



We wish all of our readers a safe and happy New Year. Please note, there will be no Timberjay published on Friday, Jan. 5. Timberjay offices will be closed Dec. 25 - Jan. 5.

the **TIMBERJAY**



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VOL. 28, ISSUE 51 December 29, 2017

ENVIRONMENT

Twin Metals can reapply for mineral leases

Trump's Interior Department reverses earlier rulings by Reagan and Obama

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The Trump Interior Department has reversed previous legal opinions issued by both the Reagan and Obama administrations and concluded that the Bureau of Land Management has no choice but to renew mineral leases to Twin Metals for its proposed copper-nickel mine near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The latest

legal opinion, issued by Deputy Solicitor Daniel H. Jorjani, would appear to pave the way for Twin Metals to reapply for two mineral leases on about 4,800 acres of the Superior National Forest, within the Kawishiwi River watershed.

The decision was something of a surprise, but appeared to be a reaction to abortive attempts in the U.S. House to restore the mineral leases to Antofagasta, the Chilean copper

The decision means the USFS and BLM must reconsider applications to renew Twin Metals' mineral leases near the BWCAW. file photo

mining giant that controls Twin Metals, and had controlled the leases until they were cancelled one year ago.

Twin Metals proposed copper-

See...**MINING** pg. 7



MINNESOTA DISCOVERY CENTER

Telling our stories

Discovery Center's newest exhibit focuses on history of Iron Range labor

by **JODI SUMMIT**
Tower-Soudan Editor

CHISHOLM- The newest permanent exhibit at the Minnesota Discovery Center is a journey into the labor history of the Iron Range, highlighting struggles that had national significance.

The public got their first look at "Blue Collar Battleground: The Iron Range Labor Story" at a grand opening celebration on Dec. 7. Iron Range Historian Pam Brunfelt opened the evening with a talk about how Iron Range miners, from the Cuyuna, Mesaba, and

Above, Curator Allyse Freeman, stands in front of the Minnesota Discovery Center's newest permanent exhibit that focuses on the often-violent labor history of the Iron Range.

Right, Mining companies spied on their employees and other activists. photos by J. Summit

Vermilion iron ranges fought to get safer working conditions and

See...**LABOR** pg. 7



ELY

Recreation facility spot put on hold

ERCC cancels request for school location

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**
Ely Editor

ELY— The prospect of a 50,000 square-foot community recreation complex on Ely's school grounds died last week with a formal statement from the Ely Regional Community Complex board of directors.

A letter sent Dec. 20 to ISD 696 School Board members and Superintendent Kevin Abrahamson, by Kurt Soderberg on behalf of the ERCC board, stated, "The ERCC formally withdraws its request for a planned community recreation complex to be located on the grounds of the Ely schools."

At their Dec. 11 meeting the school board voted 4-2 to table the issue rather than vote on a plan to support a school campus location for the proposed recreational facility. That decision came after an hour of comments, mostly from project opponents. The meeting was anticipated

See...**ELY** pg. 8

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

'Welcome home, Harley'

Cook family gets a new a home in time for Christmas

by **MELISSA ROACH**
Staff Writer

COOK - "I know exactly where I'm going to put the Christmas tree." Harley Pajari and her son Liam will indeed be home for the holidays. "It's been a long haul, we're really happy to be in by Christmas. Thank you to everyone for your help and support she said."

Habitat for Humanity board

member Cindy Pogachnik presented Pajari with a Bible and a hammer, and said, "Welcome home, Harley." Construction volunteer crews started working on the Pajari house back in March 2016. "Sometimes it seems like these projects take forever...I told Harley when it began that it would be about a year, and told her to imagine that in about a year from now, she would have a home."

Harley Pajari and her son Liam moved into their new Habitat for Humanity home in Cook just in time for Christmas. photo by M. Roach

Harley and her young son Liam had moved twice in the past three years, so they are happy to have their own permanent and sustainable home this

See... **HOME** pg. 7



Check out Poetry at the top of the stairs!

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HEALTH CARE

Scenic Rivers welcomes two new care providers

by MELISSA ROACH
Staff Writer

COOK- Scenic Rivers Health Services Medical Clinic has been expanding, and they recently added two new medical care providers to the team at the Cook Medical Clinic. Coming aboard are Certified Nurse Practitioner Rachel Beldo and Dr. Eric Elleby.

Although new to the clinic, Rachel Beldo, CNP, is no stranger to the area, having grown up in Eveleth where she graduated high school in 2003. She went on to obtain her RN at the College of St. Scholastica, subsequently working at the Mayo in Rochester for three years. Beldo then

applied to the University of Minnesota to work on her Doctor of Nursing Practice. She then went back to the Mayo for four years, working in family medicine, before making the journey back north.

"I really wanted to move back to be closer to my family," she said. "I also wanted to stay in family medicine. I enjoy getting to know families and wanted to build those relationships." When she is not working, she enjoys time spent with family on Lake Vermilion.

Also making the trek north, Dr. Eric Elleby hails from the small town of Hayward, located in southern Minnesota where he grew up with a tight-knit family

on a dairy farm. After high school, he went on to the University of Illinois-School of Medicine, where he majored in organic chemistry. He graduated in 2014. Elleby then continued on to Wisconsin, completing his residency with the La Crosse-Mayo Family Residency Program. The three-year residency program focuses on family medicine. "I like rural medicine, out-patient care, and ER." Although he has no family with him in the area, he said, "I wanted to be up north...I like fishing, the outdoors, hockey, skiing...that's why I'm here."

Right: Dr. Eric Elleby and Nurse Practitioner Rachel Beldo.



MINNESOTA POLITICS

AG's office: GOP senator can't hold two offices

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The state's solicitor general has determined that GOP Sen. Michelle Fischbach, of Paynesville, must resign her seat once she is seated as Minnesota's next lieutenant governor. That could happen as early as Jan. 2, when current Lt. Gov. Tina Smith takes the oath of office to replace Sen. Al Franken.

Franken announced his resignation on Dec. 7 following a series of sexual harassment allegations.

The advisory opinion, issued by solicitor Alan I. Gilbert on Dec. 21, almost certainly won't be the last word on the subject. The matter is likely headed to court, with control of the Minnesota Senate potentially

hanging in the balance. Republicans currently hold a two-seat majority in the Senate, but a special election to replace DFL Sen. Dan Schoen, of Cottage Grove, is set for Feb. 12. If the DFL maintains control of Schoen's seat, as expected, they could take control of the Senate should Fischbach be forced to resign her seat and if the DFL manages to win a subsequent special election.

Gov. Mark Dayton, at the urging of Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, GOP-Nisswa, had requested the opinion from the attorney general after Fischbach announced that she had no intention of resigning her seat in the Legislature. The Minnesota Constitution requires that any vacancy in the office of the lieutenant governor be filled automatically by the most-recently

presiding president of the Senate— which happens to be Fischbach.

But Fischbach, citing an opinion from the Senate's legal counsel, argued that she could hold both positions simultaneously, citing a case from 1898, when Sen. Frank Day retained his seat in the senate after being named lieutenant governor after a vacancy arose. That decision was subsequently challenged in court, but the state's Supreme Court sided with Day, arguing that the two functions were not incompatible and that he was not expressly prohibited by the constitution from holding two offices. But the court's ruling disregarded Article IV, Section 5 of the constitution, which states that "no senator or representative shall hold any other office under the authority of the United States

for the state of Minnesota, except that of postmaster or of notary public."

Solicitor Gilbert cited numerous subsequent court rulings that have affirmed the prohibition on anyone serving in two offices that would be considered "incompatible." In 1898, noted Gilbert, the duties of the president of the Senate and the lieutenant governor were essentially identical, but that the roles of the two positions have since changed considerably as a result of amendments to the constitution and state statutes that have assigned purely executive branch functions to the lieutenant governor's position. "The current responsibilities of the lieutenant governor are therefore materially different than they were in 1898 and involve powers exercised by the executive branch of gov-

ernment," wrote Gilbert. "In 1989, the position of lieutenant governor had no executive branch responsibilities," he noted. "Rather, as ex officio president of the senate, the lieutenant governor's sole constitutional duties were "to preside over the senate" and "to authenticate by his signature the bills passed by the senate." In light of the changes to the office, "a strong argument can be made that the 1898 decision of the Minnesota Supreme Court does not control the outcome of this dispute," Gilbert concluded.

In more recent times, notes Gilbert, senators have resigned their seats upon filling a lieutenant governor vacancy, as previous attorneys general have recommended.

See VACANCY...pg. 5

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TOWER-SOUDAN

Board to seek funds for new wastewater capacity

Connection of Hoodoo Point Campground prompts Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board to respond

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— For years, the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board has operated in relative obscurity. But the revelation that the communities are suddenly faced with a potential shortage of wastewater capacity, and that the issue could hamper pending new development in Tower, raised the profile of the board's decisions.

The subject of capacity was top of the agenda for the board at their regular meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 20. The city of Tower's recent decision to connect the Hoodoo Point Campground to the municipal system is expected to consume most of the system's remaining

“We’re at that point. We can’t stick our heads in the sand.”

Greg Dostert

capacity and that's prompted the board to consider how to respond. "The campground puts you at about 82 percent of capacity," noted City Engineer Jason Chopp. "At 85 percent, the MPCA is going to want to see your plan."

"We're at that point," said Breitung Supervisor and wastewater board member Greg Dostert. "We can't stick our heads in the sand."

Breitung Supervisor Chuck Tekautz agreed, but noted that the timing is far from ideal. "Look at our books," he said. "We're pretty well down to bare bones in terms of finances." Indeed, the board later approved cashing in the wastewater district's final CD in order to pay bills for December. "We need to know how much it's going to cost," he said.

