missed but never forgotten. Rest easy, Dean. You will forever be in our hearts.  
Dean was born on July 24, 1970, in Virginia. Dean proudly served his country with honor and distinction, dedicating years of his life to missions in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. He was a member of Pratt-Volden-Mickelson-Anderson American Legion Post 239 of Virginia. His bravery, steadfastness and commitment touched many lives both at home and abroad.  
Lake Vermilion was where Dean’s heart found solace and happiness. He cherished his life there, savoring every minute on the water and every moment of peace in its surrounding woods. The lake wasn’t just a place to him; it was where he was truly at home.  
Dean is survived by his loving wife, Heather Lundstrom Esala; father, Gary Esala; sister, Jodi Esala Pontinen; mother- and father-in-law, Debra and Arnold Lundstrom; sister-in-law, Lisa (Levi) Anderson; several nieces and nephews; and many loving aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.  
He was preceded in death by his beloved mother, Tandy McDermid Esala; and brother, Ryan Esala.

**Judith M. Syrjanen**  
Judith Marie Syrjanen, 84, of Soudan, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth. She was born on July 7, 1940, in Virginia. To respect Judith’s wishes, there will be no funeral service.  
She is survived by her husband, Robert; and other

family members.  
**Robert M. Glinsek**



Robert M. “Bob” Glinsek, 55, of Tower, passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, March 30, 2025. Funeral services will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 16 at the Church of Saint Andrew in Elk River, with visitation from 10:30 a.m. until the time of service. Interment will follow with full military honors at 1:45 p.m. at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Dare’s Funeral Home in Elk River.  
Bob was born on March 22, 1970, in St. Paul. He was a man with a heart as big as his stories were long, and we miss him so much already. If you ever met Bob, you undoubtedly heard the same jokes more than once. His sense of humor was infectious, and he had a way of filling every moment with laughter and eye rolls. But more than anything, Bob loved his family. His greatest joy was his daughter, Nan. He was her biggest fan, never missing a chance to watch her play basketball or soccer. And last March, on his birthday, he experienced one of his proudest moments, walking Nan down the aisle and welcoming Rishi into the family.  
Bob was a man of many passions. A U.S. Marine through and through, he considered his Marine buddies his family. He made friends

wherever he went, and everyone who knew him had a Bob story. He loved the great outdoors, spending time hunting and fishing, and had a deep appreciation for the simple things in life. We can’t forget about his dogs; he loved his dogs.  
A natural talker, Bob built a successful career in the lumber industry, where his gift of gab served him well. But it wasn’t just business, he genuinely cared about people. He was the guy who never said no to a beer with a friend, who would drop everything to help someone in need, and who had the most caring and generous heart. But above all, he loved reliving old memories through his storytelling and creating new ones.  
Bob lived his faith through his kindness and generosity. He gave without hesitation, helped without question, and loved without limits. He was generous with his time and always willing to lend a hand. Rest easy, Bob. Your stories, your laughter, and your love will live on in all of us.  
Bob is survived by his parents, Joe and Mary Kirscht Glinsek; daughter, Nan Glinsek (Rishi); siblings, twin sister Elizabeth (Darin) Laabs and James (Dr. Carrie) Glinsek; nieces and nephews, Taylor, Thomas, Tate, Etta, Lyla, Brittini and McHale; other relatives, friends, and his military family.

**Elizabeth I. Hill**  
Elizabeth “Betty” I. Salo Rekonen Hill, 100, passed away at the Cook Care Center on Tuesday, April 1, 2025. The family would like to thank the Cook Care Center and all the wonderful staff for the excellent care they gave Betty. A celebration of life is planned for Sunday, May 18 at the Cook VFW from 12-3 p.m. Arrangements are with Mlaker

Funeral Home in Cook.  
She is survived by three children and two stepchildren, Rosemary (Oz) Leciejewski, Lee Rekonen, John Rekonen, Sally (Brett) Wakefield and Scott Hill; grandchildren, Melanie (Tim), Tony (Karen), Kellie (Luke), Lauren (Bryan), Heath (Christine), Sara (Steve) and Amanda (Jeremy); and nine great-grandchildren.  
**Ann L. Pucelj**  
Ann Louise Baker Pucelj, 70, of Chisholm, originally of Bear River, died on Thursday, April 3, 2025. Visitation will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 12 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook, with a service at 2 p.m. and a luncheon to follow.  
She is survived by her sisters, Linda (OJ) Volkman, Sandy Baker and Lauren Baker; brothers, Mike (Claudia) Baker, Pat (Min) Baker and Steve (Mary) Baker; children, Katie (Jason) Lorenzen, Robert Pucelj and Julie (Kevin) Leecy; nine grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.  
**Bernadine J. Krtinich**  
Bernadine “Bernie” Joan Oja Krtinich, 88, of Babbitt, passed away on April 17, 2024. Please join us in celebrating her life from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at the Babbitt Junction Conference Center in Babbitt. Food and beverages will be provided. Please come to share your stories and celebrate the “Queen.”  
She is survived by her sons, Danny (Connie) Krtinich and Steve Krtinich; four grandchildren; two great-granddaughters; sister, Annette (Bob) Pozos; sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews.

Keep it Clean,  
ST. LOUIS COUNTY



<b>ASH RIVER TRAIL CANISTER SITE</b> 11391 Ash River Trail	<b>SUMMER HOURS</b> <b>Wed: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.</b> <b>Sat: 2:30 p.m. — 5:30 p.m.</b>
<b>COOK TRANSFER STATION</b> 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Cook	<b>Mon: 10 a.m.—6 p.m.</b> <b>Tues thru Sat: 9 a.m.—3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>COUNTY 77 CANISTER SITE</b> 2038 County Rd. 77 Greenwood Twp	<b>SUMMER HOURS</b> <b>Tue: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.</b> <b>Thu: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.</b> <b>Sat: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</b> <b>Sun: Noon–6 p.m.</b>
<b>KABETOGRAMA LAKE CANISTER SITE</b> 10150 Gamma Rd	<b>SUMMER HOURS</b> <b>Mon, Wed: 9 a.m. - Noon</b> <b>Sat: 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.</b>
<b>ORR CANISTER SITE</b> 4038 Hwy 53	<b>SUMMER HOURS</b> <b>Tue: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.</b> <b>Thu: 2 p.m.— 7 p.m.</b> <b>Sat: 8 a.m.—noon</b> <b>Sun: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.</b>
<b>PORTAGE CANISTER SITE</b> 6992 Crane Lake Rd, Buyck	<b>SUMMER HOURS</b> <b>Tue: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.</b> <b>Thu: 10 a.m.— 1 p.m.</b> <b>Sat: 1 p.m.—5 p.m.</b> <b>Sun: 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.</b>
<b>REGIONAL LANDFILL</b> 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia	<b>Mon-Fri: 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m.</b> <b>Sat: 8 a.m.—3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITIES</b>	
5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia <b>Tues and Sat: 8 a.m.—1 p.m.</b>	3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing <b>Sat: 8 a.m.—1 p.m.</b>

ST. LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
218-471-7703 | OFFICE HOURS MON - FRI 8 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Summer hours effective April 15 - September 30





EMPLOYMENT

**Wanted- Tractor Trailer Delivery Drivers looking for a Local Career**

CDL Class A. Year round work. Home every night.  
Tractor Trailers based in these areas: Hibbing, Grand Rapids, Virginia, Esko - and we need 4 drivers to fill them.  
Min 75000 miles OTR, clean record, no accidents, safety attitude.  
Tanker and Hazmat work, but we train for these.

