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# the TIMBERJAY

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COMMUNICATIONS

## Report: ‘Staggering deficiencies’

Minnesota Commerce Department issues scathing assessment of Frontier’s service

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— Frontier Communications has failed to provide adequate, reliable phone and Internet service to its Minnesota customers and should

be required to refund or credit customers for service outages and unauthorized charges.

The company also appears to have violated dozens of laws and rules and could be subject to hefty fines or even prosecution.

Those are among the find-



ings and recommendations in a scathing investigative report released by the Minnesota

Commerce Department on Jan. 4.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ordered the investigation last year following reporting by the *Timberjay*, which had revealed widespread problems with the

company’s service in northeastern Minnesota. As part of the investigation, the department and MPUC oversaw seven public hearings in September in regions of the state served by Frontier.

See...FRONTIER pg. 9

TOM RUKAVINA, 1950-2019

## He fought for the Iron Range

Legendary legislator passes away after cancer battle

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL - Longtime state legislator and one-time county commissioner, Tom Rukavina, died Monday following a months-long battle with leukemia. He was 68.

Rukavina had a storied career in Minnesota politics spanning more than three decades, serving 26 years in the state House along with a term as Fourth District Commissioner on the St. Louis County Board. He died on the very day that his county board successor, his longtime friend Paul McDonald, took the oath of office to replace him.

Rukavina, a populist DFLer, had a reputation as a fighter for average Minnesotans, most particularly for residents of his beloved

See...TOMMY pg. 12



**EDITORIAL**  
The Iron Range’s happy warrior will be sorely missed by all. **Page 4**



**Top: Tom Rukavina makes a point at a 2017 steelworkers rally in Virginia.**  
**Right: Tom rides shotgun with Mike Forsman in the 2016 Ely Fourth of July parade.**  
**Above: Tom asks questions at a 2018 St. Louis County Board meeting in Ely.**  
Timberjay file photos



ELY

## Expansion in health, wellness

Ely hospital looks for partners in \$24 million project

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital and the Ely Regional Community Complex formed a partnership at the beginning of the new year that could lead to the building of a 40,000 square-foot community facility comprised of wellness amenities and enhanced health programs and services.

EBCH Executive Director Michael Coyle told the *Timberjay* last week that the hospital signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ERCC to develop a community initiative that will strive to meet the needs of residents.

The partnership “perfectly aligns with the mission of our organizations and involves a true partnership with our community in meeting needs defined in our Community Health Needs Assessment, while providing additional resources and tools to encourage our community to live healthy lifestyles,” he said.

That mission appears to mesh well with the Ely Regional Community Complex, which is continuing to look for a home following the failure of the group and the

See...ELY pg. 10

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

## Waiting, unanswered questions as shutdown continues

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL — Come Monday, Sidra Starkovich may be on the lookout for a new source of income.

The Bois Forte grant manager is next in line to be laid off in a second phase of

cuts by the tribe if the federal government shutdown doesn’t end soon.

“I am worried financially,” Starkovich said. “Luckily I am in a two-income household, but I have always counted that my job is secure.”

Even so, she fears other families could face a greater impact

since both bread winners work for the tribe. Bois Forte staff are being furloughed in stages as the tribe grapples with the financial pressures caused by an interruption of crucial federal funding. It’s an example of how the impact of the federal government shutdown is reaching well beyond the 800,000 federal workers who

have been sidelined, or are being forced to work without pay, since President Trump refused to sign spending bills that would fund a long list of agencies. They include Customs and Border Patrol, the Internal Revenue Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Forest Service.

More impacts are likely on the way, as funding for programs like SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, is relying on fund balances to provide the food assistance that tens of millions of Americans rely on. President Trump is saying he might allow

See... CLOSED pg. 11



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# COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

## Old time dance at McKenzie's Wolf Lake Dance Hall on Saturday, Jan. 12

ELY- There will be an old time dance with live music on Saturday, Jan. 12 at McKenzie's Wolf Lake Dance Hall, 2140 Wolf Creek Pass, Ely. Potluck dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. and the dance with "Music of Sugar on the Roof" starts at 7 p.m.

Dust off your dancing shoes and bring a dish to share. Donations will be accepted at the door to cover the band's expenses.

## Explore costs and benefits of copper-nickel mining at Mesabi Unitarian on Sunday, Jan. 13

VIRGINIA- Timberjay Newspaper Publisher Marshall Helmerger will explore the costs and benefits to area economies from proposed copper-nickel mining development, focusing primarily on the Twin Metals project and its potential impact on the Ely area, on Jan. 13 at Mesabi Unitarian. Helmerger will discuss how the potentially risky copper-nickel mining could impact the natural amenity-based economy that has become established in the Ely area. "This is not a tourism versus mining debate as some like to suggest," said Helmerger. Instead, he will show the economic impact that new residents to the Ely area are having on the local economy, and how those benefits could be at risk as a result of copper-nickel mining. The presentation will also briefly discuss some economic considerations related to the PolyMet project.

The service will be on Sunday, Jan. 13 at 10:30 a.m. at Mesabi Unitarian Universalist Church. The church is handicap accessible and located at 230 7th St. S in Virginia.

## Dance benefit for Road Runners Coach Lori Sundbom, Sunday, Jan. 20

MT. IRON- Lori's family and the Road Runners Special Olympics coaches are hosting a benefit dance for Lori Sundbom to help cover medical expenses for treatment of her stage 4 breast cancer. The dance will be on Sunday, Jan. 20 at the Mt. Iron Community Center on Hwy. 169 in Mt. Iron from 4 to 7 p.m. There will be a free will donation for admission to the dance. Food will be available for an additional charge.

Lori has been a coach for the Road Runners for years. Thank you to Kevin Turner at TNT Entertainment for donating his time to DJ the music for the dance. Monetary donations can be sent to Lori's sister, Lynn Sundbom, 703 3rd St. S, Virginia MN 55792. Thank you for your support.

## True Stories from the Edge in Ely on Thursday, Jan. 17

ELY- Most people have a story to tell. Stories can entertain, teach, or reveal something surprising about someone's life. You can learn a lot by listening to other people's stories. You get a glimpse of what a "mile in their shoes" might feel like. Plus, stories can be fun to tell and hilarious to listen to!

We are hosting an open mic storytelling event in Ely called "True Stories from the Edge", from 6-8 p.m. at the Ely Senior Center (cookies and coffee provided) on Thursday, Jan. 17, Thursday, Feb. 21, and Thursday, March 21. The theme for Jan. 17 is "I Didn't See That Coming!". Drop your name in the hat, and if chosen, you can tell us a six-minute true story that happened to you. Please come to listen or tell your story. Email questions to elystorytelling@gmail.com.

## LAKE COUNTRY POWER



Operation Round Up® recipients are pictured receiving their program funding at Lake Country Power's service center in Mountain Iron. Front, left to right: Kristi Sopoci of Cook Library, Norma Thomas and Patty Carlson of Trinity Quilters, Katie Fredeen of the Hibbing Dylan Project, Bobbi Maish of the Operation Round Up Trust Board, Kristine Wagner of the Twelfth Step House, and Teresa Brecto of Salvation Army of Hibbing. Back, left to right: Mike Sterk of the Iron Range Historical Society, Larry Furlong of the Hibbing Dylan Project, Ann-Marie Vito of Summer Work Outreach Program, Robbie Peterson and Tom Martin from the Embarrass Fire Dept., Steve Burgess from the Breitung Fire Dept., and April Larson of the Hibbing Public Library. submitted

## Operation Round Up® gives more than \$52,800 to community programs

GRAND RAPIDS- Through the contributions of Lake Country Power's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently approved \$52,850 in assistance to local community programs during its quarterly meeting.

The cooperative's Trust Board reviewed and considered 60 grant applications and distributed funds to 51 projects and programs this past quarter. Since the program's inception in October 2004, more than \$2.2 million has been distributed to community-based projects and programs.

Recent recipients include Bi-County Community Action Program, Inc., Hope Lutheran Church Christmas food boxes, Lutheran

Social Service of MN/Sr. nutrition, Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, Angel Foundation emergency financial assistance, Trinity Lutheran Quilters, Bethel-Trinity Lutheran Church, Zion Love Project Quilts, Patchwork Pals Plus, Ruby's Pantry, Iron Range Historical Society, Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Area Events, Grand Lake Volunteer Fire Department, ElderCircle Adult Day Stay, Breitung Township, Voyageurs Area Council, Embarrass Region Volunteer Fire Department, Home Visitor Program, Big Sandy Area Lakes Watershed Management Project, Summer Work Outreach Project, Jamie Tennison Compass Fund, Make it Monday's after-school program, True Friends camp scholar-

ships for disabled, King Elementary School, Droba Warriors Robotics, Southwest Elementary field trip, Cook Public Library, Project READ Program, Story Portage books for Babbitt, and Mesabi Symphony Orchestra.

More than 71 percent of Lake Country Power members participate in the program through voluntary contributions. 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.

Applications are available online at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop). The next application deadline is Friday, Feb. 15.

## Two drown on White Iron Lake

REGIONAL— Rescuers recovered the bodies of two apparent drowning victims in late December, both pulled from White Iron Lake after their snowmobile apparently broke through the ice around Dec. 21.

Members of the St. Louis County Rescue Squad located Debbie Sebarighi, 60, of Cloquet, at about 11:30 p.m. on Dec. 24, near Beargrease Island, located where Birch Lake flows into White Iron Lake. The body of Kenneth Windenauer, 60, also of Cloquet, was located nearby two

days later.

According to law enforcement officials, it appears that the snowmobile the two people had been riding broke through thin ice as they neared Beargrease Island. Police said they are not clear on the details of the incident since neither person was immediately reported missing. Windenauer was reported missing after he did not show up for work in Cloquet on Dec. 24.

According to first responders, Windenauer's vehicle, along with a vehicle belonging to Sebarighi, was

parked at Windenauer's cabin on Spring Ridge Road in Babbitt. They were last seen at Tank's Bar on the night of Dec. 21.

Assisting in the search were St. Louis County Rescue Squad, Morse-Fall Lake, Babbitt Fire Department, Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Louis County Sheriff, St. Louis County 911 dispatch, Carlton County and St. Louis County Public Works.