The board agreed to seek estimates from engineering firms in time for their Jan. 17 meeting, at which point the board will likely have to make a decision on whether to apply for public facilities funding in 2018. The annual application is due March 1, which means if the city misses the deadline, it would push the timeline for new capacity back

at least another year. As it is, meeting the deadline is no guarantee that the board will obtain the funds it will need to expand its treatment capacity any time soon. Applications to the state's Public Facilities Authority are ranked based on need. In some cases, projects are funded quickly, while others can languish for years. Normally, a project takes about three years from initial application to construction, according to MPCA officials, which could push any solution out to 2020 or 2021 at the earliest.

That could pose a problem for prospective new development. The first phase of harbor town homes, now slated to begin construction in May, would add about 4,800 gallons to the system, and a proposed new RV park is

expected to add another 2,000 gallons. Those two projects, combined, would likely push the system to 85 percent of capacity. While Chopp said the wastewater district could go above that level, he said the MPCA would likely have something to say about it.

System operator Matt Tuelch said he'd be reluctant to go above that level himself, given previous phosphorus violations in 2014 when the system operated at 85 percent of capacity due to heavier than expected flows during a very cold winter when many residents ran water to prevent freeze-ups. "It makes it harder to remain compliant," he said.

And that's a concern to some residents of Lake Vermilion,

See WASTEWATER...pg. 5

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE

Health center funding fix remains elusive

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— The political dysfunction in Washington is taking a toll on community health centers around the country, and it could eventually impact Cook-based Scenic Rivers if funding for the roughly 9,800 centers nationwide isn't addressed soon.

Congress did approve a temporary funding patch, that includes \$2.85 billion for the Children's Health Insurance Program and \$550 million for community health centers, just ahead of their Christmas break, but those dollars are expected to

provide operating funds only for several weeks, and that's unlikely to resolve some of the problems the centers are already facing.



Mike Holmes

Community health centers typically provide care to underserved populations, such as in the inner cities, or in rural, medically-underserved regions like northern St. Louis, Koochiching, and Itasca counties. Nearly a

quarter of the nation's community health centers were facing the loss of funding as early as Jan. 1, and the uncertainty over reauthorization was forcing some centers to close, at least temporarily, and forcing many others to begin layoff proceedings and delay the hiring of new staff.

"We're trying to keep funding into those centers, so they don't have to shut down," said Scenic Rivers CEO Michael Holmes, who also serves on the executive board of the National Association of Community Health Centers. Current funding for Scenic Rivers expires at the end of May, so the system still

has a few months to go before major disruptions might occur.

Holmes was in Washington, D.C., again last week hoping to convince lawmakers of the urgency of approving new funding for the Community Health Center Trust Fund, which expired back on Sept. 30. The trust fund, authorized as part of the Affordable Care Act, has been providing about 70 percent of the federal funding that has allowed community health centers to remain open and expand their services. The funding allowed Scenic Rivers to expand its service locations, including adding medical and

dental clinics in Tower.

Holmes said community health centers continue to enjoy bipartisan support in Congress and he remains optimistic that a long-term reauthorization will eventually be approved. The continuing resolution approved by Congress last Thursday expires on Jan. 19, which provides the next critical deadline for lawmakers. "Supposedly, everything should be done by then," said Holmes. But he's been hopeful of that for many months now, and yet a final deal remains elusive.

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OPINION

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Editorial

The west in tumult

Liberal democracies facing challenges of their own making

A quarter century ago, the liberal, free market democracies of the West were triumphant. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the world's Western leaders had declared victory in the war of ideas. Free market capitalism and liberal democracy had won the day.

Francis Fukuyama, a prominent conservative writer of the era, wrote a celebrated polemic “The End of History,” proclaiming that humanity had now reached its pinnacle of social development. “There is no alternative,” declared then-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Oh, how the triumphant have fallen.

As we head into 2018, the world looks very different than it did in 1993. Far from ascendant, the world's Western democracies are in disarray and looking for leadership as authoritarian and oligarchic regimes, like Russia and China, are on the rise. China, in particular, has stepped into the vacuum of world leadership presented by the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States.

While once the leader of the Western world, the U.S., under Trump, now denigrates our traditional democratic allies while the new president heaps praise on dictatorial strongmen around the world. He is actively undermining democratic norms, such as the rule of law, and appeals to the worst instincts in his supporters.

Today, observers, like Fukuyama, are openly eating their words. It turns out, there are alternatives to free markets and democracy, as displeasing as they may be.

Far from victory, it looks increasingly as if Western democracies may have won a battle, but lost the war of ideas to the demagogues, the kleptocrats, and the fools.

The election of Donald Trump, however, was only a solidifying step in America's devolution. The handwriting has been on the wall for more than a decade. Just as oligarchs have dominated Russian politics in the age of Putin, they have all but dictated the workings of Washington in the age of Citizens United, the 2010 Supreme Court decision that

opened the floodgates to unlimited amounts of dark money in our electoral process. Unconscionable gerrymandering, aided by the latest computer technology, has made rigging elections standard operating procedure, particularly for Republicans. Voter suppression further stifles the will of the people.

A flawed process inevitably leads to flawed policy, such as the tax bill that President Trump signed last week. At a time of extraordinary income inequality, the bill makes a bad situation even worse, promising massive tax breaks to U.S. corporations that already contribute far less to the nation's treasury than they have in nearly a century. Not surprisingly, the bill is extraordinarily unpopular with the public, but the will of the people has little to do with what happens in Washington these days. Indeed, congressional leaders made no bones about it. Their costly campaigns are bankrolled by billionaires, they told their fellow lawmakers, and the billionaires had demanded their due. America's oligarchs run the show, much as their Russian counterparts do in Moscow. So who really won the Cold War?

Perhaps more importantly, how is it that the Western democracies find themselves in such dire circumstances? For the most part, they have only themselves to blame. Western leaders, in their arrogance, failed to take account of those who were being left behind as liberalized capitalism and globalization sent more and more of the wealth of nations to those at the top. The left behind struck back with a vengeance in 2017, tossing Britain from the European Union and sending an intemperate grifter and his family to the White House.

It was a dramatic pendulum swing to be sure, and voters may still issue a corrective later in the New Year. But it's clear that the future is far less settled than it seemed not so long ago. Can Western democracy be saved? Is it worth saving? Only time will tell.



THE ENGAGED CITIZEN

It's time more of us learn to lead

by MELISSA ROACH
Citizens for Civic Education

“Why are you running?” is the inevitable question every person who runs for elected office must answer.

Wanting to be a candidate and run for office is something that almost never comes naturally to most folks. Those seeking office must provide an answer to that question for the people who might cast their vote for them. The question, I think, must also be one that the candidate asks oneself.

I have heard candidates talk about their parent's or grandparent's public service and how they were brought up in a family of public service.

I have watched the professional politicians who have lost touch with their constituents or never really represented them in the first place work around the rules of law and dangle a carrot in front of voters.

I have listened to candidates who talk about a pivotal moment when they had had enough, and putting reluctance aside, they had to step forward.

I have listened to people talk about the struggles of their ancestors in an American dream that didn't include them.

I have heard about the laborer who saw the company getting richer off the back of the workers exposed to dangerous conditions.

At some point, reluctant people step up, take control of the wheel, and fight back. American activist Maggie Kuhn said, “Speak the truth, even if your voice shakes.” People are beginning to understand that standing aside and not being involved in civic action and the



political process is no longer a choice. The consequence of inaction is greater than the consequence of action.

There is an authenticity that we look for in that brave new shaky voice of someone stepping forward to run for office, to be a leader—whether they run out of frustration, or in wanting to protect the most vulnerable among us, or protect our resources and our future, or even just to uphold the laws and our constitution.

Right now, more than at any other time in our nation's history, we have more women running for office and becoming involved in the political process.

Perhaps you might imagine navigating the political process and running for office something like suddenly finding yourself and some others in the backseat of a car cruising down a really bad road in need of repair, going to the future destination at 90 mph. All of a sudden there is the realization that either a) someone entirely irresponsible is controlling the car or b) nobody has been driving the car. Everyone looks around and discovers they have been waiting for someone else to take control of the wheel.

Looking among ourselves for a leader, we find out that some never learn to drive at all, some are too young, ill, or blind and need to be just passengers.

We all know what to do with the brakes though. But brakes alone can't get us anywhere. Somebody's got to drive. Maybe we look at the

driver's seat, and we find that it's a stick shift. But no one knows how to drive a stick. Yet, someone has to jump into the driver's seat and take control for the sake of everyone.

So, a reluctant leader jumps to the driver's seat, takes the wheel, and learns to drive a stick. There is some frustration and fear at being a new driver, but you get the hang of it.

It also means that, not only the driver, but together we all understand the parts of the vehicle and what maintenance is needed and not to rely on cruise control. And we all need to focus on the road ahead.

We must also teach those who are younger than us to drive, developing leaders among us. Those who are ready to take the wheel, learn the process, be that driver, and speak out.

Even if their voice shakes.
Melissa Roach lives in Bear River.

We want your letters!

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

I want a cardboard box for Christmas!

I got out of bed this morning, not right away when I heard my iPhone alarm and its irritating chime, but after about three rounds of groping in the dark and tapping the snooze. My first thought was, another chaotic day doing more things than I ever intended to cram into a day...to earn money and seem to come up short anyhow....“Maybe living in a plain cardboard box under a bridge doesn't sound so bad?” As you see, it's never just one thought, it's a first thought followed by rounds of thoughts



SCARLET LYNN STONE

before I even have one small sip of coffee.