- Range of pay last year \$65K-\$95K, depending on FT hours worked.
- Family Insurance at a reasonable co-pay. You choose the deductible.
- 401K with 20% match
- Part Time available also.

We have not had a lay-off in last 15 years. Reason for posting: Growth

If you are a quality Class B driver living in these areas:  
Ely/Babbitt, Virginia, Hibbing, Silver Bay  
**We have work available close to home.**

Taking care of our customers is our #1 priority.  
If you have that mind-set, please apply.

Contact: Krissy/recruiter at 218.741.9634 • kwanwas@eoctrimark.com  
or our website: edwardsoliandpropane.com/careers.  
Edwards Oil and Propane, 820 Hoover Rd, Virginia, MN 55792

**Camp Voyageur is Hiring**

Registered Nurse wanted for summer months. If you like working with youth and the outdoors this is an ideal job for you. Lakeside accommodations. For complete job description contact deb@campvoyageur.com. 4/18

**CryptoQuip**

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

Clue: J equals C

HNFC DOA JSDDMAKSF

JVNNFAI SH OA EWD INYF VPJO

HNPM DN CVNY OPH ESHDWVA:

“MNSK NF DOA VSFCA.”

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**Super Crossword**

Answers

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

**LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION**  
**TOWN OF CRANE LAKE**  
**St. Louis County, Minnesota**

**will meet at The Crane Lake Chapel Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.**

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and also to determine whether corrections need to be made.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your St. Louis County Assessor's Office to discuss your concerns. If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local Board of Appeal and Equalization. **Please email info@cranelaketwp.com or mail Town of Crane Lake, P.O. Box 402, Crane Lake, MN 55725 with your concerns, if possible.** The board will review your valuation, classification, or both and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to your county board of appeal and equalization.

Ashlyn Denning,  
Clerk, Town of Crane Lake

Published in the Timberjay, April 11 & 18, 2025

**MORCOM TOWNSHIP**  
**Important Information Regarding Assessment and Classification of Property. This may affect your 2026 property tax payments.**

**Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization of the Township of Morcom shall meet on Wednesday, April 30, starting at 5:00 p.m., at the Bear River School/Community Center, 12512 Hwy 22, Cook, MN 55723.**

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and also to determine whether corrections need to be made. If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board shall review the valuation, classification, or both if necessary, and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to your county board of appeal and equalization.

If you are planning to attend, please send written notice to the clerk, Sasha Lehto, PO Box 240, Side Lake, MN 55781, or email morcomtownshipmn@gmail.com. Please call if you have questions, Sasha Lehto, Clerk, at 218-969-5812.

Published in the Timberjay, April 11 & 18, 2025

**FIELD TOWNSHIP**  
**Important Information Regarding Assessment and Classification of Property. This may affect your 2026 property tax payments.**

**Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization of the Field Township shall meet on Wednesday, April 30, from 11 a.m. – 12 noon, at the Field Town Hall.**

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and also to determine whether corrections need to be made. If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board shall review the valuation, classification, or both if necessary, and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to your county board of appeal and equalization.

Any questions, contact The St. Louis County Assessor, Ron Bushbaum, 218-471-7277

Pat Chapman, Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, April 11, 2025

**WORD SPIRAL**

A		R
	S	
V		S

Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.  
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**Even Exchange** by Donna Pettman

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

1. Combat	___ A ___	Baby feeder	___ O ___
2. Defeated one	___ S ___	Hermit	___ N ___
3. Household task	___ R ___	Selected	___ S ___
4. Concierge	___ R ___	Wanted sign	___ S ___
5. Movement	M ___	Idea	N ___
6. Smallest amount	___ T	Fido's rope	___ H
7. Bates of "Psycho"	___ N	Customary	___ L
8. Persuade	___ J ___	Tapestry creator	___ R ___
9. Acquire knowledge	L ___	Ache for	Y ___
10. Rupture	___ S	Charred	___ N

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**timberjay.com**

**GO FIGURE!**

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	-		×		= 16			
-		+		-				
	+		÷	4	= 2			
×		÷		×				
	-		+		= 13			
=		=		=				
24		5		36				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦**

**♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!**

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**CryptoQuote**  
answer

There are two kinds of people, those who finish what they start and so on.  
— Robert Byrne

**READ It HERE**

**SNOWFLAKES**  
solution

**Call 753-2950 to subscribe to the Timberjay!**

**King Crossword**

**ACROSS**  
1 Mediocre  
5 Church seat  
8 Greenish blue  
12 Tora —,  
Afghanistan  
13 Noshed  
14 PETA con-  
cerns  
15 Slight criti-  
cisms  
17 Pear-shaped  
fruits  
18 Step  
19 Hot dish  
holder  
21 Oodles  
24 Log chopper  
25 Mandatory  
coll. courses  
28 Calendar  
entry (Abbr.)  
30 Zodiac  
animal  
33 Chit  
34 Concepts  
35 Swelled head  
36 Singer  
DiFranco  
37 Proscribes  
38 Eve's mate  
39 Born  
41 Entryway  
43 Dress desig-  
nation  
46 Ignited again  
50 Shake —  
(hurry)  
51 Dropouts

**DOWN**  
1 Cookouts,  
briefly  
2 Lummax  
3 Met solo  
4 Customs  
5 Bud  
6 Bordeaux  
summer  
7 Left on a map  
8 Tack on  
9 Trembled  
10 Desire  
11 Celeb's aide  
16 Buddy  
20 "Phooey!"  
22 Zilch  
23 Shell out  
25 Estuary  
26 A gazillion  
years  
27 Groups of five  
29 El —, Texas  
31 Turkish title  
32 Oft-tattooed  
word  
34 "A likely  
story!"  
38 "Queen of  
Soul" Franklin  
40 Skating figure  
42 Scrap  
43 Italian cheese,  
for short  
44 Sci-fi race  
45 Iso-  
47 Boxer Spinks  
48 Press  
49 Recipe amts.  
52 Web address  
53 Squid squirt

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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.

## AUTOMOTIVE

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

## SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— **King Crossword** —  
Answers  
Solution time: 24 mins.

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

**CryptoQuip**  
answer  
Song the cattleman crooned as he put down rich soil to grow his pasture: "Loam on the Range."

**Even Exchange**  
answers

1. Bottle, Leash

2. Loser, Loner

3. Chore, Chose

4. Poster, Poster

5. Motion, Motion
6. Least, Leash

7. Norman, Normal

8. Caggle, Carole

9. Learn, Yearn

10. Burst, Burnt

## Word Spiral Answer

## ABRASIVES

Go Figure!  
answers

5	-	3	x	8	=	16
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	+	7	÷	4	=	2
x	+	÷	x			
6	-	2	+	9	=	13
=	=	=	=			
24		5		36		

## HAIR CARE

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

## PET CREMATION

Go online to VermilionPetCremation.com or call 218-780-8069 for pet cremation details and rates.