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RETAIL CLOSURE

# Goodwill to shutter Ely store and donation center

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY — The Goodwill store in Ely is slated to close permanently on Saturday, Jan. 19. The news of the closure of the store and the related donation center, located at 40 N 2nd Ave. East came as a blow to Ely area residents who used the store to access affordable clothing and household items.

“I am shocked and disappointed,” said Frana Cherico, a regular customer of the store. “The store has a cadre of loyal customers who have appreciated having affordable, quality clothing options here at the end of the road.”

The announcement comes less than two weeks after another Goodwill store closed in Cloquet, all part of a cost-cutting effort according to Scott Vezina, a communications manager for Goodwill Industries in Duluth. “A lot goes into this kind of decision, including donations, revenue and long-term planning,” he said when reached by

telephone on Friday. President and CEO, Marcy Vogt, said Goodwill’s board of directors has concluded that the decision “is a necessary step in becoming a more efficient organization.”

Some in Ely aren’t content to simply accept the decision. Three Ely residents, Pat Bieber, Marlene Benson and Arlene Hanson, wrote an email to Ely Economic Development Authority President Heidi Omerza and implored the governmental body to do all they can to keep the store open. “It is a wonderful asset to the people here. It is one of the busiest stores in town. It fills a need that will be unmet with its closure,” Bieber wrote. “People come from the surrounding communities to shop there.”

Members of EEDA discussed the planned closure at a meeting on Tuesday, but weren’t sure what the authority could do about it. “I don’t know what we can do other than contact

(them),” said Omerza. “You never like to see businesses leave Ely, obviously.”

Mayor Chuck Novak said the closure was based on a business decision by the organization. “How is it that they get everything donated for free and are a for-profit (business) and can’t make it?” he asked. “That is their business model. We can’t strong-arm them. It is a private enterprise and they can make their own decisions. We are aware of this and are concerned about it.”

Approximately six employees will be impacted by the store’s closure and Goodwill officials indicate they are working to identify how to support everyone’s transition needs. “Our top priority is the people we employ and serve and we will make every effort to ensure as easy a transition as possible. We will continue to fulfill our mission of providing employment and employment services to people with disabilities or other barriers,



The Goodwill Store on Sheridan Street in downtown Ely is slated to close its doors next Saturday, Jan. 19.

photo by K. Vandervort

ers, while taking the necessary steps to make our organization stronger,” Vogt said.

“We would like to sincerely thank the local community for their support of the Ely store over the past five years, and invite them to shop and donate at any of our other 13 retail stores and donation centers in the Northland,” Vogt continued. “Although there are no immediate plans to open another Goodwill store in the Ely area,

Goodwill will continue to explore the possibility of this in the future” she said.

The Ely store will hold a 50-percent-off storewide sale through Jan. 19. Donations will also be accepted through that date, according to Vezina.

Goodwill Industries serves 13 cities and 29 counties throughout the greater Minnesota and Wisconsin area. Goodwill’s retail store in Virginia is the next closest location to Ely.

CITY OF TOWER

# Harbor town home deal finally gets the green light

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

TOWER — After months of twists and turns, the city council here quietly gave its unanimous blessing to a new development agreement that should clear the way for construction of town homes at the city’s harbor later this year. Under the deal, the city agrees to transfer land to the developers for \$1 and also agrees to provide an unspecified level of funding for the installation of public infrastructure for the project.

The agreement sets an April 1, 2019, deadline for the developers to provide a notice of intent to proceed with the project, with construction set to get underway by July 1.

The latest council action reflects a surprising turnaround from council discussions in late November and December, when it appeared that some city officials were intent on terminating the town home project and pursuing a new development proposal. A large turnout of city residents at the council’s Dec. 19 special

meeting, who urged the council to give the town home project a chance, seemed to temper those efforts.

A tax abatement plan that had been the subject of dispute between the city and the developers has become less contentious, given increased optimism that additional public funding might be available for the public infrastructure. The city had originally agreed to provide full funding for streets and related utilities, but later reneged on that commitment and pressed the developers

to find the resources to install the infrastructure, with repayment through tax abatement.

According to Jeremy Schoenfelder, the town home project’s general manager, he will be working with the city to identify other funding sources for the public infrastructure. He said the timeline in the development agreement is “certainly the goal,” although he said Monday that he has yet to receive the development agreement signed by city officials and still needs to verify that the recently-approved

plat has been filed with St. Louis County. “So, there will be multiple efforts going on to achieve the goal,” he said.

After two years of delays on the project, the next potential roadblock could be a weakening economy. Schoenfelder acknowledges that it’s a risk, but said he believes the uniqueness of the project will continue to make it attractive to potential buyers. “Our development allows for a true “lock and leave”

See COUNCIL...pg. 5

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\*See store for details

January 2019

# MINE READER



www.twin-metals.com

## ACT NOW: SUBMIT COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF TWIN METALS



The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is now conducting a 30-day public input period through January 22, 2019 to solicit comments on the completed environmental assessment for the renewal of Twin Metals Minnesota federal mineral leases.

These mineral leases are the foundation of Twin Metals underground copper-nickel mining project and their renewal is critical to the continued design and submittal of a formal mine project proposal to state and federal agencies.

Twin Metals has held these leases in good standing for more than 50 years, and has invested more than \$400 million in exploration and design of a formal mining proposal.

We need supporters like you to submit a comment to the BLM by January 22.

Voice your support for the project and mining in northeast Minnesota by submitting a comment online or via mail to:

MN Hardrock Lease Renewal EA Project Manager  
Northeastern States District Office  
626 E. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 200  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

To submit your comment online and view some suggested points to include in your comment, please visit [www.twin-metals.com](http://www.twin-metals.com).

Submit a comment today and thank you for the continued support!

For more information on Twin Metals Minnesota, visit [www.Twin-Metals.com](http://www.Twin-Metals.com).



e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

# OPINION

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

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

## Editorial

### Tommy Rukavina

The Iron Range’s happy warrior  
will be sorely missed by all

This week’s untimely passing of longtime state legislator Tom Rukavina is a huge loss to both his family and to the Iron Range he loved and fought for throughout his political career. Known affectionately as “Tommy” to his friends and constituents alike, he was a quintessential Ranger, who never backed down from a political fight, whether at the Legislature or, more recently, during his service on the St. Louis County Board.

Rukavina had a well-deserved reputation for pugnacity, but frequently used his remarkable wit and personal charm to win over those on the other side. A proud and progressive DFLer, Rukavina stood up for the little guy—the working stiffs, the seniors, and the students, trying to make life a little easier. He was a happy warrior, who relished his political battles with GOP opponents in St. Paul, whom he saw as too willing to represent the interests of the One Percent. Yet he was content to finish the day sharing Grain Belts with the very legislators he had denounced hours earlier.

In that sense, Rukavina was an old school politician, who recognized that political differences didn’t have to become personal. He recognized that government and politics can greatly improve the lives of people—all people—and that was a mission to which he devoted himself until the very end. It was fitting that one of his last political statements was in a letter to the editor of this newspaper, in which he extolled the values of recent immigrants to this country who comprised much of the workforce at the Twin Cities hospital where he was undergoing treatment for a rare form of leukemia.

Rukavina, however, was not just a political leader on the Range. He was an astute and accomplished student of all things Iron Range, who knew the history and the interpersonal connections between the families and ethnic groups that have made this region home for the past four generations. It seemed he could share a few words in just about every language from every group that ever settled in the region and, at times, it seemed he belonged to them all. No politician could work an Iron Range gathering like Tom Rukavina, who could spend hours meandering his way through a crowd, greeting nearly everyone by name. With a handshake here, a touch on a shoulder there, and always remembering to inquire about a spouse, a son or granddaughter, he had a true gift for connection with the people of this region. It was no wonder he regularly received 75 percent or more of the vote during his 26 years representing the East Range in the Minnesota House. Without a doubt there have been more than a few glasses lifted high across the Iron Range this week to remember the little guy with the big heart who fought the good fight for the people he loved.

Sadly, his cancer diagnosis, which Rukavina reluctantly revealed in April, was one fight that Tommy was fated to lose. Nonetheless, he leaves a legacy that will be remembered on the Iron Range for many years to come.

Rest in peace, Tommy.

## National Parks of the Shutdown



## Letters from Readers

### No tweets for you

Little Red Riding Hood went to the wood. Something was wrong, she stopped and she stood. Old Crow said, “We have no more chirps and no cheeps, cuz Trump came before you and stoled all the TWEETS.”

Janet Y. Schultz  
Sturgeon Twp

### Shocked by closing of Ely’s Goodwill store

I am shocked and disappointed at the decision by Goodwill Industries to close their relatively new store in Ely. The store has a cadre of loyal customers who have appreciated having affordable, quality clothing options here at the end of the road. Its closure will make it difficult for many residents of Ely to get access to this kind of clothing, as well as household items, in the future.

I would encourage everyone who relied on the Goodwill store to contact William Sawyer, Board President, Goodwill Industries, 700 Garfield Ave., Duluth, MN 55802. Please send a letter today. Time is critical if we have any hope of convincing Goodwill to reconsider their decision.

Frana Cherico  
Ely

### We have much to lose from new mining

I was a union uranium miner in the Gas Hills of Wyoming in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Lucky Mac Mine first, then Union Carbide. Hard-rock mining, for sure. Explosives required to break the rock. I was in the engineering department so I got to help set the charges, divert traffic, etc. It was great fun for a 26-year-old.

I was proud of both companies’ commitment to the reclamation plans and maximum contaminant levels included as part of their permitting process . . . and the fact that they had put up a BOND to insure that the mines WOULD be reclaimed,

no matter what. I think the bond was around \$1 million.

It started well. The sight of mining pits being filled with stockpiled dirt and topsoil, and then seeded with grass, was wonderful. My manager, Tim Scott, was a great boss. He wore an earring and played Stairway to Heaven in his office on weekends.

Eventually, however, and within a couple of years, we saw the quality of ore diminish. At about the same time, the mine was “sold.” We were all again laid off, this time for good. The new owner, already stuck with processed U238 it couldn’t sell, walked away from its bond and abandoned all reclamation efforts. Worse, it stopped monitoring the condition of its tailings ponds. Predictably, one or more ponds failed. The new owners petitioned the EPA for an increase in its “maximum contaminant levels,” or MCLs. Again, and then again. Each of these petitions was approved in turn.