Lately, I haven't even had time for morning coffee in my chair with my favorite cat, Miss Kitty. I haven't had time to sort out my pills into the plastic, dated organizer strip. I plod around the house searching for my pills, digging in my purse or finding them in the Walgreen's bag still in my car. Still in my nightgown, sweater and BOG

boots I enter back into the house, walking through my office where no table surfaces

are visible and bags of Christmas gifts and ornaments are stacked here and there. Ahead on the hallway wall I see the decorative sign that says, “Out of my mind...be back in five minutes.” My purse and the back of my car looked as messy and disheveled as a hamster cage, so I quickly cleared them out at the same time I was looking for the pills.

Minutes later, I am upstairs getting dressed when I happily discover I still have clean underwear and jeans to put on, but will have to re-wear the same pair of socks. Then it occurs to me that Christmas is nearly here and I haven't yet worn my “Ugly Christmas Sweater,” or the red, short-sleeved T-shirt that looks

like a Santa suit with a belt printed across the middle and words on the left upper chest that read, “Does this suit make me look fat?” I put it on, decided that it did...make me look fat... but wore it anyhow...to spark a chuckle...in someone...somewhere. In myself too.

I'm definitely not chuckling about my “holiday five”. I've been grazing holiday buffets, indulging at parties and eating too many Christmas cookies, so now my jeans are tight. I was so proud after losing weight during my gallbladder situation. Such a sense of accomplishment to try on my snowmobile pants and not

See CHRISTMAS...pg. 5

MINING

PolyMet clean-up liability could top \$1 billion

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— State officials and independent consultants hired by the Department of Natural Resources have put a number on the financial assurance requirements they believe the state will need to ensure that taxpayers aren't left on the hook for clean-up costs at PolyMet's proposed copper-nickel mine near Hoyt Lakes. It's \$1.04 billion, a number that's substantially larger than the company has previous-

ly proposed.

The information was first obtained through a data practices request by the *Star Tribune*, which reported on the determination this past week. DNR officials have confirmed for the *Timberjay* that the numbers reported by the *Star Tribune* are accurate, and reflect the calculations of DNR staff and the financial consultant hired by the agency.

"The experts involved in this work have extensive experience in what is needed to reclaim a site and operate water treat-

ment," said Assistant DNR Commissioner Barb Naramore.

The company likely wouldn't be required to post a billion dollars in order to begin mining. Instead, the amount of protection would be negotiated on an annual basis by the state and PolyMet. The \$1.04 billion estimate was devised for the peak of mining operations at the site, when the potential liability for clean-up would likely be the highest. PolyMet recently proposed to provide a combination of letters of credit or surety

bonds totaling \$544 million for the first year of mining.

Those numbers "align well with the DNR's current estimates for the two construction years and first year of mining," said Naramore. "Any draft permit that the DNR places on public notice will detail how the department would calculate financial assurance on an annual basis," Naramore added. DNR officials anticipate issuing a draft permit to mine early next year.

The DNR has not received a financial assurance proposal from

PolyMet that extends beyond the first year of mining, which suggests the two sides may not yet be in full agreement on the numbers required. "I want to be clear that we are still in the deliberative process," said Naramore.

The financial assurance package is critical to the mine project because it provides the resources to pay for clean-up at the mine should PolyMet or whatever company ultimately acquires it declare bankruptcy at some point in the operation. Mining companies have been notorious over the years for declaring bankruptcy as mines play out, leaving taxpayers on the hook for the clean-up costs. In the case of PolyMet, the financial assurance would help pay for the cost of long-term water treatment at

both the mine and tailings basin site. The environmental impact statement on the project estimated that water treatment at the site will be necessary for centuries.

Unlike taconite mining, the copper-nickel that PolyMet proposes to mine is bound in sulfur-bearing rock, which is known to leach acid and heavy metals once exposed to air and water.

The financial assurance package will be a significant component of any permit to mine that is ultimately issued by the DNR. It will be more critical than ever that the state get its calculations correct, since the Trump administration has discontinued a proposal to require companies to provide funding to pay for any federal clean-up that might be required.

VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Tower charter school finances look good

TOWER— The Vermilion Country School auditor had good financial news for the grades 7-12 charter school, reporting another year of positive budget numbers for the 2016-17 school year, which ended in June.

The school ended the year with a \$134,149 unreserved fund

balance, or more than 18 percent of the school's annual budget of approximately \$750,000. It maintained a \$178,000 general fund balance as of the end of November. About 45 students currently attend the project-based school, which is a slight increase over last year. The school is now in its fifth

year of operation. The school's current year budget projects a slight deficit, which isn't unusual. The official budget is typically conservative, and year-end numbers routinely end up significantly more positive than the approved budget.

CHRISTMAS...Continued from page 4

need the green bungee cord to keep them fastened this year. The zipper was able to complete the task! Now I wonder, will I need the bungee again? I don't want to blow out the zipper sitting down for the first ride! December trauma is upon me.

This is all very stressful and there is more. I had the dentist fill six, yes six, teeth in the past two weeks. A record! Apparently certain blood pressure meds will cause "dry mouth" which I learned can bring on bacteria and tooth decay. Needless to say I switched meds and the dentist said I should add to my daily tasks, a smear of fluoride gel on the teeth before bed. Will I have time, or just misplace the gel? If I misplace the gel...I will have no teeth.

Also, adding to the loss of my mind is the drama of my son and his girlfriend's rent/housing crisis this past two weeks. Yes indeed, "the mother of the year" as someone accused me of being...I helped. Not financially, but with finding them resources. It drew out a few more gray hairs. If I

lived in the box under the bridge with no phone they would have figured it out themselves...or would they have?

Did I mention I also had a community choir concert, a poetry reading event at the Inn to organize, a craft sale with my Iron Ranger hooded sweatshirts to sell...and my brother and sis-in-law came up for a family visit. This is too much isn't it? My answer to myself who isn't present but will be back in five minutes is... "Scarlet, it's past time to push something away...seriously."

The worst December trauma episode is that I didn't keep track of our health insurance renewal form this past October. How could I...it never arrived! I was busy learning the ropes at my new job managing the Inn. I did not notice the form never arrived, then a week ago I got the cancellation letter. Merry Christmas and happy birthday...no health care for you. Even tossing on the Santa suit wouldn't cheer me out of this dilemma! I was on the phone for hours with MNSure trying to get it

straightened out. One call center worker said I wasn't even in the system. Right away I figured it was my past haunting me again...a "name change issue". I told her to make sure she was looking for my new name, Scarlet Stone and not Lynn O'Hara. I could hear the keyboard clicking as I waited. She gently reported, "I am not finding a "Scarlet O'Hara." A thought shot out in my head... "And you won't, as this is not MGM Studios in 1939!" I laughed at how silly that sounded and corrected her. Then she said she was looking through all of the "Stones." Images of agates, quartz and topaz being tumbled around flashed in my muddled head.

I ended up printing a renewal form on-line and sending in all of the income verification needed. So where do I send it? I looked all over the form and there was NO address anywhere. When they mail the form you get a return envelope but I didn't have one. I opted out of calling back to the MNSure office and waiting for thirty minutes to get an address. (It's having to listen to that

musical arrangement again that is the toughest part.) I used an address from the cancellation letter thinking the form would go to the correct office. Just this morning I followed up with a phone call. MNSure had my income verification entered in but the renewal form was missing. I had sent it to the wrong office.

"Just forget it"...I thought. I'm calling the appliance store and reserving the next empty refrigerator box available. Forget insurance hell, the pills, the bills, the kids, the snowmobile riding, my teeth, family, and the choir. Forget about tight pants and holiday poticca, screenprinting equipment and making Iron Ranger shirts too. I'll be headed out with my cardboard box on my back, searching for a good site under a bridge somewhere to live out this chaotic existence!

I wish you all a calm, bright, warm and cozy holiday. If you receive a new large appliance for Christmas, can I have the box?

Scarlet can be reached at: scarlet@frontiernet.net

VACANCY...Continued from page 2

GOP seeks special session

Republican leaders in the Senate have called for a special session in January, in hopes of electing a DFLer as presiding officer of the Senate, but current Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk, has been cool to that suggestion. It's unlikely that the governor would call a special session under the circumstances without support from DFL leaders.

While Fischbach has held her seat in the typically Republican-leaning district since the 1990s, GOP leaders don't appear as confident they can hold the seat as they might otherwise be. Democrats have been significantly outperforming past outcomes in recent special elections around the country since the election of Donald Trump, which could put the seat in play. "They're worried sick about a special election

given the current environment," said Bakk.

For now, Republican leaders aren't budging, despite the opinion from the solicitor general. "I have every confidence Sen. Fischbach will continue to be an effective public servant for her constituents in her roles as a state senator for District 13 and acting lieutenant governor of Minnesota," Gazelka told Minnesota Public Radio.

While Smith's appointment to Franken's Senate seat does have potential downsides for the GOP, it is not without potential peril for Democrats. Fischbach, after all, would be in line to replace Dayton should anything happen to the governor. Dayton, now 70, has had a series of medical issues, although none currently appear to pose the risk that he might be unable to serve the remainder of his term.

brought online. Chopp noted that the city is fixing old sewer lines at the campground, which likely contributed considerable I and I into the campground's existing mound system. That additional volume may have contributed to the perception that the campground's treatment system was close to failing.