## WANTED

SELIGA CANOES WANTED: We'll buy old Seligas in Good Shape. Turn your classic canoe into cash. Call Steve at 365-6745. ttn

## FREE PIANO

FREE PIANO You move. Located in Soudan. Call 218-410-6001. 4/11nc

## GARAGE SALE

YARD SALE- Friday and Saturday, April 18 & 19 (weather permitting), 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. 219 W. Vermilion Drive, Cook. Large variety and many great items for sale. 4/18

## Try out the Timberjay classifieds

Line classifieds cost 30¢/word, \$6.00 minimum. Classified ads can be run a second time at half price (private parties only). We now accept payment by Visa, Mastercard, AmEx, and Discover. Call your ad in to 218-753-2950. Display (boxed) classifieds are billed by the "inch"- please call for prices and information on discounts. Call Today – 218-753-2950

## MARINE

### MOCCASIN POINT MARINE

4655 Moccasin Point Rd  
Lake Vermilion  
**218-753-3319**

Storage, Boat Rentals,  
Service/Repairs/Sales  
Mechanic on Duty

moccasinpointmarine.com



### MERCURY OUTBOARDS

**Frank's Marine Sales & Service**  
Mercury, Crestliner, Lund

www.franksmarinesales.com  
franksmarine@centurytel.net  
Hwy 53, Orr • Call 218-757-3150

LAKE VERMILION, TOWER  
Located two miles southwest of Tower on Hwy. 169  
Winter Hours Start Nov. 1:  
Mon-Fri: 9 AM-5 PM  
Sat & Sun: Closed

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**855-213-4393**

**BOGO 40% OFF** Minimum purchase of 4

**+ \$200 Off Your Entire Purchase**  
Minimum purchase of 4

**ENDS 4/30**

**RENEWAL by ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

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

## Super Crossword FROM ALABAMA TO LOUISIANA

### ACROSS

- 1 Complaints to otologists  
9 Foreboding  
16 ESPN datum  
20 Feelings  
21 Alternative to chocolate  
22 Rev gauge  
23 Ailment suffered from being given too much leeway?  
25 Bicolor whale  
26 Poet Hughes  
27 Tooth doctors' org.  
28 Scarf down  
29 Cantata's kin  
30 "The Chi" airer, in brief  
33 Alpo alternative  
36 Things people run on racetracks in Switzerland's capital?  
39 Coke and Pepsi's business?  
43 Collide with  
44 Robots in human form  
45 "Fer cryin' out loud!"  
48 Barkeeper on "The Simpsons"

- 49 Audio game from Hasbro  
50 Soothsayer  
52 Off-limits  
54 Farrow of film  
57 Storytellers' leagues?  
63 The "A" of ETA: Abbr.  
64 Tech sch.  
65 Some raptors  
66 Vinaigrette alternative  
67 Team letdowns  
70 Apple tablets  
72 Mild  
73 Actor Koteas  
74 Thighbone  
76 Watering tube  
79 Earth's star  
80 Bivalve mollusk that's neither anxious nor perturbed?  
85 1040 ID  
86 Sock fillers  
87 Instant, in some brand names  
88 "— come to save the day!"  
90 Blubber  
92 Suburb of Buenos Aires  
95 Etched computer components

- 97 Eight-note spans  
101 Monty Python member wearing no jewelry or fancy clothes?  
103 Topmost point on a perfume bottle?  
106 Alan of "Tower Heist"  
107 Blast source  
108 Lindsay of "Machete"  
109 Barney Miller player Linden  
110 Sue Grafton's "— for Evidence"  
112 Sallie —  
115 Gung-ho  
116 Like a shutter so shabby there's no point in putting in a new louver?  
123 Head, in Nice  
124 Attacks like a bird  
125 Tombs for pharaohs  
126 Greek strife goddess  
127 In a very similar way  
128 Cliffhanger feeling

### DOWN

- 1 Conger, e.g.  
2 Docs' org.  
3 Decompose  
4 Working hard  
5 Quote  
6 Magician Harry  
7 Call a halt to  
8 Atlanta-to-Miami dir.  
9 Exiled Roman poet  
10 Gruesome  
11 Ballpoint fluid  
12 S.F. NFLer  
13 City in southwest New York  
14 Long, loose overcoat  
15 Airline to Sweden  
16 Snitching sort  
17 Kilt pattern  
18 Say "yes" to  
19 "No kiddin'?"  
24 Lip off to  
29 Interoffice note  
30 Wound cover  
31 Academic A-lists  
32 Ancient cuneiform language  
34 Attaches  
35 Deep thinkers  
37 Retina locale

- 38 Home of Pago Pago  
40 Seed case  
41 Wee amount  
42 TV host Banks  
46 Arctic boot attachment  
47 Pawn  
51 Approximate  
53 U.S. soldiers  
54 One of the Leeward Islands  
55 Contained as a part of  
56 Very pale  
58 "— a pity"  
59 Pottery piece  
60 Downcast  
61 Uno + due  
62 Spy novelist Fleming  
63 Smart — (wise guys)  
68 Actor Elliott  
69 PC key abbr.  
71 "Pick up the Czech," e.g.  
72 "Well, I'll be!"  
74 Antagonist  
75 Grades K-6: Abbr.  
77 Longtime bud  
78 Like cut bread  
81 Many times  
82 Gator's kin  
83 Karate blow

- 84 Blue-green  
89 Has no life  
90 False appearances  
91 Maker of Skin So Soft  
93 Apt. units  
94 True-to-fact  
96 Finger-pointing people  
97 Recently  
98 Four-leaf —  
99 One of the Windward Islands  
100 "Dr." of insoles  
102 Diner grub  
104 Sine, for one  
105 Actor Cary  
111 Eensy  
113 "Right away!"  
114 "Game of Thrones" actress Bianco  
116 Packers' and Panthers' gp.  
117 Sugar suffix  
118 Co- — (some apartments)  
119 Sch. in Manhattan  
120 "Hamilton" composer — -Manuel Miranda  
121 TV plugs  
122 Mao — -tung

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

EXCFC NFC EZT IOVJA TU  
WCTWQC, EXTAC ZXT UOVOAX  
ZXNE EXCP AENFE NVJ AT TV.  
— FTGCFE GPFVC

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## Answer

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



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# SPRING Home Improvement

SAVING MONEY



## NO FUSS NO MUSS

Story by Marshall Helmberger

If you’ve long dreamed of building the perfect deck to enjoy your place at the lake or in the woods, you’ve probably considered whether natural wood or one of the new composite decking materials is right for you. It’s tough to beat the beauty of a quality, natural

## Composite decking leaves the tedium of maintenance in the past

wood deck, but maintaining that lustrous appearance takes regular maintenance, such as sanding and re-staining. For those looking for a low- or no-maintenance option, composite decking is your best bet. “Some of the composites

now have a 50-year warranty against staining or fading,” said Eric Burckhardt, who owns and operates Cook Building Center. But even the base-level composite products have at least a 20- 25-year warranty, noted Burckhardt.