If you do a Google Earth search for Gas Hills, Wyoming now, you’ll eventually come across some very large rectangles that shield the viewers’ eyes from these abandoned pits with huge, opaque rectangles. No idea who was behind these censored photos, but those abandoned pits are as real as the contamination they continue to create every day. Not surprisingly, my opinion of these types of operations was completely and forever changed. And given their record, I’m more than a little skeptical of Antofagasta’s latest claim - “It’ll be different THIS time - we promise!” I no longer believe that these newest claims have any more substance than a fart in a whirlwind. I’m angry.

How can you love and enjoy the beauty of this great land WITHOUT having concerns for its future? If the mining plans are successful, we’ll lose SO much of the beauty that this land currently offers.

Duane Behrens  
Ely

### Trump’s stereotyping an explosive mix

No Irish Need Apply, Yellow Peril, and Red Scare identify anti-immigrant vitriol in the American story. Unwanted newcomers were met with a barrage of hostile epithets to put them in their place. The welcoming committee conveniently forgot their own immigrant origins. On racial supremacy by whites, LBJ observed that, “Hell, give him somebody to look down on and he’ll empty his pockets for you.”

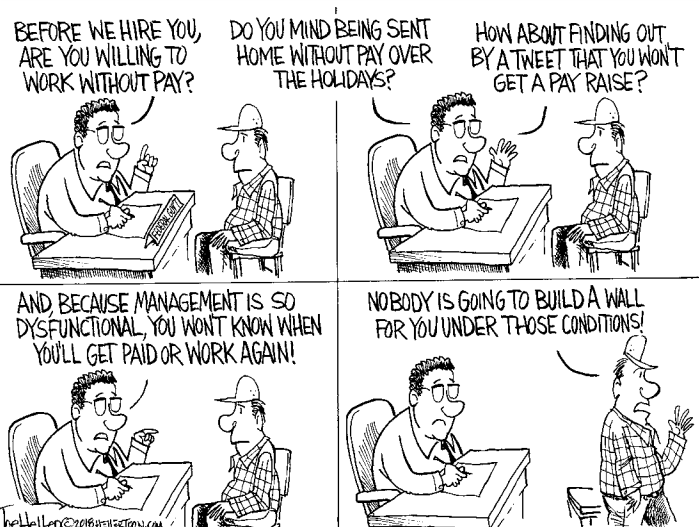
Unscrupulous politicians pander to fear and frustration of constituents who cannot realize their dreams and misdirect their attention away from real and complex causes to easy and vulnerable targets. Social, political and economic inequality is the real source of their discontent, but displacement gives them someone else to hate and blame.

Smearing Mexicans with ugly epithets creates a negative stereotype that demonizes brown people as all alike, without seeing them as individuals. These preconceived notions dehumanize the “other” to set the stage for intolerance. A divided people empowers the manipulator, not the manipulated. The former gains, the latter loses!

Labels that falsely tag people as rapists, murderers and drug traffickers pigeonhole them as unwanted and valueless refuse. Hostility wrapped in twisted thoughts inside of bigoted and dangerous belief is an explosive mixture.

Scapegoating blames others for personal failures. History stands as witness to extreme scapegoating—witches burned at the stake, religious infidels tortured, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Anti-immigrant attacks by Trump sow seeds for a deadly harvest. Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan poet, reminds us: “History never really says goodbye; history says see you later.”

Harold Honkola  
Tower



## We can all play a part in making America hopeful again

I have been reading and thinking a lot about our emotional balance: happiness, hopefulness, satisfaction, anger, apathy, and depression. Why is it that we are more optimistic at times and why is it that some people are just always more optimistic? There has been quite a bit written about the



BETTY  
FIRTH

topic of optimism, the optimism bias and how we, as human beings, are wired for optimism to keep our species going. How this plays out is that we often remember past events as being more positive than they were. We think more highly of ourselves and our situations than reality might bear

out, and we are hopeful that our personal futures are going to be even better. Our imaginations play an important role here, even creatively reconstructing past memories to better fit our rosy views.

In order to be able to picture a future for our progeny, make plans, or be inclined to save resources for leaner times or future generations, we have an ability to travel through space and time mentally, with the imaginative powers to see ourselves in the past or the future.

The Iroquois understood that capacity and comprehended that our actions today will have far-reaching effects. They believed that we should make decisions based on maintaining a sustainable world seven generations in the future.

In 2008, a wave of optimism swept our country with 80 percent of Americans feeling optimistic about the next four years, according to Tali Sharot in her book, The Optimism Bias; A Tour of the Irrationally Positive Brain. Not only that,

but that wave of optimism was felt around the world. Was this due to booming economies, extraordinary scientific discoveries promising relief from chronic diseases, or a breakout of peace? Quite the opposite. We were in a deep global recession with the U.S. facing one of the worst periods in its economic history, second only to the Great Depression of the early 1930s. The war on terror was in high gear and the war in Iraq in its fifth

See **HOPEFUL ...pg. 5**



# Letters from Readers

## Thanks for the help out on the trail

A thank you by a volunteer Vermilion Penguin Snowmobile Club trail groomer operator. On Thursday, Jan. 3 in the afternoon, the Bear Cat snowmobile and trail drag got stuck on the side of the trail. Along came Rod Lundstrom and his daughter Kendra who were a great help getting the equipment upright and unstuck. Thanks Rod and Kendra for your help.

**Don Johnson**  
**Lake Vermilion, Tower**

## More on Lake Country Power's improvements

With a new year upon us, we know it's important to keep looking forward and meet the needs of the community of co-op members we serve. At Lake Country Power, investing in infrastructure, service, and community are some of those

ways.

We appreciate the *Timberjay's* interest in those topics as covered in a Thursday, Dec. 20 article. And we appreciate a brief clarification in the Dec. 27 edition. That said, it's also important that we provide additional perspective on items that may have caused confusion in the story.

We have two major projects underway. But the costs and benefits of the investments cited in the article will be spread over the course of many years, not just 2019. As capital investments, much of the work will be done in the near-term, but the projects will provide service and reliability benefits to co-op members for many years to come.

One of the initiatives involves the installation of nearly 70,000 new automated meters. The new technology will provide many advantages to members compared to the current metering system.

The new meters will allow

co-op members to monitor hourly electric usage and account information. The meters will improve the number of meters that communicate with the co-op and read on a regular basis. The meters will have outage detection capabilities, which will improve outage response for co-op members.

As noted in the Dec. 20 story, construction is also underway on a new headquarters building in Cohasset. The new building will replace a time-worn and overcrowded 50-year-old building in Grand Rapids that needs major repairs.

The new location will also provide us with much safer access to U.S. Hwy. 2, a major concern at our present site. The new building will be designed to meet the needs of tomorrow – and get more trucks and equipment under cover – protecting important material and equipment investments from the harsh rays of the sun, as well as ice and snow.

Hawk Construction, a northern Minnesota contractor, is leading construction of the new service center. We expect construction will be complete on the \$11.2 million project in late 2019.

We're also moving forward with other important service, reliability and infrastructure investments, which are also part of the \$25 million figure cited in the Dec. 20 article.

We're moving forward with these important plans and investments, but we don't anticipate a rate change in 2019. It's been a few years since we've made changes to rates. It doesn't mean severe weather or unplanned circumstances can't change that thinking, but thanks to wise budget management, a strong year for our power supplier in 2018 and a revenue deferral plan approved by our lender, we expect to meet our financial commitments in 2019.

As we settle into a new year, it all adds up to good news – any

day of the year.

**Greg Randa**  
**General Manager**  
**Lake Country Power**

## Good luck to the Iron Range

I hope the Iron Range, the Steelworkers Union and all Iron Range businesses who were looking forward to a thriving mining community are happy they voted for Mr. Walz for Governor. He just appointed Sara Strommen as the DNR Commissioner. She's an ex-Policy Director of the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. I'm sure she will be MORE THAN FAIR AND SMART when it comes to making any decisions on permits for mining or rules and regulations. Good Luck, Iron Rangers.

**Sheila Ballavance**  
**Duluth**

## MINING

# New Minntac permit challenged in court

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Minntac's newly-issued water discharge permit for its 8,700-acre tailings basin north of Virginia, is being challenged in court as a violation of state and federal law. Duluth-based Water Legacy recently filed an appeal of the new permit, which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency issued in November 2018.

Water Legacy legal counsel Paula Maccabee said the new permit fails to comply with state and federal water quality standards for sulfate, specific conductance, bicarbonates, and hardness. The massive tailings basin continues to discharge large volumes of polluted water through seepage and/or direct discharge into both the Dark and Sand rivers. The Sand River is a tributary of the Pike River, which flows into Lake Vermilion. The basin also contaminates groundwater in and

around the mine site as well as nearby wetlands through dozens of seepages located along the basin's perimeter.

Unpolluted waters in the region typically have sulfate levels below 10 milligrams per liter. Studies have consistently shown that sulfate levels above 10 mg/l can diminish the growth of wild rice. Tribal governments and environmentalists have cited recent declines in wild rice beds in waters downstream from the Minntac tailings basin, particularly in Sandy and Little Sandy lakes, as evidence of the environmental harm the basin is creating.

Water Legacy is raising several issues in its appeal, including whether the MPCA complied with federal law when it declined to enforce the state's wild rice standard on Minntac's discharges. The appeal also questions whether the 2015 state law that prevents enforcement of the wild rice standard indefinitely is, itself, a violation of federal law. Water

Legacy is also challenging the MPCA's determination that the Minntac tailings basin does not qualify as a "point source" of pollution, as well as the agency's decision not to enforce water quality standards for the company's various pollution discharges.

Under the new permit, the company would be required to slowly improve the water quality within the basin. In particular, the permit requires the company to reduce the sulfate levels in the tailings basin from current concentrations of approximately 1,000 milligrams per liter, to 800 mg/l within five years and 357 mg/l within ten years.

The company would also be required to reduce sulfate pollution in groundwater to 250 mg/l by the end of 2025.

The MPCA and the company have previously reached agreements to reduce sulfate levels in the tailings basin, but the company has repeatedly reneged on those

commitments. Previous attempts by the MPCA to control discharges of polluted water from the tailings basin have run into political opposition in the Minnesota Legislature, particularly from Iron Range legislators.