WASTEWATER...Continued from page 3

which is where treated wastewater from the system's stabilization ponds ends up. "My concern is for the lake," said Isle of Pines resident Lee Peterson, who spoke to the board last week under public input. Peterson, who operated a wastewater facility himself in the past, said he's concerned that the city of Tower is adding flow to


the system that it may not be able to safely treat. "When we're this close to capacity, there could be more problems like in 2014," conceded Tichel, although he noted that the system hasn't had any violations since then. "We've had a series of mild winters, and drought," responded Peterson. Dry years typically

reduce wastewater flow because of reduced inflow and infiltration, or I and I, and mild winters typically mean fewer residents run their water continuously. Chopp suggested that both the city and the township could try to reduce their I and I over the next couple years as a stopgap measure to reduce flow until new capacity can be

December 31 is the last day to impact your 2017 taxes.

Donations charged to a credit card before end of 2017 count, even if bill isn't paid until 2018.

For more info log on to ASKJEAN.NET and select the "Hot Topics" link, or call

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TZ1 Touring 1100 4-Stroke	\$11,299	\$8,999	\$163
2015's			
ZR 120 Youth Green	\$2,699	\$2,449	\$49
Lynx 2000 Green	\$6,499	\$6,099	\$111
Bearcat 5000 XT Blue	\$12,699	\$9,690	\$175
ZR 7000 LXR Green	\$12,299	\$8,928	\$161
2016's			
Lynx 2000 Black	\$6,499	\$5,999	\$109
Lynx 2000 LT Touring Black	\$6,999	\$6,249	\$114
Bearcat 3000 LT Blue	\$9,999	\$7,999	\$145
2017's			
Bearcat 3000 LT Blue	\$10,099	\$8,999	\$163
Bearcat 7000 XT Blue	\$14,599	\$12,497	\$225
Bearcat 7000 XT Orange	\$14,599	\$12,497	\$225
Pantera 3000 Black Touring	\$10,799	\$9,045	\$163
Pantera 7000 LTD Blue	\$14,399	\$12,727	\$229
ZR 3000 Black	\$8,799	\$7,855	\$142
XF 8000 137" Cross Country	\$14,199	\$10,753	\$194
ZR 5000 137" LXR Black	\$9,199	\$8,455	\$153
ZR 7000 137" LXR Black	\$12,699	\$10,498	\$189

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TOWER-SOUDAN EARLY LEARNING

Learning Readiness celebrates the season



From left: Learning Readiness students Fiona, Lois, Gus, Jase, and Blake sang Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer at their holiday program at Tower-Soudan Elementary last week. Learning Readiness is a school-based preschool program that meets three days a week.



Parents and grandparents attended the program, and then got to help their children build small gingerbread houses to take home. photos by J. Summit



AEOA Senior Dining Menu

TOWER- Vermilion Country School and AEOA sponsor a senior dining site at the charter school in Tower. All meals include salad bar, fruit, choice of beverage and dessert.

Reservations are appreciated the day before, or morning of, but walk-ins are always welcome. Take-outs available. Seniors age 60 and older who have registered for the program and their partners qualify for special pricing of \$4 per meal, but all ages are welcome at the regular rate of \$5.75. There are no income guidelines.

Meals are served from 12:30 – 1 p.m. on days when the charter school is open. Call the school at 218-753-1246 ext. 1003 for reservations, or call AEOA at 1-800-662-5711 ext. 7323 for the one-time registration process.

Week of Jan. 5
No school all week.

Week of Jan. 12
Monday- Meat Calzone with Marinara
Tuesday- Hot Italian Sub, Cole Slaw
Wednesday- Sloppy Joe, Vegetables
Thursday- Meatballs, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Dinner Roll, Vegetable
Friday- Beef Fried Rice, Bread Stick

Week of Jan. 15
Monday- Chicken Alfredo with a Twist, Bread Stick, Vegetable
Tuesday- Breaded Pollock, Mashed Potatoes, Dinner Roll
Wednesday- Chunky Chicken Gravy over Mashed Potatoes, Dinner Roll, Vegetable
Thursday- Tater Tot Hot Dish, Dinner Roll
Friday- Chicken ala King in a Bread Bowl

Week of Jan. 14

Monday
TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m.

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

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:30 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Jan. 16.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (drill) and third (business meeting) Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

Wednesday
Tower AA- Open Basics- 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. Questions, call 753-2332.

Thursday
Vermilion Country School Board- Fourth Thursday (except near holidays). Meetings posted online at vermillioncountry.org. Next meeting is Thursday, Jan. 18 at 5 p.m. (third Thursday).

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

Get Informed! Get the Timberjay!



the TIMBERJAY

The Tower-Soudan Timberjay and Cook-Orr Timberjay are published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950], PO Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is: editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website: www.timberjay.com.

Entered as Periodicals at the Post Office in Tower, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Timberjay, P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Three award-winning community editions are published each week for Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
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Official Newspaper:
City of Tower, Orr, Townships of Bearville, Breitung, Crane Lake, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Greenwood, Field, Morcom, Leiding, ISD 707.

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

Subscriptions Available:
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NOTE: Changes of address must be sent or called in to the Tower office. Out-of-state delivery may take 2-3 weeks. For prompt out-of-state delivery try the First Class Subscription: \$100 year or \$10 per month.
Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$27.95/year; details at www.timberjay.com.

Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.
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THE NEWS OF THE WEEK FROM MS. VERA MILION



Dear Hearts,

Hilda and I have become part of the twentieth century!

Moose has brought us a computer!

He also said not to mention that this addition to our household is "hot, hot, hot!"

He got me to sit down at the keyboard and it is nifty.

Hilda says as far as SHE is concerned it's nothing but a keyboard connected to a TV set.

One must keep up with the times and the BEST part is it corrects your mistakes

and has a little box that gives you synonyms.

For example, INSTEAD OF mistakes I COULD have written gaffes, blunders or inaccuracies. This would prove to you that I am smart.

It is difficult to appear clever, smart or even judicious these days!

Hilda is addicted to the computer and in the past week that we have had the computer in the house she has played 2,384 games of solitaire AND won six.

I am into more serious web pages!

WEB PAGES - if I got ANY MORE with it, I would be sixteen again!

I GOOGLED the advantages of being sixteen:

"Say goodbye to dolls and toys, Say hello to makeup and boys!"

"I've anxiously waited for this year to arrive."

"Queen of Sixteen!"

"The best substitute for experience is being sixteen."

"The secret to eternal

youth is arrested development."

This one pertains to more than a sixteen-year-old: "Drive now, Text later."

And as Pablo always said, "It takes a very long time to become young."

I have joined Succulents, Tiny Gardens & Terrariums, Maine Iris Society and Bearded Iris Society.

And Hilda found this in her time searching the WEB:

Jack Daniel's Winter Jack is a seasonal blend of apple cider liqueur and festive spices, based on an original family recipe from Jack's home in Lynchburg, Tenn. It is available at select Walmart stores; she is on a road trip as I type!

The OTHER really hot, hot, hot thing and what makes me pro-computer is RECIPES!!! OMG! (The boys tell me that OMG is also a computer thing.)

As we ALL KNOW one CANNOT have too many recipes on file...even

though we just use three or four.

Recipe reality has not stopped me...I have used a REAM of paper printing recipes, especially seasonal favorites!

As Hilda ALWAYS says, what is CHRISTMAS without a CHEESE BALL? Well maybe Hanukkah, too!

CHEESE BALL
2 pkg. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
1 pkg. (8 oz.) KRAFT Shredded Sharp Cheddar Cheese
1 Tbsp. finely chopped onions
1 Tbsp. chopped red bell peppers
2 tsp. LEA & PERRINS Worcestershire Sauce
1 tsp. lemon juice
Dash ground red pepper (cayenne)
1 cup chopped pecans, toasted
Beat cream cheese and cheddar cheese in small bowl with hand mixer until blended. Add all remaining ingredients except nuts; mix well and refrigerate for several hours. Carefully roll into a ball, refrigerate several more hours, roll the ball in the pecans, and there you go.

Get out those little cheese spreaders someone gave you decades ago, some Ritz crackers and your bottle of Jack Daniel's Winter Jack and have yourself a PARTY!!!

Ms. Vera Milion

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Hwy. 77 Canister

Winter hours now in effect
Thursday 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Recycling canisters available daily at the Greenwood Town Hall. For info: 1-800-450-9278

Bookmobile Schedule

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 31; Feb. 21; March 14

Bois Forte Boys/Girls Club	11:00-11:30 a.m.
Greenwood Town Hall	12:00-12:30 p.m.
Soudan Fire Hall	1:45-3:00 p.m.
Tower Civic Center	3:15-4:15 p.m.
Embarrass, Four Corners	5:15-6:00 p.m.

Read It HERE
218-753-2950

Libraries

Ely library
Hours: Monday — Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturdays — 8 a.m. to noon
Closed on Sundays
Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library
Monday Noon-6 pm
Tuesday Noon-6 pm
Wednesday Noon-6 pm
Thursday Noon-6 pm
Friday Noon-5 pm
Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
AA - 7 p.m. Mondays, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St.
WOMEN'S AA - Noon
Mondays, Ledgerock Community Church, Ely - use 15th Street entrance
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.
Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church.
AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m.
at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend.
BABBITT AL-ANON - Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian Church.
CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step
support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.
ELY AREA FOOD SHELF - third
Wednesday each month. 15 W. Conan St.
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
GED Study materials and pre-test available. Ely Community Center Thursday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tower by appointment. Call 365-3359, 827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS: Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living
Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital Conference Room B

Ely museum hosts bird feeder contest

ELY – Entries for the bird feeder contest at the Dorothy Molter Museum are due by Feb. 2, 2018. The is the museum's third annual contest, and all entries are welcome.