Composite wood products have come a long ways and the higher end products have the variability in coloration and patterning that makes them hard to distinguish from real wood. Each type of composite

decking has its advantages and disadvantages and there is significant variation when it comes to price. According to Burckhardt, the cost of composite decking boards can run from \$3 to \$11 per linear foot. “Just like with every-

thing, there is good, better, and best,” he said. The brands sold at Cook Building Center, which include TimberTech, Fiberon, and Trex, all come with advanced warranties. *See DECKING, pg. 2B*



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THE BASICS

# Small renovations can make a big impact

REGIONAL — Homeowners may think they must tear down walls or build room extensions to transform their homes with renovation projects, but small projects can yield impressive results, and that’s something homeowners working with limited budgets can keep in mind.

There’s no shortage of small projects that can change the look and feel of a home. Many of these undertakings can be achieved with a modest investment.

➤ Front door replacement: A new front door instantly improves curb appeal and can make a home more secure and energy-efficient. Painting the existing front door is an even smaller project that still offers appeal.



➤ Lighting addition: Whether a homeowner enlarges a window

or adds skylights, natural light can produce incredible results. Investing in new lighting can feel like expanding a space without pushing out walls.

➤ Kitchen and bath fixture upgrades: Faucets and door pulls are used every day. Swapping existing fixtures for something a little more modern can unify spaces and provide subtle changes that enhance these popular spaces.

➤ Wood floor restoration: Scuffing and scratches can adversely affect the pristine look of a natural wood floor. Homeowners can polish a floor to restore its shine. A professional service will sand down and refinish older floors at a fraction of the cost of a new floor installation.

➤ Exterior lighting: Lighting

isn’t just important inside. A welcoming glow in the yard is awe-inspiring. There are many energy-efficient lighting options, including ones that do not need to be hard-wired to the circuitry inside the home.

➤ Staircase renovation: Coordinate the staircase to the style in the home with a decorative carpet runner. A secure runner is attractive and can help reduce slipping down the stairs. Tighten shaky railings or replace them while upgrading the stair treads.

➤ Interior paint: Change the color of walls, doors, cabinets, or even furniture with paint. All homeowners need is a paint color that inspires them and a little bit of time.

➤ Replace outlet covers:

Upgrade outlet covers with screwless options. Screwless plates for outlets and light switches can make walls look more sleek.

➤ Entry organizer installation: Banish clutter from the home by catching it at the door. An entry organizer with spaces for shoes, coats, backpacks, and shopping bags can be eye-catching and functional.

➤ Carpets cleaning: Soiled carpets can look drab and dingy. Homeowners can rent carpet-cleaning machines or hire services to revitalize carpets with a deep cleaning.

Small changes around a home can create a big impact without breaking the bank.

## DECKING...Continued from page 1B

tages and disadvantages. All three brands are designed to resist moisture, fading, and warping, even when subjected to the challenges of a north-eastern Minnesota winter.

The quality of the product often comes down to the percentage of PVC in the boards. PVC provides the resistance to scratching and weathering and can enhance the appearance. Base-level products include a thin layer of PVC on top, while mid-level products are wrapped top to bottom in a layer of PVC. The highest quality products are solid PVC, said Burckhardt, which helps to maximize their longevity.

TimberTech stands out for its premium aesthetic and durability, notes Burckhardt. The company offers a variety of high-end finishes that closely resemble natural wood. TimberTech also comes with the best fire rating, which is another advantage



Composite decking can last up to 50 years, making it a smart option for home renovations.

over natural wood. Given the increasing prevalence of wildfire in the region in recent years, some of the premium products offered by TimberTech can provide greater resistance to fire spread than other composite materials and much greater resistance than most natural wood. While

its high-end appearance and fire resistance is appealing, the upfront cost can be a major consideration depending on your budget.

Fiberon, on the other hand, is known for its affordability while still offering a wide range of colors and textures. It has a reputation for

being an excellent mid-range option, providing good durability without the premium price tag of TimberTech.

Trex, one of the best-known base-level brands, gets a plus for its sustainability. Made from 95 percent recycled materials, it can probably lay claim to the most eco-friendly of the choices as well as the least expensive. But the boards tend to be thinner, which might require more support from the deck’s structure, and they are limited

to a solid color that looks more artificial.

All three brands require minimal maintenance compared to wood. An occasional cleaning with soap and water is generally enough to keep the decks looking great.

Fiberon, while more affordable, had fewer premium options, and some users have reported that it can be slightly less resistant to scratching compared to TimberTech.


Some user have reported that Trex decking, while

durable, can get very hot if the deck is exposed to long periods of sunshine during summer months. If that’s the case in your situation, consider lighter colored deck boards, which reflect rather than absorb the sun’s heat.

Winter can bring other challenges. While all three brands are designed to withstand extreme weather, composite decking in general can become slippery when covered in snow and ice, which means you’ll need to be diligent about shoveling and using non-damaging de-icers to maintain traction. If you’re considering your deck for a summer cabin, that’s probably not an issue.

**Customer choice**

The argument for composite decking ultimately comes down to its durability and the savings on maintenance. Aesthetics are clearly a major factor as well, notes Burckhardt, who said his customers tend to opt for the highest-quality options. “The people who really see their deck as an investment are usually going with the best products,” he said.



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SAVING MONEY

# A heat pump can tame your heating bills

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Come April, residents here in the North Country are starting to add up the damage from the heating season. Depending on the age and the type of fuel used by your heating system, the bills can really add up in a typical northern Minnesota winter.

One way to really rein in the cost of heating your home is by replacing your old furnace with an air-sourced heat pump.

You may have heard that air-source heat pumps can't adequately heat your home in northern Minnesota — and that once was true. But times have changed, according to Ron Hardy, a longtime service technician with Lake Country Power.

While homeowners in Lake Country Power's service territory were sometimes disappointed with heat pumps when they first hit the market in the 1970s and 80s, Hardy said technological advances now allow heat pumps to continue to operate effectively even when the temperature dips into the teens below zero.

We all know it frequently gets a lot colder than that in our region, but even in the coldest temperatures, heat pumps can still produce heat, although not as efficiently as they can during milder weather. During those periods, homeowners can rely on other options,

“You spend a dollar on fuel oil and you maybe get 70 cents worth of heat.”