MPCA spokesperson Dave Verhasselt indicated that the agency is committed to enforcing applicable standards. "U.S. Steel [Minntac] will be held accountable to meet the terms and conditions set out in the permit, including the actions and timelines in the compliance schedule," said Verhasselt. "The current permit, with identified timelines and targets, is more readily enforceable than the previous permit, which lacked such specific requirements."

The new five-year permit, which took effect Dec. 1, replaces a permit that the MPCA had originally issued in 1987 and that had expired in 1992.

## ArcelorMittal to manage Hibb-Tac

REGIONAL — ArcelorMittal USA has agreed to assume the role of managing partner for Hibbing Taconite, effective in August. Ownership of the 8-million-ton capacity iron ore property remains unchanged, including ArcelorMittal's majority ownership stake. There are no anticipated changes to production volumes or operating plans.

"When Cliffs announced it would tender its resignation as managing partner, we knew that assuming oversight for the operation was the right thing for our business, the Hibbing workers and the Iron Range community," said John Brett, president and CEO, ArcelorMittal USA, who will have functional oversight for the Hibbing operation. "ArcelorMittal is responsible for a significant portfolio of raw material and mining assets throughout the world, producing more than 62 million tons of iron ore last year. This includes our Minorca Mine operation located just 30 minutes northeast of the Hibbing property."

## HOPEFUL...Continued from page 4

year. Sharot contends that during hard times people rely on optimism the most. It was the election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States and his promise of change that triggered hopefulness. In his inauguration address he acknowledged the challenges but added: "I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that... America can change. What we have already achieved gives us hope for what we can and must achieve tomorrow." Listeners felt inspired and hopeful, a reaction called "elevation." Psychologist Jonathan Haidt at the University of Virginia, suggests that such events stimulate the vagus nerve, which triggers the release of the hormone oxytocin, causing a sense of elevation, erasing cynicism and generating hope. AKA "the love molecule," oxytocin can reduce uncertainty and cynicism while increasing trust.

What was unusual after Obama's election was the sense of optimism about the world in general. Typically, people will feel more optimistic their own futures (private optimism) while holding negative expectations about the future of their country (public despair). But in 2008, 71 percent of people polled believe the economy would get better in the coming year and 75 percent forecast positive changes in international relations, a level of optimism rarely observed even in stable times.

We tend to feel more optimistic about things we feel we can control, even if that feeling is an illusion. For example, even if we live in a high crime area, we believe we will have less risk than others because we'll be more careful. We don't carry the same illusion about having any control over other people's behavior.

Sharot says our feel-

ings of satisfaction often depend on the power of relativity: how are we doing relative to others? When we believe we are doing better than people we know or the general population, we can perceive ourselves as fortunate or even privileged and therefore hold an optimistic bias about our personal futures and a pessimistic bias about everyone else's. A friend of mine once said that she could be happy as long as she knew that there was someone else that was more miserable. So people bemoan the health care system in their country but think their local providers are great. They disparage the condition of education nationally but consider their local schools excellent. When surveyed about what they thought would make them happy, people most frequently named the following five factors, listed in order of importance:

1. More time with

family

2. Earning double what I do now

3. Better health

4. More time with friends

5. More traveling

Answers varied depending on age and other differences, but surprisingly, some key conditions are not on that list. Sharot reports that according to "The World in 2005: The Economist Intelligence Unit's Quality-of-Life Index," political stability is one of the nine strongest indicators of a nation's well-being, along with material well-being, health, family life, community life, climate and geography, job security, political freedom (civil liberties) and gender equality.

The respondents were asked about life satisfaction rather than about happiness.

I wouldn't have thought most Americans would consider issues of political stability and

freedom as key to their personal happiness, but apparently the current state of affairs in our country is having a deleterious effect on many. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced that there were more deaths in 2017 than in any of the last 100 years with a resulting decline in U.S. life expectancy, particularly because of the number of deaths of younger people. The suicide rate, with 47,000 deaths, is the highest in 50 years, and over 70,000 people died of a drug overdose. Dr. William Dietz, a disease prevention expert at George Washington University, sees a sense of hopelessness as an underlying issue. "Financial struggles, a widening income gap, and divisive politics are all casting a pall over many Americans. I really do believe that people are increasingly hopeless, and that leads to drug use and potentially to suicide."

Perhaps this casts

a different light on the importance of taking political action and reaching out to others. If the state of the nation angers or saddens you, taking some action might lift you up with a sense of purpose and a dose of hopefulness. Your actions might help your own frame of mind as well as others.

If oxytocin motivates us to care about others and work together for a common purpose, are there ways we can increase our levels of oxytocin, this hormone of well-being? Paul Zak, Claremont Graduate University professor, answers "yes," that oxytocin can be stimulated by doing such things as "listening intently with your eyes, giving a gift, sharing a meal, and meditating while focusing on others." So go meditate or spread the word about a political candidate stumping for change. You just might help make America hopeful again.

## COUNCIL...Continued from page 3

option with direct lake access as well as access to the city's restaurants, shops and services. This gives us some insulation from the overall economy."

In other business, the council approved amendments to an ambulance purchase agreement to include items that Ambulance Director Steve Altenburg said he had overlooked

in generating the original specifications. The over-looked items included an inverter, to convert the engine's 12-volt DC power to standard 120 AC power, a drawer for a work station and dividers between compartments. Altenburg also asked to include several safety features, including a 360-degree camera and a "howler" siren that is a

lower frequency, to be more easily "felt" by drivers than a traditional siren.

The additions will increase the price of the new ambulance from the original bid of \$243,994 to \$249,788.

In other action, the council extended a listing agreement for city lands with Janisch Realty for one more year.



## OPEN HOUSE!

Sunday, January 27  
11 AM to 2 PM

Be our guests for lunch and tour the Inn featuring our NEW Projects/Classroom.

**\*\* Drawings for FREE NIGHT STAYS! \*\***

218-753-2333 • 30 Center St., Soudan • [www.vermilionparkinn.com](http://www.vermilionparkinn.com)





TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



This year's Santa's Workshop was another success. Thanks to donations from school staff and community members, every student was able to shop for presents for their family members. Then volunteers including Casey Skala (above) and Cindy Myre (below left) helped the children write cards and wrap each gift in style. photos by J. Summit



Tower-Soudan Athletic Association to hold annual meeting on Jan. 31

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Athletic Association will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, Jan. 31, following the end of the Vermilion Country School Board meeting at approximately 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Vermilion Country School.

TSAA is a local booster club that raises money at its annual fall auction to fund athletics and activities at the Vermilion Country School, summer baseball programs, and special elementary athlet-

ic opportunities at Tower-Soudan Elementary. In 2018, the group donated about \$3,500 for youth activities, including Tower-Soudan Little League (\$650) and Babe Ruth (\$650); community programs at VCS, including the Lake Superior Zoomobile visit and community open house; sponsored the VCS running club; sponsored the VCS yearbook; and paid the entry fees for the TS Elementary students who participated in the Ely Marathon (\$360). Funds available for dona-



TSAA funds were used for the Vermilion Country School community open house last August. Community members and students got to visit with sled dogs (above) and critters from the Duluth Zoo (at left). file photos



tion vary due to the success of the annual auction. This year's auction raised almost \$1,000 more than previous years, so the group will have additional funds available.

The 2018 officers were

Marshall Helmberger, president; Joan Dostert, vice-president; and Jodi Summit, treasurer. The 2019 officers will be elected at the annual meeting. Anyone wishing to learn more about the group, or to request

funding, can contact Jodi Summit at [vcs.charter@gmail.com](mailto:vcs.charter@gmail.com).

**Cook VFW**  
Open Daily at Noon  
**CLOSED on TUESDAYS**

**Happy Hour**  
Daily 4-6 p.m.  
**All Beer & Drinks**  
Bar Menu & Pizza Available

**Event Rentals**  
**Welcome**  
**218-780-6709**

**Pull-Tabs Sold Daily**  
Lic. 00390

**Sunday FREE Pool**

**Thursday Bingo**  
Early Bird 6 p.m.  
Progressive Prizes

**Friday 4:30-7 p.m.**  
Hamburger Special

**Take-Out 666-0500**

Friends of Vermilion Country School holds annual meeting on Jan. 31; group hosts monthly senior bingo

TOWER- Friends of Vermilion Country School will hold their annual meeting on Thursday, Jan. 31, at the Vermilion Country School, at approximately 6:15 p.m. The group is a booster club for the school, and all money raised goes to support school activities and other needs that are not funded through the regular budget.

The group sponsors Senior Bingo, held at the Tower Civic Center on the first Monday of each month from February through December. This year, bingo raised, on average, \$360 per month. Students from VCS volunteer each month at bingo, helping run the event. The group also sponsors the Fourth of July 10K run/walk, and also writes grants to support school activities and community events. In addition, Friends sponsors the annual December Craft Show at the Tower Civic Center.

Friends also works with the school's student council, helping

to support student fundraisers and activities such as dances. School activities supported in 2018 included paying fees for participation in the ice sculpture contest at the Ely Winter Festival, supplies for various student community service projects, Minnesota State High School League fees, a trip to the Duluth Aquarium, honey beehive project supplies and live bees, graduation expenses, Boundary Waters canoe trip food, paintball trip, school supplies and prizes for open house, young adult novels for reading groups, field trip transportation expenses, math classroom smartboard, and help with the school's marketing efforts to attract new students.

The 2018 officers were Muriel Scott, president; and Jodi Summit, treasurer. New officers will be elected at the annual meeting.

Friends would like to send special thanks to its regular adult bingo volunteer crew of Muriel



VCS students volunteer at senior bingo each month.

Scott, Joan Dostert, Jodi Summit, and Sheldon Majerle.







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 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.

In Brief

**Tuesday Group Schedule**  
ELY - The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesday at the Grand Ely Lodge.  
**Jan. 15-**Jon Gilbert - Director of Biological Sciences at the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, "Six Essential Elements in Working with Indian Tribes"  
**Jan. 22-**Sherry Abts - Sharing with Sherry/Loon Stories  
**PEO will meet on Jan. 17**  
ELY - PEO Chapter FD will be meeting on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, E Harvey Street. Visitors from other PEO Chapters are also welcome.  
If anyone has any questions, please call B. J. Kobierski, 365-4475.