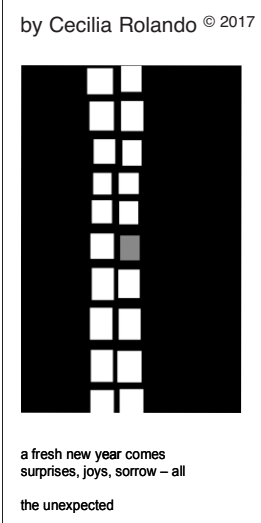
Channel your inner Dorothy and get creative designing and building a bird feeder for this annual contest to celebrate Dorothy's love of birds. This contest is for all ages and abilities.

Submit entries at the museum from Jan. 31-Feb 2, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Go to the museum basement door at the back of the Interpretive Center.

Download contest information at <http://www.rootbeerland.com/programs-events/>.

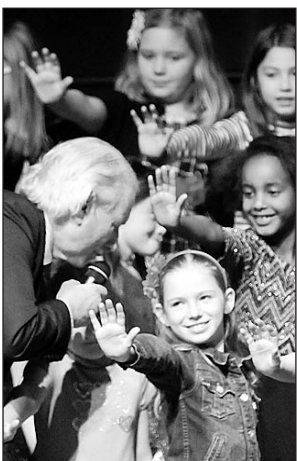
Judging will be held Feb. 3-8. Winners will be announced Feb. 9 at the museum's Annual Fundraising Dinner.

Breathing Out



by Cecilia Rolando © 2017

ELY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT



Washington Elementary School students presented their wiuner concert last Wednesday, "Celebrate Around the World."
photos by J. Greeney



ELY MEMORIAL SCHOOL

Quarter 1 Honor Roll 2017-2018
* Denotes 3.5 GPA or above

Grade 6: Chase Anderson, *Esther Anderson, *Colton Bramley, *Lily Dirks, *Kiarstin Eaton, Lita Ellis, Samuel Favet, Ryan Fenske, *Thomas Homer, *Abigail Johnson, Matthew Johnson, *Grace Latourell, Samuel Leeson, *Henry Lowe, Andrew Marold, *Gavin Marshall, Braydin Mosher, *Samuel Prijatel, *Deegan Richards, *Isabelle Shiltz, *Rose Mary Schlosser, *Ava Skustad, Robert Towley, *Sarah Visser, Kadein Zupancich.

Grade 7: Erron Anderson, *Kale Beno, *Joseph Bianco, Charlize Carlson, Bennett Cavalier, *Jacob Cochran, Ashton Cook, *Katherine Coughlin, *Rachel Coughlin, *Margaret Dammann, *Zoe Devine, *Sydney Durkin, *Courtney Eilrich, *Natasha Fulkrod, *Taylor Gibney,

Madelyn Gruba, *Gunnar Hart, *Jackson Hegman, *Phoebe Helms, Madeline Kallberg, Jason Kerntz, *Logan Loe, Kole Macho, Gabriel Mann, *Morgan McClelland, *Sean Ogburn, *Cedar Ohlhauser, *Elizabeth Omerza, Madeline Perry, *Madison Rohr, Levi Shusta, *Juliet Stouffer, *Grace Sundell, Lillian Tedrick, *Audrey Thomas, *Kelly Thompson, Blake Walsh.

Grade 8: Rylee Dusich, *Bryce Fairchild, *Charly Flom, *Joseph Foster, *Jon Hakala, *Drayke Hanninen, *Madison Hasz, *Matthew Janeksela, *Micah Larson, *Sidney Marshall, *Annikka Mattson, *Willow Ohlhauser, *Cora Olson, *Lauren Olson, *Gabriel Pointer, *Gracie Pointer, Edward Prijatel, *Abigail Rehbein, *Zachary Robbins, Raven Sainio, Chase Sandberg, Harry Simons, *Kellen Thomas, Karissa Vanvickle, *Ande Visser,

*Emma Wolfe.
Grade 9: *Madisyn Carlson, *McKenna Coughlin, *Harrison Dammann, *William Davies, *Grace Erickson, *Jasper Johnston Cameron Kienitz, *Jaicee Krings, *Brock Latourell, Zoe Lennon, *Hanna Littler, Sophie Montana, Katie Pinckney, *Amelia Pluth, *Margaret Renner, Sydney Richards, *Julia Schwinghamer, Abigail Thompson, Brynn Vollom, Elsie Vollom, Davis Walsh.

Grade 10: Elissia Bennett, *Ana Bercher, *Ethan Bremner, *Eli Conaway, Nils DeRemee, Andrew Dunn, *Kalyssa Eilrich, *Dylan Fenske, *Apolonia Homer, *Haley Hopkins, Sarah Isbell, *Savannah Johnson, *Christopher Jones, *McCartney Kaercher, Steven Kerntz, *Joshua Larson, *Henry Matthys, *Erika Mattson, *Jenna Merhar, *Nathan Nettifee, *Luke Olson, *Raif Olson, *Brooke Pasmick,

Mitchell Peterson, Joshua Pohlman, Seann Prigge, *Winter Sainio, Dalton Schreffler, *James Schwinghamer.

Grade 11: Jessica Anderson, *Dana Crenshaw, *Charles Dammann, *Lida Dodge, *Leo Georges, Nash Hren, *Madelene Johnson, Kaitlyn Lakner, *Gabriella Omerza, Mackenzie Peterson, *Shane Spangler, Lucy Stouffer, Logan Synnes.

Grade 12: *Evelyn Bercher, *Lindy Dalberg, Cody Davis, *Chase Eilrich, Kalley Fischer, *Carter Gaulke, *Benjamin Gustafson, Gracie Hanson, *Ethan Hasz, *Hannah Jankovec, Austin Kallberg, *Emma Kari, *Dylan Kientz, *Danielle Krostue, *Blaise Lah, *Emma Larson, *Brandon Martin, *Thomas Montana, Tyler Moravitz, *Anna Nelson, Austin Nelson, *Laura Pasmick, *Ryne Prigge, Andrew Rouse, *Emma Terwilliger, Shayla Zaverl.

the TIMBERJAY

The Ely Timberjay is published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950], and PO Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is: editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website: www.timberjay.com.

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Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
General Manager	Jodi Summit
Ely Editor	Keith Vandervort
Staff Writer	Stephanie Ukkola
Office Manager	M. M. White
Graphics	Scarlet Lynn Stone
Ad Sales	Jay Greeney

Official Newspaper:
City of Tower, City of Orr, Townships of Bearville, Breitung, Crane Lake, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, ISD 707.

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

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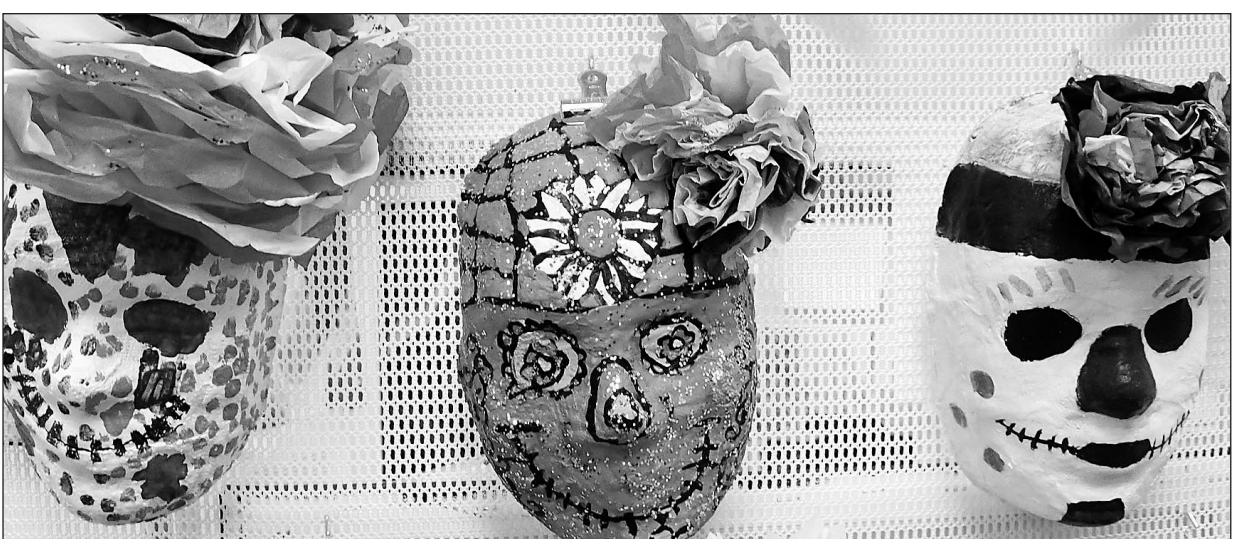
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ELY PUBLIC LIBRARY



Ely Memorial School art students displayed their first semester work at an art show in the Washington School media center earlier this month. Jeanne Zaverl, left, viewed the display prior to the Winter Concert. photos by K. Vandervort

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY - The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule (subject to change) is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesday at Grand Ely Lodge, unless noted.

Jan. 2 - Leah Pflifer - Candidate for U.S. Congress, 8th District



Boys basketball players from elementary to high school posed for the annual Grizzlies Nation photo during a recent home game. photo by C. Stone

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the TIMBERJAY

The Cook-Orr Timberjay is published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950] and Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website: www.timberjay.com.

Entered as Periodicals at the Post Office in Tower, Minnesota. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Timberjay, P.O. Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Three award-winning community editions are published each week for Cook/Orr, Tower/Soudan, and Ely.