Ron Hardy  
Lake Country Power

**Right: More and more heat pumps are being installed around the North Country.**

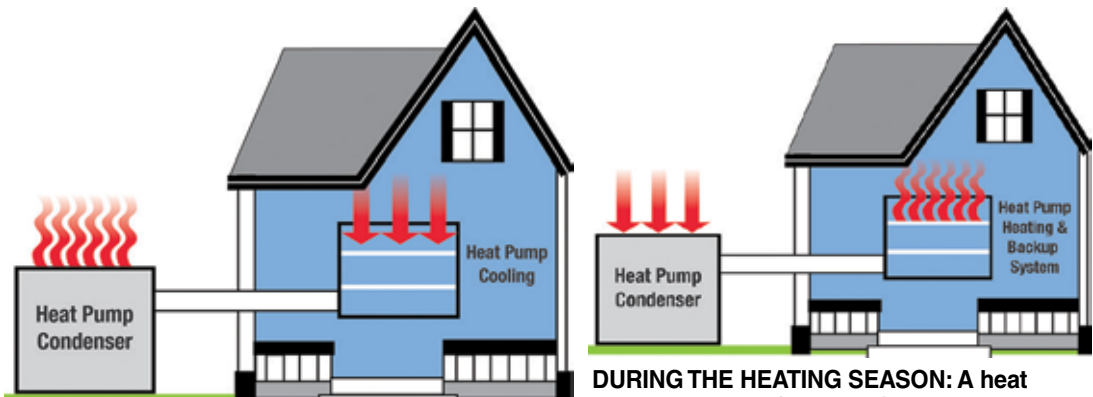
such as baseboard heat, or an electric plenum heater that will give a boost to a heat pump in the coldest weather.

Those occasional assists help boost the comfort factor for homeowners, notes Hardy. “When it’s really cold the forced air produced by the heat pump may only be 85 degrees, and that doesn’t necessarily feel warm against your 98-degree skin,” he said. But an electric plenum heater, which can easily be installed along with a heat pump, can kick in when the thermometer drops well below zero and raise the temperature of the air in your ductwork to a more cozy-feeling temperature.

**Savings really add up**

Heat pumps are the most efficient during the shoulder seasons here in the North Country, when even the coldest temperatures are typically above zero. “That’s their sweet spot,” said Hardy, when a heat pump can easily heat your entire home.

Heat pumps don’t generate heat by burning a fuel. They use freon like a refrigerator or air conditioner, but in reverse, so they produce heat by using electricity to compress freon, which generates the heat, which is distributed as a fan blows air over hot coils. The efficiency of the system is astonishing. Hardy notes that an older style fuel oil furnace might only be 65-70 percent efficient as much of the heat produced by burning the fuel oil goes up the chimney. You



spend a dollar on fuel oil and you maybe get 70 cents worth of heat,” he said.

Even a high-efficiency propane furnace tops out at about 95 percent efficient, or about 95 cents for every dollar you spend on heating fuel. “But heat pumps at their peak generate about \$2.50 worth of heat for every dollar in electricity. “They’re 250 percent efficient,” said Hardy. “They can really save a lot of money on your utility bills.”

Even at regular electrical rates, a heat pump can save you plenty of money. But Hardy notes that most utilities offer cheaper dual fuel rates

that allow them to cut off power to your heat pump when demand gets high. That means you need another source of heat for those occasions, but the extra savings can help you save even more money.

**Mini-splits are popular**

Heat pumps can come in two types, ducted or ductless. A ducted heat pump is designed for a forced air system that typically takes advantage of existing ductwork to distribute heat throughout the house. But heat pumps don’t operate like a traditional furnace. Rather than distributing hot air, in the range of 120 degrees, throughout the house, a heat pump

pushes merely warm air, which means heat pumps need to push more air to provide the same amount of total heating. That means you’ll need to confirm that your existing ductwork has the needed capacity. Many houses in our region don’t have adequate ductwork, which can make installing a ducted heat pump a challenge in an existing home.

That’s why many people are turning to ductless heat pump systems known as “mini-splits,” which connect an outside heat pump

See HEAT PUMPS, pg. 4B

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MAKING IT YOUR OWN

# How to give your home a more cozy feel

The meaning of the term “cozy” varies as it pertains to home decor. For some, cozy may mean intimate spaces with lots of quilts and throws. For others, cozy could indicate bright and airy spaces enhanced by plenty of fresh foliage.

Regardless of how they define cozy, homeowners typically want their homes to be inviting and comfortable. With that in mind, the following are some ways to impart a cozy vibe to any living space.

- Make use of a fire-place. Flames lapping wood (or faux wood in the event of gas-powered fireplaces) can put anyone in a tranquil state of mind. Fireplaces add instant ambiance and make great places for people to congregate and engage in conversation. During warmer months when the fire isn’t blazing, decorative candles can be lit to mimic the same feel.
- Add texture in the design. Texture can be anything from a raised pattern on wallpaper to a knotty area rug



to a mosaic piece of artwork. A home with texture tends to create cozier impressions than one with all sleek and smooth surfaces.

- Enjoy a soft rug. Although many design experts say hardwood floors or laminate options are easier for allergies and keeping a home clean, a soft rug underfoot can

be welcoming. Rather than wall-to-wall carpeting, place area rugs in spots that can use some cozying up, such as beneath beds and even under the dining table.

- Light candles. The warm, flickering light of candles adds cozy vibes in spades. According to The Spruce and Paula Boston,

a visual merchandiser for Festive Lights, candles can be used throughout a home to create instant atmosphere. Exercise caution with candles and fully extinguish them before retiring for the evening.

- Update bedding for the season. Crisp and light cotton and linen are cozy materials when the weather is warm. But

when the temperature starts to dip, flannel or jersey bedding makes a bed that much more inviting, says *Real Simple*.

- Invest in lots of pillows. Pillows can instantly make a spot more cozy, whether it’s the living room sofa or an outdoor lounging nook. Look for materials that are durable for the space in which they’re

being used.

- Think about warm lighting. The transition from incandescent light bulbs to halogen and LED is beneficial from an environmental standpoint. However, LEDs illuminate with a more stark, blue light that can seem clinical in home spaces. Look for bulbs where the “temperature” can be customized. The more the color spectrum leans toward warm light, the more cozy a space will feel. This can be enhanced by putting some lights on dimmer switches, and toning down the brightness as needed.
- Install a bookshelf. Even for those who are strict devotees of e-readers, a shelf full of actual books interspersed with some well-placed knickknacks can make a room feel more cozy. Books add texture, the feel of hallowed halls and libraries, and visual appeal.

Making a home more cozy doesn’t have to be complicated. A few easy modifications can improve interior spaces.



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## HEAT PUMPS...Cont. from page 3B



The mini-split unit, or “head” is installed on an indoor wall. They can be operated by remote controllers.

to what are essentially heating or cooling registers that mount on the wall inside the house.

Yes, heat pumps not only heat... they provide cooling in the summer months with the mere flick of a switch, so you’re getting both a highly efficient heating system and a highly efficient air conditioner.

“Mini-splits are definitely the most popular type of heat pump being installed in the area,” said Scott Twining, who is also a technician with Lake Country Power.

While most people will turn to a professional installer, the installation of a mini-split is straightforward enough that it can be a DIY project for a capable homeowner. They generally require a 240-volt electrical connection (120-volt models are available but they aren’t as efficient) to the main unit that sits just outside the house. From there, you’ll be running refrigerant and electrical lines to the individual registers (or “heads”) located in strategic locations within your house.