**Breathing Out**  
by Cecilia Rolando © 2019

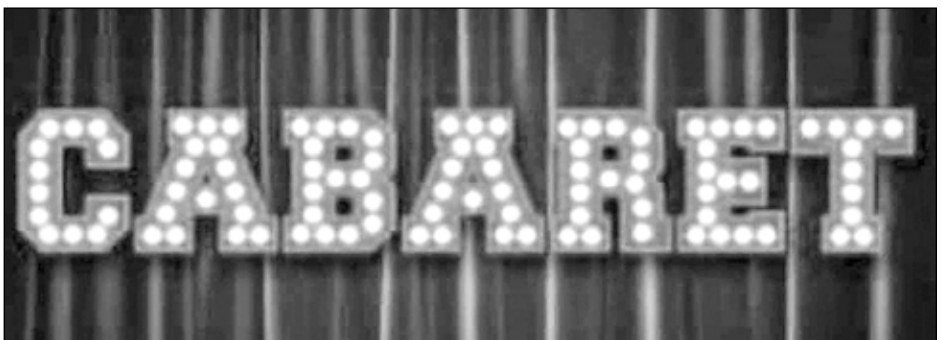


a fresh new year looms possibilities ahead  
what lies before us

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

NLAA holds 'Cabaret' auditions

ELY – Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA) will hold auditions for the Ely Community Spring Musical, "Cabaret," Jan. 20-22, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Vermilion Community College Theater.  
Roles for characters, ages 16-70-plus, are available. Come prepared to dance, sing and read from the script. No prepared monologue or song selection is necessary. Rehearsals will be held Sunday to Thursday evenings.  
Performances are scheduled for March 28-31 and April 2, 4-6.  
Cabaret takes place from 1929-1930, a time when Berlin, in the midst of a post-World War I economic depression, is transitioning from an underground, avant-garde cultural epicenter to the beginnings of Hitler's



totalitarian regime and the rise of the Nazi Party.  
Into this world enters Clifford Bradshaw, a struggling American writer looking for inspiration for his next novel. On his first night in Berlin, Cliff wanders into the Kit Kat Klub, a seedy nightclub overseen by the strange, omniscient and gender-bending Master of Ceremonies, "the Emcee."  
Here, Cliff meets Sally Bowles, a vivacious, talented cabaret performer, and an utterly lost soul. Sally and Cliff begin a

relationship, which blossoms unexpectedly into a dream-like romance. As time passes, however, the situation in Berlin changes from exciting and vital to ominous and violent; Ernst, Cliff's first German friend, turns out to be an up-and-coming member of the Nazi Party, and Herr Schultz, a fellow boarder at Fraulein Schneider's guest house (and Schneider's fiancée), is the victim of an Anti-Semitic hate crime.  
When he finds out that Sally is pregnant, Cliff decides that they must

leave for America at once before things get any worse. Sally, afraid, confused, and unsure that she'll ever really be able to trade the sexy, illicit cabaret lifestyle for motherhood, tells Cliff that he must leave without her.  
With a distinctly Brechtian dose of provocation and a score featuring songs that have become classics of the American Musical Theater, Cabaret is a fierce, meaty musical that pushes the boundaries of the form and literally holds the mirror up to nature.

Van and the Free Candies debut CD



ELY – Van and the Free Candies have been playing their own eclectic style of bluegrass music around the Iron Range since 2013 and recently produced their first self-titled CD.  
They held a CD release party last weekend at Amici's Event Center before a packed house.  
"We have our own style of music," said band member Heidi Schiltz, who plays rhythm guitar and provides some vocals, along with Nick Allen, vocals and violin, Van Conrad, vocals and banjo, and Ellen Root, vocals and bass. Heidi's father, Larry Cooper, fills in sometimes on harmonica. Their sound technician is Nick Holtz.  
"We went into the studio last April and came out with 12 original songs and a cover from Ozark Mountain Daredevils," she said. "We were very humbled by the large crowd that came out to support us last week."  
Look for Van and the Free Candies playing next month during the Ely Winter Festival.



**Above: Van and the Free Candies played Saturday at Amici's Events Center. Right: the CD cover art is by Sarah Moldenhauer.**  
photo by K. Vandervort

OUR COMMUNITY

Ely Space Camp will lift off Jan. 18-19

ELY - 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 ... Blast Off! The 2019 Ely Space Camp will be held Friday and Saturday, Jan. 18-19 at Grace Tabernacle Church, 3 E Allaire St.  
During the 2019 Ely Space Camp, children will get set for a mission to the Red Planet—Mars. Many activities will also feature robots. This special winter day camp is filled with incredible space adventures, astronaut-style food, robotic crafts, and out-of-this-galaxy games for children age three to fourth grade.  
As part of their five-year

anniversary, Space Camp organizers will be hosting a special Friday night for families complete with rocket launches and telescopes.  
Kids will be trained for a new mission to Mars, with new games, new crafts and new space adventures.  
Ely Space Camp will take place Friday, Jan. 18, 5-7 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 19, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
To register online, go to VBSmate.com/ElySpaceCamp or find the link on the Ely Space Camp Facebook page.





**the TIMBERJAY**

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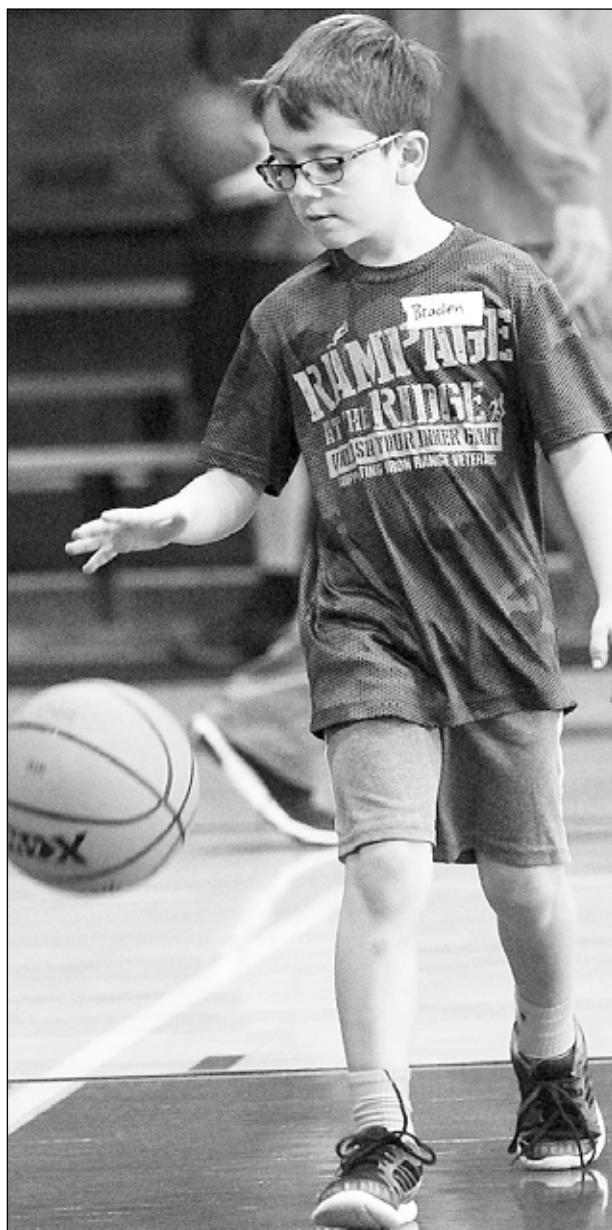
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# ON THE COURT



# BASKETBALL CAMP



The Ely Hoop Club is sponsoring a Youth Basketball Skills Program on Saturday mornings at the Memorial gym. Above, participants learn to dribble her ball from their knees. Layla Puglielli, above left, plays keep-away with a coach. Braden Jonas, above right, concentrates on his dribbling skills. Below, participants learn to shuffle their feet while on defense. photos by K. Vandervort



## AAUW Branch collecting shoes

ELY – The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Ely Branch is conducting a shoe drive fundraiser through Jan. 15, 2019, to raise funds for local area, educational programming for women and girls.

AAUW Ely will earn funds based on the total weight of the pairs of

gently worn, used and new shoes collected, as Funds2Orgs will issue a check for the collected shoes. Those dollars will benefit mission-based educational projects serving the Ely community.

Anyone can help by donating gently worn, used and new shoes at designated local drop boxes, with any AAUW

Ely member, or by calling 218-365-6802.

Drop boxes are currently located at The Pebble Spa, Gators Grilled Cheese Emporium, and Vermilion Community College, Office CL135.

All donated shoes will then be redistributed throughout the Funds2Orgs network of micro-enterprise (small business) partners in

developing countries where economic opportunity and jobs are limited.

Funds2Orgs helps impoverished people start, maintain and grow businesses in countries such as Haiti, Honduras and other nations in Central America and Africa.

Proceeds from the shoe sales are used to feed, clothe and house their families.

## In Brief

### Open house set at AFU building

ELY – A open house to celebrate the renovated AFU Building, 111 South 4th Ave East, now housing Ely Community Resource, Ely Community Health Center, and Range Mental Health Services, will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to see the fine workmanship and attention to original detail that have revitalized this Ely landmark. Snacks will be provided.

### Ely Food Shelf open Jan. 16

ELY - The Ely Area Food Shelf, 15 W Conan St. will be open for shopping Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. Registered shoppers need to bring one form of identification and new shoppers need to bring two forms of identification.

Please call the food shelf number at 218-235-8537 or check the Ely Food Shelf website at [www.elyareafoodshelf.com](http://www.elyareafoodshelf.com) for further information.

New volunteers, food or cash donations are always welcome. Check out the website for volunteer and donation information.

## Yesterday's news, this week

from the archives of

## THE ELY MINER

Courtesy of the Ely-Winton Historical Society

January 10, 1919

### Start made on Community Center

At the meeting of the city council on Tuesday, the council made an appropriation of \$1,000 to begin active work toward establishing a community center in this city. The matter was placed in the hands of the Building and Grounds Committee and they will act in connection with the local Commercial Club committee.