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North Woods Elementary held their holiday concert last week. Students performed a nice selection of holiday favorites, and the elementary band also showed off their skills. See more photos, including high school and jr. high concerts, in our first paper in January.

photos by M.

Official Newspaper:
City of Tower, Orr, Townships of Bearville, Breitung, Crane Lake, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Greenwood, Field, Morcom, Leiding, ISD 707.

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

Subscriptions Available:
St. Louis County: \$34 year Elsewhere: \$49 year
We accept VISA/Mastercard/Discover.
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North Country

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OUR COMMUNITY

Ely woman helps with hurricane relief

Debbie Hultman dropped everything and headed to the Virgin Islands

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
Staff Writer

ELY- The news of the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria rattled the hearts of many Americans. The stories and photos caused many people to wish they could do something to help. While some donated money or supplies, a much smaller number volunteered their time.

Debbie Hultman, a resident of Ely for over twenty years, dropped the activities of her day-to-day life to help hurricane victims who desperately needed assistance.

Hultman reached out to the Duluth chapter of the American Red Cross to seek deployment. "The huge disasters from fires and hurricanes pulled at my heart and motivated me to take action to help." She thought she would be sent to Florida or Texas but was surprised to learn she would



Debbie Hultman, of Ely, unpacks hurricane relief supplies on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. She was deployed through the Duluth chapter of the American Red Cross. submitted photo

be going to St. Thomas, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

She arrived on the island of St. Thomas on Nov. 13, feeling

anxious, apprehensive and eager, knowing it would be a challenging few weeks in more ways than one. Her days started with

a 7 a.m. meeting followed by hours of supply distribution with a team of Red Cross volunteers and paid staff that lasted until 6 p.m. As soon as their work was done, they would return to their sleeping quarters. Hultman took part in delivering over 300,000 desperately needed items to communities throughout the island.

Each morning Hultman, another volunteer, and a local volunteer loaded emergency supplies into a Jeep or SUV, then went into neighborhoods and handed out supplies such as comfort kits, buckets, tarps, cleaning kits, gas cans, batteries, and food. When they had emptied their vehicle of supplies they returned to the warehouse and went out again, sometimes making multiple trips to the warehouse and then back into the communities in one day.

Some days Hultman chose to stay in the warehouse to load cars all day.

She said, "It was physically very hard work, but it gave an emotional break from delivery into the community." The quality of life for the islanders was "horrible."

"The people were incredibly grateful for a toothbrush, and people would hug me and cry with gratitude for the bag of beans I handed them," she said. "There were many times that I would yell out, 'Red Cross,' and would hear somebody yelling back from a windowless shack of a dwelling. After waiting for them to appear, I would often see a very old person or a woman with a few young children in diapers who were desperate for the supplies I brought. One day, it was a man who had just had a leg amputated and he crawled to meet me. He was so happy that I heard him yelling. Sometimes we requested a Red Cross nurse to go out

See...RELIEF pg. 2

WINTER SPORTS

WolfTrack Classic returns for 2018

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

Both sled dog races begin and end in Ely on Feb. 25

ELY - The almost-annual Wolftrack Classic sled dog race will return to Ely, Feb. 24-25, 2018, following a weather-related cancellation last year.

New for this year, the 10th annual event, both the six-dog and eight-dog team races will now start and finish in Ely.

Instead of following a route to Tower, the six-dog race will now loop back around to the Taconite Trail using Purvis Road. It remains a 30-mile race. "The six-dog race has never come back to finish in Ely and on our 10th anniversary we are very excited about this for our teams, spectators, volunteers and handlers," said race director Ellen Cashman.

Race weekend begins with the veterinary checks for the race dogs on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"One of our great sponsors and longtime supporter of the race, the Ely Veterinary Clinic, will once again be on hand at Vermilion Community College parking lot to perform the pre-race veterinary exam," Cashman said.

Every team must have this mandatory exam to ensure the dogs are in good health to run the race. The veterinarian staff's work does not stop with the pre-race checks as they are also on hand at the start and finish of the race events to check on the dogs and are available throughout the race and ready to head out on the trail if needed.

"For spectators, this is a great opportunity to see every dog," Cashman said. "More than 300 animals



Above: The 2018 WolfTrack Classic sled dog races will both start and end in Ely on Feb. 25.

Right: Ely racer Scott Edgett shows some affection for one of his race dogs file photos



will be there throughout the day. You can also talk with the mushers, who love to share their passion for their dogs and the sport. Remember though, they may be busy. Getting a team ready takes a lot of time and they may not be able to talk. Be careful where you walk. There may be chains, sleds and other equipment that pose a tripping hazard. Sled dogs are beautiful animals and as a rule are friendly

and great with kids. However, you should not pet one without first checking with the musher," she said.

The Vermilion Community College Wilderness Club will be

selling hot drinks and food in the west wing of the building. "This is an exciting day in which you can catch the energy of the dogs and pick your favorite team to cheer for on Sunday. Bundle up the

family, bring your camera and come for the day," she said. "We know you love dogs, but it is better to leave yours at home so everyone can enjoy the event without incident."

Details on the annual

Musher's Dinner, planned for Saturday night, will be announced at a later date, Cashman said.

Race day starts at 7 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 25 at the softball complex located on Highway 1 just outside of town.

"On race day, spectators have another opportunity to mingle with the mushers and watch them prepare for the race," Cashman said. "The mushers and teams will be in the parking area across the road from the starting line, preparing equipment, themselves, and the dogs that are eager to get on the trail. It is truly a great experience and a chance to get a behind-the-scenes look at the equipment that is used and see how the dogs are prepared. Please be careful of all the gang lines and equipment and stand back to give the dogs space so the mushers can get them ready to run the race."

The first of the eight-dog teams leaves the race chute at 9 a.m. for a 50-mile journey through the Superior National Forest. "Spectators will be amazed at the organization of the race as teams are brought into the start area," she said.

The teams are staged for the race in three steps. In the hole is the first spot the teams are moved into, on deck is the next, and finally they are led to the starting line. They leave in two-minute intervals.

The eight-dog race course begins on the Taconite Trail, winds through the forest and then

See...RACE pg. 2

NORDIC SKIING

Ely Nordic skiers start season strong

by JAY GREENEY
Staff Writer

GRAND RAPIDS – The Wolves ski teams looked strong in their first competition of the season, with the boys taking second and the girls third at the Grand Rapids Invitational.

Both teams lost skiers to graduation and had some big shoes to fill, especially the girls, as they were set to defend last year's team championship without individual champion Erin Bianco. A solid group of seniors with lots of experience should make both teams very competitive again this year.

A lack of snow has made it difficult for normal workouts so this invite was a chance to see where the team stood against some good competition.

"It was a typical first race for us as we are not race ready yet," said Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson. "That will start to happen in January as we



Cedar Ohlhauser begins the race at the Grand Rapids Invitational. Jeff Sundell photo

get consistent racing along with high intensity intervals under our belts."

The girls finished with 366 points, good for third

in a very close contest, as just five points separated the team from first place finisher Grand Rapids.

"Girls were solid with

Ryne, Emma, Laura, and Evelyn all having good first races," said Coach Anderson.

Ely boys put five skiers in the top 16 to finish second with 363 points. Grand Rapids was the boys winner with 382 points, including three skiers in the top four spots.

"The boys had a really good showing as Ben had a great race finishing fifth," added Anderson. "Grand Rapids will be hard to beat as they have three very strong skiers."

Next up for the Wolves will be the Proctor Invite at Spirit Mountain, on Tuesday, Jan. 2. Race time is 11 a.m.

Girls individual results

- 3. Ryne Prigge 14:03.9
- 7. Emma Terwilliger 14:30.0
- 10. Laura Pasmick 15:01.0
- 18. Evelyn Bercher 15:42.2

- 25. Kalyssa Eilrich 16:27.8
- 30. Brooke Pasmick 17:14.5
- 35. Lindy Dalberg 17:52.2
- 39. Anna Nelson 18:42.1

Boys individual results

- 5. Ben Gustafson 12:27.2
- 9. James Schwinghamer 13:14.1
- 12. Ethan Hasz 13:20.9
- 15. Raif Olson 13:34.8
- 16. Jasper Johnston 13:43.0
- 25. Nate Nettifee 14:28.9
- 30. Henry Dirks 14:54.0
- 34. Chase Eilrich 15:08.8
- 46. Aidan Bremner 16:22.6

Girls team results

- 1. Grand Rapids 371
- 2. Duluth East 367

- 3. Ely 366
- 4. Bemidji 327
- 5. Proctor/Hermantown 325
- 6. Mesabi East/Virginia/Eveleth-Gilbert 304
- 7. Cloquet-Esko-Carlton 274
- 8. Duluth Denfeld 254
- 9. Cook County/Two Harbors 65
- 10. Deer River 58

Boys team results

- 1. Grand Rapids 382
- 2. Ely 363
- 3. Bemidji 348
- 4. Cloquet-Esko-Carlton 347
- 5. Duluth East 342
- 6. Mesabi East/Virginia/Eveleth-Gilbert 289
- 7. Detroit Lakes 233
- 8. Hibbing 176
- 9. Proctor/Hermantown 129
- 10. Duluth Denfeld 118
- 11. Deer River 64
- 12. Cook County/Two Harbors 52

BOYS BASKETBALL

Timberwolves defeat Lake of the Woods, 108-40

by JAY GREENEY
Staff Writer

ELY – The Timberwolves bounced back from their loss to North Woods last week, taking it to Lake of the Woods 108-40 as they headed into their holiday break.