A system that includes two or three heads is likely to run somewhere in the vicinity of \$7,000-\$9,000 according to local contractors. While most contractors are still replacing traditional furnaces with newer versions of the same thing, mini-splits have become increasingly popular, particularly as they’ve become more efficient at cold temperatures.

While most of us have gotten by without air conditioning in northern Minnesota, increasing humidity in recent years has made summers not as comfortable in northern Minnesota as they once were.

### The right time to switch?

You might think the time to switch to a heat pump is when your old furnace needs replacement. But Hardy says when you’re looking to add or replace an air conditioner is an even better time, since heat pumps not only heat in the winter, they air condition in the summer. “If your old A/C unit dies, your first choice for replacement should be a heat pump,” says Hardy.

While some northern Minnesota HVAC contractors remain skeptical of the effectiveness of heat pumps during the depths of a Minnesota winter, Hardy said they can work very effectively, particularly with a backup or supplemental source of heat for the coldest days.

Hardy recommends that homeowners be more persistent if their local contractor is dismissive of heat pumps here in the North Country. “The savings are very real,” he said.

While the cost of installing an air source heat pump involves a significant up front cost, utilities like Lake Country Power offer substantial rebates that can help cover some of the cost. The size of those rebates depends on the size and efficiency rating of your heat pump and the final cost can vary depending on any special circumstances with your house.

The federal government, under the Inflation Reduction Act, has also enacted a 30 percent tax credit, up to \$2,000 annually, for installing a heat pump, which can help speed the payback of making the switch.

A state program that is supposed to offer up to \$4,000 in rebates for installing a heat pump has yet to be opened for applications.

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# New owners bring next generation to Floor to Ceiling

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

VIRGINIA — A seemingly off-handed comment turned into a life-changing decision for the new owners and operators of the Floor to Ceiling Store in Virginia.

Sadie Klegstad had been helping her brother Justin Dukek with the financial and marketing side of his fledgling business, North Star Flooring, in Fargo, when Justin suggested he'd like to grow his business beyond the installation side. "He mentioned that he'd really like a brick-and-mortar flooring store one day," recalls Sadie.

The suggestion percolated in her mind and she soon started exploring real estate listings online. When, last summer, she found the listing for Floor to Ceiling's Virginia store, it seemed like a good fit.

"I asked him how serious he was," said Sadie.

Serious enough, it turns out.

Sadie, her husband Dylan Klegstad, and Justin, officially took ownership of the



Left-right: Dylan and Sadie Klegstad and Justin Dukek, are the new owners at the Floor to Ceiling Store in Virginia. The Klegstads are at the store daily while Dukek, who still runs a flooring business in Fargo, is at the store occasionally.

store on Jan. 31 after months of working out the details with the Small Business Administration and longtime owners Jim Norlander, Joe Ahlin, and Anton Udovich.

Sadie and Dylan are quickly learning the basics of

the business, all while negotiating the challenges of child care and commuting from their home in Bemidji while they shop for a new home on the Iron Range.

"It's a lot to learn," said Dylan, who was manning the

store on a recent morning. "But we're quick learners." Dylan and Sadie are also tech savvy, and they have plenty of ideas on how to boost their business's profile on social media, while also retaining their traditional presence in

print and on radio.

They're also currently researching new products and new vendors. For example, while Floor to Ceiling's Virginia store has long dabbled in sauna and sauna supplies, Sadie said they're looking at showcasing a barrel sauna manufactured in Grand Rapids, which they display outside the store.

As is typical of many couples, Dylan and Sadie have taken on different parts of the business, while collaborating in other areas.

Dylan, who managed sales across a huge territory for manufacturers like Husqvarna and Yamaha, is working with a large number of vendors whose products are retailed at Floor to Ceiling. He's also learning the ropes of working outside the store, handling site visits to customers' homes, taking measurements, taking orders and offering ideas.

Sadie, who was a dental technician while helping her brother on the side, works the store side with customers. "My experience has always been with the customer side," said Sadie.

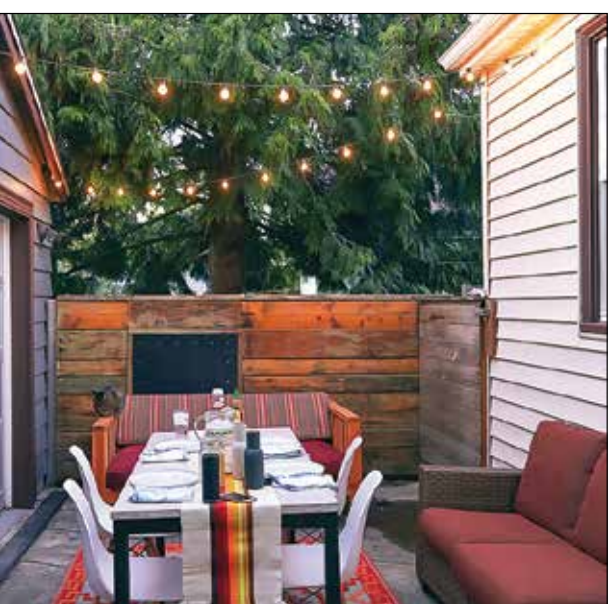
"Like with the dental field, it's about getting to know people and building those connections," she said. "Some of the projects, they might come in for a new kitchen and it later becomes a bathroom renovation. You really get to know your customers pretty well going through that process."

They've had a bit of a backstop on their learning curve. The prior owners all agreed to help out during a transition and Joe Ahlin plans to stay on longer term while Jim and Anton are looking forward to retirement.

It's the kind of transition that can pose a real challenge for many small businesses, but as an established franchise, new owners can depend on the support of a larger corporate entity. Burnsville-based Floor to Ceiling now has stores in 22 U.S. states and bills itself as one of the fastest-growing organizations in the home décor industry, with product lines including kitchens, baths, lighting, floor coverings, and window treatments. The Floor to Ceiling Store in Virginia is located just off Hwy. 169, at 8401 Enterprise Drive. Stop in soon and say hi to the store's new owners.

## EXTERIOR SPACES

# Five patio projects to enhance your outdoor living



REGIONAL — Warm weather paves the way to more opportunities to enjoy fresh air. For homeowners who have the luxury of outdoor spaces, including private patios, now is the time to start thinking about projects to enhance these gathering spots.

A patio can be considered a transitional area that links the outdoors to the inside of a home. According to the home and lifestyle resource The Spruce, a patio is often an oasis for lounging and entertaining. And depending on homeowners' budgets and preferences, a patio can be just as comfortable and stylish as interior spaces. The following are five patio projects that can transform these valuable spaces.

**Pretty pergola**

A pergola is an open-air (traditionally wood) structure that adds a measure of shade and privacy without completely blocking views of Mother Nature. Installing a pergola over the patio helps define the seating area. Hanging plants can add to the ambiance and string lights can make this a great spot to gather when the sun sets.

**Patio fire pit**

Build a fire pit right into the design with the same materials used to create the patio. For example, if the patio is brick or flagstone, build up to create an eye-catching fire pit. Fire pits not only look good, they also expand the time frame that the patio can be enjoyed, offering cozy spots to sit even when the weather chills.