The men in charge of the work will outline plans and get things in working order at once. The prospects are that the Central School building will be fitted up for the accommodations of the plan. This building presents a chance to put the plan into execution and instill into the minds of the people something better for the future or until such time as the Memorial or Liberty Building project can be accomplished.

The Community Center is needed here and especially at this time when the boys are returning from service to the country and from a condition where all these things proposed to be had in a community building were the source of much comfort and joy to them. Not only is it needed for the returning soldiers, but also for the younger and older people of the city. Recreation and physical training has been shown to be about half the necessary adjuncts for the making of good men and women.

The city is to be congratulated on having made a beginning. A writer in the Ishpeming Iron Ore hits the nail squarely on the head when he says, "It is the idea to have community service a permanent thing everywhere in the nation. The idea is to have communities better acquainted, to better conditions and to implant a nobler and better conception of life. It would conserve wasted leisure and convert it into channels for the betterment of mankind. It is said that in nearly every town there are people who do not know their next-door neighbors. The statement is founded on fact. Neighborliness is becoming a lost art."

The idea of this community service is to enlist volunteer leaders in neighborhood groups and gain through them knowledge of the people, of all the people. There's no limit to what could be accomplished in this line, no boundary of the good that might be accomplished. It is surely worthwhile and ought to find a responsive chord in every heart.



## Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

**Northwoods Transfer Station**  
9384 Hwy 21 N. Ely/Babbitt  
Winter Hours  
Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am–3pm  
Tue: 9:30am–3pm  
Wed: 11am–5pm

**Aurora Transfer Station**  
5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora  
Hours  
Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am–4pm  
Tue, Wed: 10am–4pm  
Sat: 8am–noon

**Embarrass Canister Site**  
7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass  
Hours  
Sat: 12:30–4:30pm  
Thu: 10am–5pm

**Soudan Canister Site**  
5160 Hwy 169, Soudan  
Hours  
Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun:  
8am–5pm

**Household Hazardous Waste Facility**  
5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia  
Hours  
Tues and Sat: 8am–1pm

**Regional Landfill**  
5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia  
Hours  
Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm  
Sat: 8am–3:30pm

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department  
1-800-450-9278  
Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday  
[www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle)





# Community Notices

## UFOs at Cook Library

COOK- The Arrowhead Library System is pleased to present Supernatural Lake Superior with Chad Lewis, a free one-hour presentation being offered for ages 13 to adult at Cook Public Library on Friday, Jan. 11 at 4 p.m.

Take a visit to the strange side of this Great Lake with bizarre tales of UFOs hovering over the water, phantom ships disappearing into thin air, haunted businesses along the shore, deadly sea serpents, mysterious creatures, and sinister men in black; this program will change the way you view the majestic lake.

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead Library System, was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, please see our calendar at [www.alslib.info](http://www.alslib.info), follow us on Twitter @ALSLibraryNews, or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/alslibinfo](http://www.facebook.com/alslibinfo).

## Winter Reading Programs

COOK - The Cook Public Library is ready for winter, offering programs and events for all ages. The program kicks off in January and runs through March.

Adult Winter Reading:

Curl up with a good book and enter to win prizes during the Winter Reading Program. Prize entry tickets will be given for each book or audio book checked out from the Cook Public Library. This includes items requested from other libraries. Write your name, phone number and prize number on your ticket and turn it in at the front desk. Prize bundles are on display at the library. Drawings for prizes will be held on March 13.

Teen Winter Challenge (Grades 7 – 12):

Check out 25 books or more and get an invite to an all-day Saturday party at the library in March.

Preschool – Sixth-Grade Reading Challenge:

Every time a child checks out a book she or he will receive a mitten cutout to hang in the library window. If 400 mittens are in the windows by March 8, we'll have a pizza party at the library.

## Winter Events at NWFA Gallery

COOK - Northwoods Friends of the Arts (NWFA) Gallery winter hours for viewing the exhibits and shopping are in effect now until April: Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Writers Group meets Saturday, Jan. 12, 1 to 3 p.m.

All ages welcome who like to write. The facilitator of the group is the very experienced Dr. Ellie Larmouth. During the session, writers respond to prompts that Ellie creates for each session. There is lively discussion and readings. Writing is for everyone interested and always the second Saturday each month this winter at NWFA.

New Painting Class to register for.

"A Study in Light and Color" presented by Thomas Chapman from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16. Open to adults using any media. Bring your own materials.

Necessary colors: Red, Yellow, Blue, White and Black.

You must register with Tom Chapman at 218-750-4416 or [tom@artfromgodsheart.com](mailto:tom@artfromgodsheart.com).

Aside from Feb. 16, every Saturday is Open Studio Art Space at NWFA Gallery from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Note the ending time is 12:30 to accommodate transition to the writers group.

Woodcarvers For

Beginners to Expert every Tuesday night at 6 p.m. at the gallery.

## Grocery delivery services offered in Cook

COOK - Registrations are being taken here for a grocery delivery service following the fire at Zup's Grocery. The program, offered by the AEOA, is for seniors 60 years of age or older. Registrations will be taken over the phone by calling the agency at 1-800-662-5711 ext. 6899.

## North Woods Spelling Bee

FIELD TWP - Students here will test their language skills on Monday, Jan. 14 at 1:30 p.m. The competition will be held in the school commons area.

## Empty Bowl event at North Woods

FIELD TWP - North Woods is celebrating their seventh year of Empty Bowl. This year it will be taking place on Friday, Feb. 22, from 4:30-7 p.m. in the North Woods Commons. To switch it up this year students made more bowls on the pottery wheel than ever before, along with decorative plates! You'll want to get to the event early because bowls made on the pottery wheel sell very fast!

This year, Miss Minnesota's Outstanding Teen, Eden Webb, will also be in attendance. She will be providing free autographs and taking pictures. So, be sure to bring the entire family along. As usual, there will be plenty of soups and desserts to choose from. One bowl costs \$10. In return you get a soup meal and get to keep the handmade bowl. All of the proceeds are given to the food shelf. We look forward to seeing you there!



Sophie the Llama wishes passerbys a Merry Christmas. M. Roach photo

## Arrowhead Library System digial magazine

REGIONAL- Arrowhead Library System, in partnership with Recorded Books, is happy to announce the launch of the digital eMagazine Collection. Digital Magazines offers full-color, interactive digital magazines for anytime, anywhere reading on desktops, mobile devices, and apps. Patrons can browse the collection of over 120 popular magazines with no holds, no checkout periods, and no limit to the number of magazines you can download. Collection features include:

►Online reading: Check out magazines and read them instantly on your desktop or mobile browser, or check out and download magazines through mobile apps.

►Mobile apps: Download and read magazines on mobile devices, including iOS (Apple), Android, and Kindle Fire<sup>®</sup>/HD/HDX.

►Current issues: New issues are often released simultaneously to the print edition or with a slight delay to allow for formatting issues. New issues appear automatically in the library's collection once available and are ready for immediate checkout.

►Easy browsing and checkout: Browse your library's collection by newest issue, keyword search, genre and language to find your favorites and to discover new reading interests.

►Helpful notifications: Sign up for weekly email reminders about your favorite magazines.

►No limit and permanent checkout: Check out as many issues as you want and keep them in your account as long as you wish.

To create an account and start downloading eMagazines, please visit <http://arrowheadmn.rbdigital.com/> or <https://www.alslib.info> and click on the eMagazine tile.

## U of M Beef Team to host Seminar, Tour, and Trade Show

IRON- The University of Minnesota Beef Team is proud to host the annual Cow/Calf Days Seminar Tour and Trade Show in Iron on Friday, Jan. 25 at 5:30 p.m. at Clinton Hall, 9831 Hwy. 37. This event has been held for over 45 years and continues to be the leading information, technology, and research outlet for cow/calf producers in the state of Minnesota.

The 2019 event will feature information on cow herd efficiency, genetic selection for commercial cow/calf operators, and optimizing ranch production per acre. The program also will feature a Q & A session with Elanco Animal Health veterinarians Dr. Brett Terhar and Dr. Bruce Hoffman. Updates from the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association will also highlight the event. The corresponding trade show will feature vendors with new information, technology, and products with a wide-array of practical uses for the operators in the cow/calf sector.

The program is directed at cow/calf producers, allied industry representatives, and is open to the public. A meal will be served with the program and a registration fee of \$10 will include the meal, proceedings book, and program materials. More information can be found at the Cow/Calf Days Seminar Tour and Trade Show website at [www.extension.umn.edu/beef](http://www.extension.umn.edu/beef), or contact Eric Mousel at 218-513-0781, or [emmousel@umn.edu](mailto:emmousel@umn.edu).

# Crane Lake News by the Singing Teapot Dames



Here we are—in the beginning of a bright new year. Hope you all are in good health and good spirits. May those who came into the new year with health problems or other issues find this year to be a good one with blessings and good news for the future. The Dames were saddened to hear of the passing of Tom Rukavina, who was a good friend and valued representative in the State Legislature for many years. May you rest in peace, Tommy!

One of the Dames is now in Florida, while the other Dame is planning on spending some of the winter also in the South—Eveleth! Hope the win-

ter is quick and mild, but prosperous for our local merchants. Those of us who enjoy having four seasons, even though we don't appreciate the extreme cold, we appreciate the beauty of our area no matter what the season.

The old Dame that is in Florida reports temps in the 60s to low 70s. Walking on the white sand beach has been such a treat. Sometimes she forgets where she is—looking out on the beach in the morning, seeing the white sand, she has been known to think, "wow, it snowed during the night" but then realizing where she is, has laughed at herself. You can take the gal out of the North, but you can't take the North out of the gal! However, the old Dame has been shopping, gotten a pedicure and maintenance on her nails—I guess flexibility is the name of the game.

Neither the Dame nor her hubby have seen it, but people in Destin, which is about 50 miles

from Panama City Beach, report that they have seen the Anderson-Congdon hurricane debris hauler. It is our understanding that PCB is still affected by Hurricane Michael—the number of homeless kids rose from 2,000 to 10,000. The Bay City Medical Center reports that it has only just opened up to full-bed capacity since the hurricane, so people here are still only in the beginning stages of recovery. It will take time before life is totally back to pre-hurricane status for them.