Ely combined a smothering press and great shooting to grab a 26-4 lead in the early minutes. They went on to build a 67-21 halftime lead.

"We jumped out to an early lead and continued to play well throughout the game," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. "I thought we

played well defensively and we really moved the ball around offensively to find the open man."

It was a good win for Ely as they not only got back on the winning track but also back to full strength. They need to stay injury free as they play a small rotation of just six or seven players.

The Wolves had some big performances and were led by Pat Vanderbeek with 26 points while Carter Gaulke had a good all around game with 24 points, seven rebounds, eight steals, and eight assists. Adam McDonald put up 20

points and Blaise Lah had a solid night with 12 rebounds to go with five assists and seven steals.

Ely has a week long break before they play back to back games at home as they host the Ely Holiday Tourney. Thursday's game is scheduled to start at 7:30 p.m. while Friday they will play at either 4:30 p.m. or 6:15 p.m. depending on the first game outcome.

Carter Gaulke (3) drives against the Lake of the Woods Bears last Tuesday night.
photo by J. Greeney



RACE...Continued from page 1

connects to the Bear Head Trail and Fishing Lakes Trail and back onto the Taconite Trail, which brings the teams back to Ely for the finish. The trail time depends on the teams entered, weather conditions and trail conditions. "We anticipate the first team to cross the Ely finish line around 1:30 p.m.," Cashman said.

After the last eight-dog team leaves the gate, there

will be a ten-minute break before the first six-dog team heads out on the trail for a 30-mile trek through the forest. They also leave at two-minute intervals and travel along the Taconite Trail, loop around Purvis Road, back to the Taconite State Trail, and then head east to finish in Ely (approximately 30 miles). The first team will finish at approximately 12:30 p.m.

"Spectators should stand back from the starting line so as not to distract the dogs. Please cooperate with race officials as they are there to help the mushers and keep everyone safe," she said.

There are several vantage points along the trail for the public to watch the mushers as they cross roads. "Lead dogs are as much as 24-30 feet ahead of the musher and since the

tree line is close to the road, the mushers may not be able to see oncoming traffic," she said. "Road crossing guards, called Guardian Angels, are stationed at each road crossing to protect the dogs and mushers. Road crossing guards keep an eye out for the team and stop traffic to allow the teams to safely cross. In some cases, additional road crossing guards are on hand to form a line

so the dogs will not mistake a road as another trail and make a wrong turn. Spectators may be asked to help form the line – if you are asked, please follow the directions given by the road guards – we don't want the dogs distracted or anyone to get hurt."

After the race, mushers and spectators head to the banquet room at the Grand Ely Lodge for the awards

ceremony.

The awards ceremony starts soon after the last team crosses the finish line. "It is fun to share in the excitement as the purses are awarded to the top mushers and to hear the great stories as all the drivers compare notes from the day's race and other races in which they compete. It is your last chance to get up close and personal with the stars of the day," Cashman said.

RELIEF...Continued from page 1

to check on people if we saw they were in need."

"Even now, two-and-

a-half months later, less than half of the island has electricity," she said.

"The island is in bad shape. Traffic lights aren't working, roads are washed out, and flash flooding occurs often. Everything is full of rust and mold. Almost every structure was

affected in some way."

Hultman returned home from her stay in the Virgin Islands last week. She said, "It was quite an experience that I'm grateful to have been part of. I feel like I helped the

situation and I realize that I can contribute more than I thought I could." Hultman was surprised by how many volunteers she met from Minnesota and the Midwest in general. "I feel proud to

be one of them." She said that volunteering was exhausting physically and emotionally, but also said, "I would do it again."



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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Apply now for help paying winter heating bills

REGIONAL – With frigid temperatures settling in over the state, the Minnesota Department of Commerce encourages eligible Minnesotans to get help paying their heating bills, and to stay safe through the state’s Energy Assistance Program.

“The winter weather may be slow in arriving this year, but we know there will be plenty of cold days ahead that can pose a serious challenge for Minnesotans who struggle to pay their heating bills,” said Commerce Commissioner Jessica Looman. “Heating your home is a necessity in Minnesota, and energy assistance is essential for vulnerable Minnesotans, especially low income families with young children, people with disabilities, veterans and seniors.”

Households that earn less than 50 percent of the state’s median annual income (\$48,077 for a family of four) are eligible for the Energy Assistance Program.

Energy assistance funds help low-income homeowners and renters pay for heating bills through grant money paid directly to utility companies and heating fuel vendors on behalf of eligible households. The funding also helps some homeowners repair or replace malfunctioning heat systems.

In October, the Energy Assistance Program received over \$102 million in federal funds, or about 90 percent of the total funds expected for the program this year. The program served over 126,000 Minnesota households last year, with an average grant of about \$520.

The Minnesota Commerce Department administers the Energy Assistance Program in partnership with 30 local service providers throughout the state. The program is part of the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

How to apply

Applicants have until May 31, 2018, to apply. However, energy assistance funding is limited and administered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Households apply through the local service provider in their area. To find your local service provider, call the Commerce Department toll-free at 800-657-3710 or visit the Energy Assistance Program section at the department’s website.

HOLIDAYS



Above: North Woods fifth- and six-grade band students performed during the elementary concert last week. photo by M. Roach

Right: Tower-Soudan Elementary students (from left: Ava, Lanara, and Clair) made tomten dolls in time for Christmas during an after-school class led by Cindy Myre. submitted photo



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Get the Timberjay!

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

MNsure open enrollment runs until Jan. 14

REGIONAL- Despite federal deadline reminders to enroll by Dec. 15, Minnesotans still have over four weeks to secure coverage in 2018. Open enrollment for Minnesota's state-based health exchange, MNsure, runs until Jan. 14. Minnesotans looking for coverage that starts Jan. 1, 2018, had until Dec. 20 to enroll, but can enroll for coverage starting Feb. 1 until Jan. 14.

MNsure extended its open enrollment deadline to ensure Minnesotans had adequate time to shop, compare and enroll into a plan that best fits their needs. Additional information on MNsure's open enrollment period can be found online at mnsure.org. The 2018 open enrollment period is Nov. 1, 2017, to Jan. 14, 2018. Ninety-six percent of Minnesotans have health coverage, the highest percentage in state history. This year, an individual earning up to \$48,240 a year, or a family of four earning up to \$98,400 a year, could qualify for subsidies.

Solar incentive programs available

REGIONAL- While the Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive Program is no longer available, Xcel Energy and other utilities continue to offer incentive or rebate programs to incentivize solar energy systems for their customers. Xcel Energy will open its Solar*Rewards Program for residential and commercial customers on Jan. 8, 2018.

The 2017 Legislature extended Xcel Energy's Solar*Rewards Program for three years and increased its funding to \$15 million in 2018, \$10 million in 2019 and 2020, and \$5 million in 2021. The Solar*Rewards Program provides recipients with 10 years of annual incentive payments based on the solar energy system's annual production. Solar*Rewards applicants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Two other investor-owned utilities, Minnesota Power and Otter Tail Power, also offer solar incentives. Minnesota Power offers solar incentives to qualified customers through its SolarSense program and will begin taking applications on Jan. 9. Otter Tail Power offers a Publicly-Owned Property solar program that provides cash incentives to publicly-owned facilities that install non-residential solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

With the 30-percent federal Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit still in place through 2019 and other utility incentive programs in force, support for Minnesota residences and businesses to install their own solar energy system remains strong. Several electric utilities in Minnesota voluntarily offer incentives for customers who install solar energy systems. Check with your utility to see if it offers incentives for new solar energy systems. See the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency, which offers a comprehensive list of information on incentives and policies that support renewables and energy efficiency in the United States.

Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive Program is no more, but program payments continue

Legislation from the 2017 Minnesota legislative session repealed the Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive Program, meaning no further applications will be accepted for the program. Commerce continues to administer the annual performance-based incentive payments that are due to recipients who have approved applications and installed Made in Minnesota solar modules during the program's four years of operation.

The repealing legislation states: All Made in Minnesota projects that have approved applications must begin generating electricity no later than Oct. 31, 2018, to be eligible for incentive payments. Questions about the program (incentive payments, change of ownership, etc.) may be directed to the Solar Helpline at solar.help@state.mn.us and 651-539-1886 (Twin Cities metro area) or 800-657-3710 (Greater Minnesota).

COOK

Sleigh rides set for Saturday, Jan. 6

North Star Draft Horse Association fundraiser for Cook Food Shelf



COOK- Come join the Mike Hanson family and the North Star Draft Horse Association for an afternoon of old-fashioned fun, and help out the Cook Area Food Shelf at the same time. The event will be held on Saturday, Jan. 6 from 1-3:30 p.m. There will be a bonfire, hot

chocolate, and s'mores. There is a small hill for tobogganing, so bring a sled!

The event will be held at 2003 Hwy. 53 (two miles north of Cook). Watch for signs.

A donation of non-perishable items for the food shelf is appreci-

ated. The event will be postponed if temperatures are below zero degrees or if there are hazardous roads. Contact 218-780-2902 or Mike Hanson's facebook page for updates.

LAKE COUNTRY POWER

Operation Round Up® has now donated over \$2 million to area non-profits



Recipients of the most recent round of Operation Round Up® grants met at the LCP Mountain Iron service center earlier this month. submitted photo

REGIONAL- Lake Country Power is celebrating a milestone with its Operation Round Up® program this month. The cooperative's member-driven charitable giving program has surpassed \$2 million in contributions after its Trust Board approved more than \$46,000 in contributions to local community programs in December.