**Frame it in**

Make the patio a true

extension of the inside by putting up walls around three sides of the patio if it connects to the home. Leave the last open to the yard, or consider installing screens to mimic the look of popular lanais. The walls will offer more weather protection, meaning you can invest in high-quality patio furniture to make this a fully functioning outdoor living room. Hang a television that is rated for outdoor use for movie-watching under the sun or stars.

**Ooh la la**

Vintage bistro tables and chairs can turn a drab patio into one that calls to mind a Parisian courtyard. Whimsical lighting and accents that you would normally think to see indoors, like a gilded mirror, can add extra appeal. Soften wrought iron and other metals on the furniture by including plenty of flowers and greenery. Don't forget the candles and a place to stash a bottle of chilling wine.

**Farmhouse chic**

Transform a patio into an entertaining space that caters to guests. A large farmhouse-style table flanked by benches and some upholstered chairs sets the scene for a dinner amid the fresh air. Watering cans filled with wildflowers and mismatched flatware establish a casual feel for gatherings in the space. For those who plan to cook and serve outside with frequency, invest in outdoor appliances so you'll never have to miss a beat with guests.

The options for transforming patios into stylish gathering spots is only limited by the imagination.

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TRENDS IN HOME DECOR

# Some home trends with staying power

Trends that seem ubiquitous one day can seemingly vanish before the sun rises again just 24 hours later. That’s especially true in the digital age, when overnight celebrities and viral videos can be on the tips of everyone’s tongue before being forgotten entirely when the next online sensation emerges in an increasingly rapid news cycle.

Home trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that’s something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes. Homeowners preparing to do just that can consider these notable trends, which the online renovation experts at Houzz suggest will be particularly popular in the year ahead.

➤ Rounded furnishings:



Houzz noted that gentle curves and rounded edges embody the organic modern styles that many current homeowners love. Rounded dining tables

and similarly circular coffee tables may merit consideration among homeowners who want to embrace popular trends.

☛ Arches: Houzz cites

arches among the more popular modern trends, and the experts at *Better Homes & Gardens* note this unique, eye-catching style has been gaining

**Left: Natural wood always brings a warm feel to a home interior. Here, wooden beams contrast with a white ceiling and a wood floor provides a rich feel to this living area.**

popularity for several years. *Better Homes & Gardens* suggests that part of the appeal of arched doorways could be their deviation from a more traditional door shape. That uniqueness draws the attention of residents and visitors alike, and Houzz notes that arched windows, cabinets and even millwork details are part of the pivot toward arches.

➤ Stove alcoves: If it’s a touch of history homeowners want, kitchen range alcoves might be just the project for them. Range alcoves call an earlier time to mind when wood burning stoves were commonplace. The report

from Houzz notes range alcoves immediately draw attention, which undoubtedly adds to their appeal.

➤ Wood for warmth: Homeowners who hear “wood and warmth” might think fireplaces, but Houzz reports that wood elements are being incorporated into interior designs as a means to giving homes a more cozy vibe. Ceiling beams, trim, wall paneling, and cabinetry are utilizing wood to add warmth to a home.

Trends come and go, but home trends typically have more staying power than styles that emerge in other arenas. Homeowners who want to upgrade their home interiors can consider the latest trends and choose those that align with their own personal tastes.

HIRING IT OUT

## Tips for finding and hiring the right contractor

REGIONAL — Contractors perform important work for millions of homeowners every day. Home improvement projects are complicated undertakings, and the experience of skilled contractors can ensure jobs are completed on time and within homeowners’ budgets.

Homeowners have undoubtedly heard horror stories from neighbors about projects that have gone awry. Projects can go sideways for a number of reasons, but a skilled contractor can help homeowners navigate such situations successfully. That underscores how important it can be to find the right professional for the job. The following are some tips homeowners can consider as they look to hire a contractor.

☛ Identify which professional you need. Some contractors are of the jack-of-all-trades variety, but many specialize in a particular line of work. It’s important that homeowners identify which type of contractor they should work with prior to starting a project. This requires homeowners to define the goal of the project (i.e., new wood floor installation), which can serve as a springboard into finding the right type of contractor.

☛ Prioritize building safety. Safety should be the utmost priority for homeowners and contractors alike. Prior to hiring a contractor, homeowners should identify any safety restrictions that might be enforced by local governments and take note of all the permits necessary to get a job done. Homeowners can then discuss those restrictions and permits as they interview contractors. Projects that do not adhere to code are illegal and can compromise homeowners’ ability to sell their homes in the future. So it’s vital to work with contractors who are familiar with local codes and aware of which permits are necessary to ensure a project can go forward.

➤ Insist on written estimates. Handshake agreements offer no protection to homeowners or contractors, so estimates indicating what will be done and how much the project will cost should be provided. Homeowners should insist on receiving written estimates and interpret an unwillingness to provide one as a significant red flag.

➤ Know your rights. Laws vary by region, but in general, homeowners have a right to a written contract and contractors are obligated to provide a copy of that contract

signed by both parties. That contract must be provided prior to the start of the project. The contract should provide a detailed account of the work that will be done, as well as a timeline indicating important dates that components of the project will begin and be completed. The contract also should detail materials

and who is providing them. Details regarding payments, guarantees and warranties also should be cited.

➤ Do not pay in cash. Some contractors may suggest that the project will cost less if they’re paid in cash. However, home improvements should never be cash transactions. Cash does not indicate proof

of payment, which can be problematic if a dispute arises. Contractors help homeowners turn dream projects into reality. Homeowners can employ various strategies to ensure they find the right professional for their home improvement project.



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LAWN AND GARDEN

# Get your lawn ready for the summer



New growth is a hallmark of spring, whether it plays out in the birth of birds and bunnies or with the returned buds on trees and plant stalks. While most greenery rebounds naturally, lawns may need a little extra TLC in order to return to their once lush, green glory.

Revitalizing a lawn in spring is a multifaceted process but can be well worth the reward when green grass adds to a beautiful landscape and functional yard. Here is how to get started when the weather warms, courtesy of The Farmer’s Almanac and The Home Depot.

➤ Clean up debris. Spend a few hours raking up leaves from the lawn and removing any other winter debris like twigs so that air can reach the grass below. Also remove any thatch that has developed.

➤ Test the soil. Take a sample of the soil to determine its pH level and nutrient needs. Then you can make adjustments to set a strong foundation for the lawn to grow.

➤ Do some weeding. Pull out any weeds that have poked through early on and apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent additional weeds from taking over.

➤ Start the aeration process. A core aerator punches holes into the soil. This enables air and water to penetrate through to the roots.

➤ Overseed the lawn. Apply grass seeds over the lawn, paying special attention to any bare or thin areas so that the seed will fill in the lawn.

➤ Water consistently. It is important to water the lawn deeply and consistently, especially when the weather is dry, to help

promote strong root development.

➤ Time fertilizer correctly. Apply a spring fertilizer around three weeks after the lawn starts to turn green or after the first two or three mowings. If fertilizer is applied too early it can feed weeds instead of the grass and result in fertilizer runoff.