Do you remember the road construction on Hwy. 23 from Orr to Crane Lake? Well, Highway 98, which is a major highway along the Emerald Coast of Florida, and which also happens to run right past the condo that the Dame calls her winter home, has been under construction since 2018 and not projected to be finished until 2020. The roadway is torn up and there are lots of big machines and trucks, but one rarely sees any people working. I

guess they have a different view of what "construction" means than we in the North seem to have. Do not ask any of us Northern Minnesota residents what their impression of Florida drivers is—most of us would just shake our heads and say, "They are crazy!" Florida drivers have only one speed (fast), one signal of displeasure (blowing their horns), and one inability to simply drive (most are also on their cell phones while driving!)

Apparently, Sasha Obama has indicated that she may attend the University of Michigan. A Dame's grandson attends the U of M (the M being Michigan)—do you suppose that she could be a guest at a Crane Lake residence in the future? I'm sure not—the granddad (with a different political persuasion) would probably be turning inside out if that happened!

Destin is full of Minnesota people—here at the Silver Shells Beach Community are

Mike and Linda Lang of Crane Lake and Donna and Dennis Carlson of Cook. Also here are Bev and Tony Krall, Bev originally a Godich from Gilbert and Tony from Eveleth. Many also from the Twin Cities area are here for the winter. One wonders just how many people are left in Minnesota. An interesting thing is that Florida is one of the states that have two different time zones in the state. Destin, in the Florida panhandle, is still in the Central Time Zone, whereas Jeff and Kathy Erickson, being in Marco Island, are on Eastern Time. Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, North and South Dakota are divided between Central and Mountain time zones. Florida, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee are split between Eastern and Central time zones. One has to pay attention to geography when traveling—or have a GPS, computer, or watch that knows where you are.

The Dames request-

ed input on birthdays so they could wish all with birthdays during a particular month a happy birthday. Apparently, no one was born in January—no responses indicating that as a birth month. Happy Birthday to all not specifically mentioned—you will still get a year older, and we did promise not to tell ages. The Dames stopped admitting their ages after 60 and quit buying candles when the max you could get was 36 in a package, so you have nothing to hide. Feel free to tell us the date, the year is not required!

Have you already abandoned your New Year's resolutions? If not, you have a few more days—most people have broken them by Jan. 15.

Let us hear from you! Send news by e-mail to [info@thelakecountry.com](mailto:info@thelakecountry.com), by fax at 218-757-3533, or by phone to Sandy at 218-757-3233 and it will be added.

Until next week, the Teapot Dames are singing off!



ARCHERY CAMP



Kids line up and take aim at Archery Camp at North Woods School last Saturday afternoon. Over 500 hundred students from across the region participated in the event. photo by M. Roach

ICE BOX DAYS

Community center offers chili feed at I-Falls festival

INT’L FALLS-Backus Community Center will offer a hot chili meal as part of Icebox Days on Saturday, Jan. 19 from 2 to 4 p.m. on the stage. Cost is \$8 for a large bowl of chili and \$5 for a smaller bowl, all meals include cornbread, condiments, beverages, and a cookie.

This year’s chili will

be prepared and served by the Knights of Columbus Chili Challenge winners from 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The annual chili cook-off started in 2009 as a “throw down” cooking contest, popular on TV shows such as The Iron Chef. Previous winners were 2009-2010 Hardee’s, 2011 Coffee

Landing, 2012 Cynthia Warren, 2013 VFW, 2014 Bruce and June Wilson, 2015 Teresa Rom, 2016-2018 Knights of Columbus. Knights of Columbus not only took the fan favorite award last year, but was deemed the best chili by an independent panel of judges.

The chili feed is a fundraising event for

Backus operational funds. “It costs an average of \$1,500 a day to keep the doors open to Backus.” says Business Manager Hoa Sobczynski. “In order to be useful to the community, we, like other non-profits, must continually raise funds to serve International Falls.”

Backus is not only

home to rental tenants such as Karen Tveit’s Area Agency on Aging office and Darcie Schulz’s dance studio, but also offers a warm, safe place to walk, bi-weekly Community Cafe meals and the large space needed for Ruby’s Pantry food distribution. “Our purpose is to serve the community in

a variety of ways.” said Executive Director Ward Merrill.

The expo will be open Friday from 5 to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information or details about the expo, please contact CWAC on Facebook at “Community Wellness Action Council.”

GRIZZLY UPDATES

Meet Mr. John Jirik

Principal John Vukmanich interviews a selection of educators and coaches at the North Woods School

Mr. V: Where are you originally from and where did you go to high school and college?

Mr. J: I was a military kid, with my dad in the Navy. I was born in Maryland, then lived in Alaska, Japan, England, Texas, and then ended up in New Prague, MN. I graduated from New Prague High School. I went to college at Mankato State (now MN State) and received a degree in Social Studies Education with a Coaching License, and then received my Masters from St. Mary’s and my Administration License from Concordia.

Mr. V: Were there teachers who were an influence on you? Please name a few if you can.

Mr. J: Yes, Dan Puls taught Social Studies at New Prague and Father Cunliffe in my elementary school in England.

Mr. V: What characteristics did these teachers have that were important to you?

Mr. J: Dan was a visionary. He always looked at how past history was going to affect our future.

Father Cunliffe had extreme discipline. You did as he said.

Mr. V: What do you teach at North Woods?



JOHN VUKMANICH

Mr. J: Currently I am the Dean of Students, the Activity Director, and the Head Football Coach. I have taught pretty much every social studies class offered for 7-12 at one point. Prior to North Woods, I was at Orr, which was my first full-time teaching job. I coached football and basketball there, too. I coached football in New Prague as well.

Mr. V: Why did you choose teaching as a profession?

Mr. J: At first I really wanted to get into history. It led me into teaching. I did a lot of youth coaching when I was younger and loved it. I worked with kids in grades two through twelve in baseball, soccer, and football.

Mr. V: What are your hobbies?

Mr. J: Traveling, I



JOHN JIRIK

love to fish in the summer, spending time with my wife, and visiting my family.

Mr. V: What is something you really like about North Woods?

Mr. J: The students. I enjoy all our kids from the little ones all the way up to seniors. The majority of our kids are really good kids.

Mr. V: What is a professional goal for you?

Mr. J: I just finished my administration licensure, which was a big goal for me, and I hope to continue using this expertise at North Woods. I want to continue to expand my knowledge as a teacher and teacher leader.

Mr. V: What is something you love about northern MN?

Mr. J: I love the summer and fall. I love the

outdoor activities that we can do during that time of the year.

Mr. V: What is a piece of advice you’d give your students?

Mr. J: Do your best in everything you do, not just things you like, and you will be sure to succeed.

Mr. V: Do you have a favorite saying or expression?

Mr. J: I have always liked the Forrest Gump quote, “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re going to get.” I’m not sure if that’s exactly how it is worded, but I am sure it’s on the internet!

Mr. V: What do you hope that your students will remember you for?

Mr. J: That I was always here when they really needed me and that I was honest with them about the situation. I also hope they feel I was fair, even though they may not have felt like it at the time.

Thank you, Mr. Jirik, for letting us get to know you better, and thanks for all that you do to keep things running smoothly at North Woods School!

Go Grizzlies!  
Your Principal,  
John Vukmanich

Cook Senior Citizens Club

COOK - The Cook Seniors meet monthly on the first Wednesday at 1 p.m. For more information, call Nancy at 666-2726 or Lois at 666-5578.

Bookmobile schedule

Visit your library on wheels, the Arrowhead Library System Bookmobile.

Jan. 31; Feb. 21; Mar. 14

Nett Lake – Community Center 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Crane Lake – Ranger Station 11:15 a.m. - 12 noon

Orr – Lake Country ReMax building 1:45 - 2:30 p.m.

Kabetogama – Town Hall 3:15 - 3:45 p.m.  
For further information on the Bookmobile or Mail-A-Book services, write or call the Arrowhead Library System, 5528 Emerald Ave., Mt. Iron, MN 55768 218-741-3840, or check our website at [www.alslib.info](http://www.alslib.info).



*the* **TIMBERJAY**

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**SAINT LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**  
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**Area Solid Waste Facility site hours**

<b>Ash River Trail Canister Site</b> 11391 Ash River Trail Winter Hours Sat: 12:30pm–4:30pm	<b>Kabetogama Lake Canister Site</b> 10150 Gamma Rd Winter Hours Wed: noon–4pm Sat: 8am–noon	<b>Sturgeon Canister Site</b> 8380 Hwy 73 Hours Sun: 10am–4pm	
<b>Orr Canister Site</b> 4038 Hwy 53 Winter Hours Tue, Thu: 9am–noon Sat: 8am–noon	<b>Portage Canister Site</b> 6992 Crane Lake Rd. Winter Hours Tue, Sat: 1pm–4:30pm	<b>County 77 Canister Site</b> 2038 County Rd. 77 Winter Hours Thurs, Sun: noon–5pm	
<b>Cook Transfer Station</b> 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Hours Mon: 10am–6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm	<b>Regional Landfill</b> 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm Sat: 8am–3:30pm	<b>St. Louis County Environmental Services Department</b> <b>1-800-450-9278</b> Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday <a href="http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle">www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle</a>	
<b>Household Hazardous Waste Facilities</b> 5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia Tue, Sat: 8am–1pm			3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing Sat: 8am–1pm

*Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th*





## GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

# Tower Ambulance seeking to raise township subsidy payments

by JODI SUMMIT

Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The Tower Area Ambulance Service (TAAS) is asking area townships to double their \$15 per capita ambulance subsidy starting in 2020, to \$30. The city of Tower has already committed to double their subsidy, effective in 2019.

Tower Ambulance Director Steve Altenburg attended the Greenwood Town Board meeting, Tuesday, to explain the reasoning behind the request, and to ask the township to put the question before residents at the upcoming annual meeting in March. The townships of Breitung (604 population taken from census data), Kugler (183), Greenwood (929), Vermilion Lake (278), Eagles Nest (239), along with the city of Tower (502), are all part of the ambulance district. The current subsidy in the three-year contract is set at \$15 per capita, up from the \$10 per capita in the previous three-year agreement. The current agreement runs through the end of 2019. Fortune Bay contributes a flat rate of \$5,000 per year to the TAAS.

Altenburg said the Tower Area Ambulance Commission had voted unanimously on the increase.