Since the program's inception in October 2004, \$2,026,915.10 has been distributed to hundreds of community-based projects and programs.

The success of Operation Round Up® is credited to the 69 percent of Lake Country Power members who participate in the program by lending a helping hand to the com-

munities and residents of northern Minnesota.

Operation Round Up® is a charitable program unique to electric co-ops, which is designed to provide financial assistance to worthwhile activities and community projects by "rounding up" members' electric bills to the nearest dollar. The average donation of each participating Lake Country Power member is less than \$6 annually.

"It's a joy to serve on the Operation Round Up® Trust Board, review the applications each quarter, and see what types of community programs are doing so much good for our local communities," said Yvette Schultenover, Operation Round Up Trust Board member. "It's great to know

how our members' pennies are being put to good use in so many different and unique ways."

Contributions are provided each quarter to community organizations. The cooperative's Trust Board reviewed and considered 45 grant applications and distributed funds to 39 projects and programs this past quarter.

All funds generated through Operation Round Up® are set aside in a trust fund. A voluntary Trust Board of nine co-op members administers the trust. Of the funds collected through the program, 100 percent is distributed to charitable organizations through an application and selection process.

"Everyone on the trust board takes their role very seriously, and it's an enjoyable, bonding experience to serve," said Marsha Doten, Operation Round Up® Trust Board member. "It's nice to help the programs and projects that really need the funds and are making a positive difference in our communities."

Interested members can opt into the Operation Round Up® program by

calling Lake Country Power at 800-421-9959 or using an online form at lakecountrypower.coop.

Most recent recipients in our area include: Lutheran Social Services of MN Senior Nutrition; Cherry High School Band & Speech/One Act; Story Portage; Veterans on the Lake Resort; Hope Lutheran Church; Earth Circle; Second Harvest North Central Food Bank; American Association of University Women; Boundary Waters Choral Festival 2018; Project READ; Voyageurs Area Council; ElderCircle Adult Day Service; ElderCircle Dementia Friends presentation; ElderCircle Guardianship Program; Ely Winter Festival; Fairview Range Medical Center; Mesabi Symphony Orchestra; Ely Folk School.

Applications are available online at www.lakecountrypower.coop. The next application deadline is Feb. 15.

Lake Country Power, www.lakecountrypower.coop, is a Touchstone Energy® cooperative serving parts of eight counties in northeastern Minnesota.

TOWER BINGO Monday, Feb. 5

TOWER- Senior Bingo will be held in Tower on Monday, Feb. 5 at the Tower Civic Center from 11:45 a.m. - 3 p.m. There is a \$10 charge for the bingo party, which includes lunch. All ages are welcome to attend this community event. Lunch is served starting at 11:45 a.m., and bingo begins at 12:45 p.m. Senior Bingo is organized by the Friends of the Vermilion Country Charter School. In case of inclement weather or school cancellation, bingo may be cancelled. Questions, call Jodi Summit at 218-753-2950.

Upcoming dates for 2017:
No bingo in January
 Monday, February 5
 Monday, March 5
 Monday, April 2
 Monday, May 7
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FOREST MANAGEMENT

Study weighs pros and cons of harvest levels

Research ordered by the governor to determine the merits of industry proposal to boost logging on state lands

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — A new DNR study, and the recommendations that come from it, could determine whether state forests are managed primarily for timber production, or for a combination of wood products and wildlife habitat. Should the state's forests be managed mostly for industry, with short rotations and a limited diversity of tree species? And, if so, what are consequences to recreation, scenic beauty, and wildlife? If the state's forests are managed primarily to enhance wildlife habitat, what are the consequences for timber production and jobs in the region's wood products industry?

These are some of the questions and potential tradeoffs examined in the new Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis, which the DNR released earlier this month. It doesn't provide definitive answers or recommendations on its own. Instead, it predicts the impacts of nearly 20 differing alternatives, ranging from plans that focus on enhancing wildlife habitat to others that focus on cutting as much timber as possible.

The DNR is supposed to use the data to develop a recommendation for the Legislature in March about whether the state can increase the timber harvest from current levels, and if so, by how much.

Officials from the wood products industry urged Gov. Mark Dayton and the DNR to increase the amount of timber sold from state lands in a bid to hold down stumpage prices. They've suggested the state can sustainably harvest one million cords of wood per year from state-managed forest lands, or about 25 percent more than the current annual harvest of about 800,000 cords. The governor directed the DNR to study that possibility and come back with findings. A 14-member stakeholders advisory group, convened by the DNR, will use the study, and public comments they receive



Above: A saw whet owl peers out of a nest cavity in an old aspen tree. Habitat for such species could be in short supply if the governor agrees to an industry request to boost timber harvests in the state.

Right: A mixed forest, like this, offers multiple benefits for recreation and wildlife.

until the end of the month to formulate the recommendations.

One of the stakeholders in that process says the modeling effort is better than he's seen in

“It's an attempt to show a different array of options.”

Don Arnosti

the past. “This is a next generation analysis compared to many of the forest modeling exercises I've been involved with in the past,” said Don Arnosti, conservation director with the Minnesota chapter of the Izaak Walton League. “It's an attempt to show a different array of options,” he said.

Those options range from a wildlife-friendly harvest level of about 650,000 cords per year to an intensive harvest plan that would generate about 1.1 million cords per year for 15-20 years before declining to about 900,000 cords annually. The short-term



spike in harvests would be possible, notes the analysis, due to what it describes as a “large supply of mature and older wood” on state lands. Some of that older forest was built up by design as part of the DNR's decision to manage for wildlife values as well as timber production. In other cases, the wood is inaccessible, which has made it difficult to market to loggers.

The consultants who developed the report, Portland, Ore.-based Mason, Bruce & Girard, assumed that loggers would continue to comply with site-level best management practices in their maximum harvest scenario, but said it did not allow for broader wildlife objectives, nor did it consider marketability factors, which could otherwise reduce the DNR's ability to increase harvest levels.

One of those marketability factors, notes Arnosti, is the increasing difficulty that many loggers face in accessing winter wood. He noted that the region is already feeling the effects of climate change, and that's reducing the period of time that loggers can traverse northern Minnesota's vast wetlands, particularly peat bogs. “If you're a logger in Koochiching County and 80 percent of your wood is winter wood, you may be in trouble,” said Arnosti. “The freeze-up

season is shortening.”

Arnosti said the study's failure to assess the implications of climate change represents its biggest shortcoming, because it's going to impact accessibility to so much of the northern Minnesota land base.

Impacts to wildlife

The prospect of an increase in harvest levels, particularly in the aspen breadbasket in Itasca, Koochiching, and St. Louis counties, is worrisome to more than environmentalists like Arnosti. While DNR supervisors are prohibiting lower level wildlife officials from commenting on the sustainability study, many have made their concerns about existing harvest levels, and a push by DNR foresters to shorten rotations for many tree species, public in the past. They argue that without older forests, which provide nesting cavities for species like fisher, or winter cover for game species like white-tail deer, wildlife in general will struggle to survive.

Tower Area Wildlife Manager Tom Rusch, earlier this year, cited intensive harvest activity in deer permit areas 119 and 108 as a primary factor behind the slow recovery of the deer herd in those areas. While deer generally benefit from increased browse availability in the imme-

diated aftermath of logging, Rusch said there's an extended period as new aspen grows back, where the sites offer little useful habitat for deer and make them more vulnerable to the effects of winter.

DNR research has also shown that species like fisher require large diameter trees, particularly aspen, for denning cavities. Wildlife managers note that shorter rotations mean trees, like aspen, will never get large enough in the future to develop such cavities. They also worry that stands managed on short rotations tend to lose diversity of understory trees, like balsam fir, which is an important tree for wildlife in the boreal forest.

Supporters of higher harvests note that the DNR analysis only considers state lands. And they argue that harvest levels are significantly less intense on many private lands, as well as on federal ownership, and that those lands can provide for wildlife habitat needs.

“Forest management is always about trade-offs,” said Arnosti. “If we have cornfields for forests, we could max out at 900 cords long-term,” he says. “That would come at the cost of old forest objectives, and forest habitat that comes with older forest. Some of us would be objecting very strongly to that.”

THE CHICKADEE CHECKOFF

Forty years, forty reasons, forty bucks

Minnesota's non-game wildlife program has been a boon to creatures great and small

by KRISTI COUGHLON
DNR Information Officer

Minnesotans are a generous lot. For the past 40 years, they've made it possible for the Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Program to help thousands of native species survive and thrive — including animals that are threatened, endangered and rare.

The program is now wrapping up its 40th anniversary with hopes that supporters will wrap up an end-of-year donation to put under the holiday tree in celebration of the many wildlife success stories it's helped create, like the comeback of bald eagles and trumpeter swans.

Success comes with a price tag, and rare species don't collect a paycheck.

They rely on our help. Unlike other DNR programs, the Nongame Wildlife Program doesn't get general tax money; it receives no fees from hunting or fishing licenses. It's funded almost entirely by voluntary donations made by people who want to ensure that Minnesota continues to have healthy natural systems that support a wide diversity of wildlife.

Many of those donations are made when Minnesotans file their state income taxes, designating an amount on the line with the loon to go to the Nongame Wildlife Program. But people can donate anytime, online or by mail. Donations fund critical habitat restoration work, research projects, surveys to assess the status



The return of trumpeter swans, like these on Lake Vermilion, are among the successes of the DNR's nongame wildlife program.

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Donations are tax deductible and matched dollar for dollar by the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) license plate fund.

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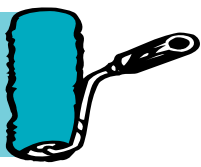
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