➤ Mow to an appropriate height. Begin to mow when the ground is dry enough and the grass is long enough to need cutting. Leave some length to the lawn; otherwise, sunlight will reach the soil and encourage weed seeds to germinate.

With a little elbow grease at the start of spring, homeowners can establish strong and healthy lawns.

# The benefits of planting native species in your garden

Spring and summer present ideal growing conditions for many plants, making these seasons an ideal time to tend to lawns and gardens. Though it’s easy to succumb to the temptation of exotic plants, avid gardeners and eco-conscious planters recognize the significance of native plants.

Novices may not realize that native plants are much better for a landscape and the local ecosystem it calls home. Recognition of the many benefits of native plants can make for healthier lawns and gardens and a healthier planet as well.

➤ Native plants are built for local climates. One of the issues gardeners who plant exotic plants run into is keeping those plants thriving when weather turns harsh. For example, exotic plants may require extra watering in areas that experience drought or even long periods without precipitation in spring and notably summer. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that at least 40 states anticipate water shortages by 2024. Planting native plants can help to combat those shortages by reducing the need to water plants if conditions become dry in late spring and summer.

➤ Native plants save money. It’s also important to note that native plants save homeowners money. Because they’re capable of thriving in local conditions, native plants tend to require less watering, which can help homeowners reduce their utility costs. But native plants also require less upkeep, which means homeowners can save on potentially costly, not to mention eco-unfriendly, pesticides and other amendments in order to maintain the look of exotic plants. And though it’s not always the case, exotic plants tend to cost more at nurseries than natives.

➤ Native plants save

gardeners time. In addition to saving money, native plants don’t require as much attention. Though spring and summer is a great time to be in the yard, it’s also a great time to be out and about. Because native plants thrive in local conditions, gardeners won’t need to spend much of their free time tending to them. Exotics tend to require a lot of extra attention and effort, especially when conditions become harsh. Spending more time outdoors in harsh weather does not appeal to most gardeners.

➤ Native plants blend in with an existing landscape. Native plants look natural within an existing landscape, adding some instant aesthetic appeal without breaking the bank. When planting exotics, homeowners may feel a need to redesign their entire gardens to create a certain look (think Japanese garden). That can quickly consume a budget



and take up a lot of free time in both the short- and long-term. Planting season marks a great time to revitalize a landscape. Choosing native plants when doing so pays numerous dividends for homeowners and the planet they call home.



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GET PLANTING

# How to get started with a new garden this year

Gardening is a popular hobby all over the world. Ruby Home Luxury Real Estate estimates there are 71.5 million gardening households in the United States alone. That translates to around 185.9 million people engaged in some form of gardening, which places the U.S. among other countries where gardening is wildly popular, including Australia and China.

A greater number of people are showing interest in gardening, which is a rewarding hobby that’s good for the mind and the body. Those who are new to gardening may need a crash course to get started. These pointers can help anyone foster a newfound passion for gardening.

Choose the best location

Spend time in the yard and decide where to house a garden. A far-off corner may get the most sun, but will you forget about the garden if it is too far away? Ideally, the garden should be located where it will get at least six to eight hours of sun each day. There also should be a water source nearby. The spot also should be convenient so that it is easy to go and pick vegetables or prune flowers.

Start small

If you’re new to gardening, begin with a small garden footprint so that you can get your feet wet. A raised garden bed can be a good starting point because it is contained and easy to maintain. As your experience (and garden) grows, you can add to the garden size the next time around.

Amend the soil

It’s possible but unlikely that the soil in the backyard is the perfect mix to grow healthy plants. It’s more likely that the garden will need some soil modification. You can test the soil



makeup with do-it-yourself kits or work with a garden center. A garden typically requires a mix of compost to add nutrients to the dirt; peat moss or coconut coir to help with water retention and to make the soil lighter; and vermiculite that helps to retain water. A compost bin set up at the same time as the garden allows gardeners to continually produce nutrient-rich food to add to the garden.

Plant starter guide

It’s best to keep a few things in mind when planning the garden. Think about what will grow well in your climate. Consider how big the garden will be and the size of mature plants. A small garden will not be able to accommodate corn, for example.

Also, how would you like the space to look and what will be its function? Is this a purely aesthetic garden or one that will be food-bearing?

Start seeds inside

If you’ll be starting a garden from seeds, it’s best to start indoors before your region’s frost-free date. This way, the delicate plants will get the needed care and can establish before they go outdoors in the ground. Keep them humid by covering the seedlings in plastic wrap. You can start the seeds in different containers, even empty egg cartons. Transplant to larger containers after the seedlings grow a second set of leaves. Once you’re free from overnight frost, you can place the

established, strong seedlings in the ground.

An automatic watering system, such as a timer hooked up to the sprinkler, can keep the garden well watered, which increases the chances of success. Then it will only be a matter of weeks before the garden can be enjoyed throughout the season.

More gardening tips

➤ Consider a raised garden in colder climates. The Farmer’s Almanac notes raised gardens can help homeowners in colder climates dry out and warm up wet, cold soils more quickly. Homeowners in such regions also can cover their beds with black plastic or cardboard prior

to planting. Doing so can protect the beds from late-season snow and spring rains and also helps to overcome erosion.

➤ Take soil temperatures. Unpredictable weather is among the noticeable effects of climate change in recent years. That lack of predictability can make spring planting a little more tricky than it once was. Experts note that soil temperatures around 50 F are best for cool-season crops, while soil should be 60 F or warmer when planting warm-weather plants such as tomatoes.

➤ Work with a garden center to identify what to plant. The right plants for one region may not be ideal for another, so homeowners are urged to work with a local landscaper or garden center before planting. Such a consultation can be especially useful for homeowners planting a new garden. Landscapers and garden center professionals will know which plants work in the local climate.

➤ Consider planting vegetables in the spring. Various garden experts note that spring is an ideal time to plant a vegetable garden. If planted at the right time, a vegetable garden can save homeowners money on their grocery bills and provide a season’s worth of fresh veggies. Lettuce and spinach are sun- and shade-friendly vegetables, which can make them good options for a spring garden. Cool-season root vegetables, which include beets, carrots and swiss chard, are some other notable veggies that can thrive in early spring.

## Did you know?

Homeowners with an eye on home improvement projects should know that kitchens and bathrooms tend to be the most costly rooms to renovate. An affiliate of the National

Kitchen and Bath Association told *Architectural Digest* in 2023 that kitchens and bathrooms require the most labor-intensive renovations, which contributes significantly to the high costs of such projects. Labor is indeed a sig-

nificant cost when renovating a home, as the Construction Labor Market Analyzer indicates labor cost percentages in construction are between 20 and 40 percent of the total budget of a given project. The final cost of any renovation

project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including the square footage of the room being remodeled and the materials homeowners choose. However, homeowners looking for less costly renovations may want

to consider revamping their dining rooms and closets, each of which are projects that can make a difference and tend to require a less significant financial commitment than projects like kitchen and bath remodels.

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