TAAS receives a total of \$46,025 each year through these subsidies, which are set aside to help fund the purchase of new ambulances, as well as to help with volunteer training costs.

Altenburg explained that the current subsidy amount is not sufficient to cover the rising cost of purchasing new ambulances. The subsidy program, he

explained, began in 1988 and the rate was \$7.24 per capita, with a scheduled ambulance replacement schedule of five years.

Right now the ambulance service has \$108,164 in the rig replacement account, plus \$46,025 in 2018 subsidies. The new ambulance that was ordered in December will cost \$230,000, with another \$20,000 for an accompanying cot. Altenburg said that would leave the service significantly in the hole when it comes time to replace a second rig in 2021.

"When I took over the ambulance service two years ago," Altenburg told the board, "we knew that the ambulance subsidy, that helps buy the rigs, was behind, but no solid analysis of the financials had been done."

Altenburg said that Tower Clerk/Treasurer Linda Keith put together a spreadsheet that showed the service would be about \$285,000 in the hole by 2028 with a rig replacement schedule of seven years at the current subsidy, but that with the increase to \$30 it would show a positive balance of \$128,664. The analysis also took into account the fact that in the future, with the purchase of ambulance rigs with a re-mountable box, the replacement cost would fall significantly since the re-mountable box can be reinstalled on a new chassis, which would reduce the cost of a new rig by about \$135,000, he said.

"Right now, we are so far behind," Altenburg said, "looking at this increase seems shocking on the surface. But that's where it should have been, building up over the years."

"Thirty dollars seems like

a lot," he said, "but in reality, what you pay per capita for fire, what we pay for police in Tower, far exceeds what we pay for the ambulance."

Altenburg also talked about the rapid increase in costs for new ambulances, and the shrinking value of older rigs. In the past, TAAS had purchased ambulances on a five-year replacement schedule, and was easily able to sell its old rigs.

"We paid \$150,000 for the last ambulance," he said, "and \$130,000 for the one before that."

Altenburg said TAAS is now keeping ambulances for longer periods, as long as they remain reliable. He said the service struggled this past spring when their two rigs went down, due to problems with contaminated bio-diesel. The service put their old rig, which they had been unable to sell and just had put in storage, back in service while the main two rigs were being repaired, at a cost of \$15,000. The new rig will have a gasoline engine, Altenburg said.

Greenwood resident John Bassing asked Altenburg how many ambulance miles were for emergency medical calls versus voluntary transfer runs.

Altenburg said they had no way to tell except by going through run records by hand.

"Things have changed massively in the last ten years," he said. "The service cannot last with just volunteers with over 300 calls a year." Altenburg said that TAAS had transitioned to a paid on-call system.

"Those transfers are what is paying for that," he said, "and making us enough money, this

year, to spend an extra \$50,000 on equipment."

"We don't make a lot of money off the medical calls," Altenburg said, explaining that most are covered by Medicare or Medicaid, with limited reimbursement.

"The transfers pay for everything," he said.

Altenburg said an average transfer from Virginia to Duluth would net the service \$1,300.

Bassing asked if Altenburg was worried that the number of transfers would decrease now that Virginia was hiring four new EMTs and planning on handling more transfers. Altenburg said that they had turned down over 100 transfer requests this year, and with the consolidation of medical services in Duluth, expected transfers to continue to be an important part of the service. He explained that the department only accepts transfer calls, which are voluntary, if there are local personnel available, as well knowing there are other local EMTs available in town for any medical calls that may come in while a transfer is underway.

Chairman Mike Ralston asked if the department was looking to add paramedics, who can administer a higher level of care than EMTs. Altenburg said the new rig that has been ordered is equipped with medicine vaults, which are used by the paramedics, but no plans were in place to add paramedics, though it was a long-term goal for the department.

"It's a financial jump," he said.

## Other business

In other business the town

board:

➤ Heard that the township errors and omission insurance from Western World actually is covering all the costs associated with the claim filed by Jeff Maus. The notice that they had stopped that coverage was sent in error, they told the township. Supervisor Carmen DeLuca also told the board that the Minnesota Association of Townships insurance trust has decided to begin covering the township's errors and omissions coverage when they reapply for insurance in the coming year, which means that the supplemental insurance will not be needed.

➤ Approved the second reading of the updated Paid On-call and Standard Operating Guidelines for the Greenwood Fire Department.

➤ Accepted a \$1,000 donation to the fire department from the Horsman family and a \$500 donation to the fire department from the Bidle family.

➤ Heard that the fire department had purchased a set of used radios and outfitted them with new batteries.

➤ Heard that Scott Kregness has requested his pension for 23 years and seven months of fire department service.

➤ Supervisor Byron Beihoffer along with John Bassing both expressed interest in participating in the Tower Broadband Project.

➤ Will donate \$100 to the Cook Library.

➤ Township filings closed Tuesday, Jan. 15. So far Carmen DeLuca (incumbent) and John Bassing have filed for the open supervisor seat, and Pam Rodgers (incumbent) has filed for the treasurer seat.

## COUNTY SCHOOLS

# Supt. plan to reduce teaching staff at TS Elementary draws criticism

by MARCUS WHITE

Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL — A plan to cut up to one full-time staff member at the Tower-Soudan Elementary drew sharp criticism on Tuesday from Troy Swanson, who represents the community and the school on the St. Louis County School Board. Superintendent Reggie Engebritson said she had presented the plan to cut up to one full-time-equivalent staff member directly to school staff before the holiday break.

"I am not for that," Swanson said. "We've known for years that Tower is one of the best

schools in the region. I don't want to do anything to undermine that. When we moved a teacher last year, no one liked it. To remove another teacher is going to undermine it even more."

Engebritson said the staff at the school were open to the idea and had come up with a counter offer to eliminate the equivalent of a half-time position while allowing the staff to devise their own plan for restructuring.

The superintendent said she had agreed to the staff's plan and would bring the proposed 0.5 FTE cut to the next meeting for a vote.

Swanson, however,

was still not on board with the idea.

"The numbers might not be exactly right, but it's working," he said. "I'd rather have money going to staffing than the additions we are making at other schools."

He said the district has spent millions in improvements at other schools, and that Tower's share of the improvement should be in the staffing since facility upgrades similar to those at other campuses are not likely in the future. He added that Tower had the best test scores of all of the elementary schools in the district.

According to a student-teacher ratio break-

down that Engebritson presented to the board, Tower-Soudan has the fewest students per teacher of any elementary in the district, with a ratio of 11 students per teacher.

Board members Chet Larson and Christine Taylor were in favor of the cut and said the district should allocate the money to boost staffing at schools with a greater need. The two represent the South Ridge School where teachers serve an average of 21.5 students, according to Engebritson's breakdown.

"If every classroom had eight kids, they'd all have good test scores," Larson said.

"Every student deserves to have the same opportunity," Taylor said. "When one school has kids with eight kids to a class and another with 25 kids to a class it's not fair."

Dan Manick agreed with Taylor and Larson and suggested that evening-out student teacher ratios at all of the campuses would yield district-wide

success.

Swanson maintained his position and said a debate last year by the board on class sizes had yielded a consensus that classroom size didn't always matter, and that higher teacher ratios at the other campuses didn't mean those schools couldn't do just as well as Tower.

Pat Christensen countered the point and said the previous debate was on classes at higher grade levels where classes were already above twenty students.

Engebritson stressed that the decrease in funding to Tower was not an indication that the school would be closing and that it was just a restructuring.

The board will vote on the measure at their next meeting on Jan. 22.

## Other business

In other business, the board:

➤ Elected Manick as the new board chair. Lynette Zupetz, who was chair, will now be vice

chair with Christensen taking on the role of clerk.

➤ Heard a plan from the district to maintain full funding for existing voluntary pre-Kinder-garten programs should the state defund it later during this year's session. Chris Koivisto expressed concern that the district was acting on an issue that didn't yet exist and questioned whether the district could afford the \$240,000 price tag. Business Manager Kim Johnson said the money was in the budget and that it was only a contingency plan so registration could occur as usual in February. She added that with Gov. Tim Walz in office, it was doubtful the plan would need to be enforced since increased education funding was part of his election platform.

➤ Manick proposed a pay hike for the board from \$250 to \$400 per month. He said he wanted service on the board to have more appeal and that he was dismayed when no one filed to take his seat during his run for the county board. The increase is the largest in recent memory. Board members offered little comment, although the plan passed unanimously.



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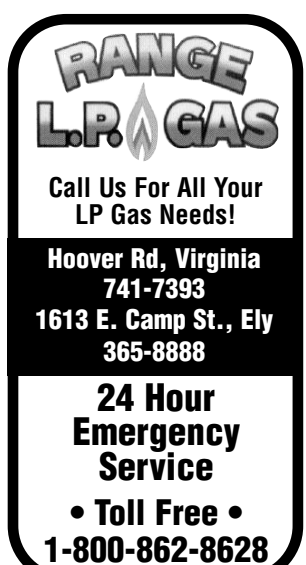
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# FRONTIER...Continued from page 1

Overall, state regulators received more than 1,000 public comments, some highly-detailed and documented.

The Department of Commerce report, which is over 500 pages in length, pulled few punches, and alleges that Frontier appears to be in violation of at least 35 separate laws and rules that the MPUC has authority to enforce.

The report also suggests the company could be subject to significant penalties for its actions. "The Minnesota legislature has provided a clear set of remedies to curb misconduct of rogue companies, ones who routinely, knowingly disregard the law and jeopardize the lives and well-being of Minnesotans, including hefty civil penalties and criminal prosecutions," notes the report.

The department investigators are also recommending that Frontier be required to refund or credit customers for service outages and unauthorized charges. They are also recommending that the company be required to add staffing to improve customer service and to increase investments in repairing and upgrading its physical infrastructure and equipment.

"The findings in this investigation detail an extraordinary situation, where customers have suffered with outages of months, or more, when the law requires telephone utilities to make all reasonable efforts to prevent interruptions of service," states the report. "Frontier customers with these outages include those with family members with urgent medical needs, such as pacemakers monitored by their medical teams via the customers' landline. The alternatives and corrective measures available to the Commission all merit consideration."

One of the cases of medical need cited in the report came from a Frontier customer in Eagles Nest Township.

A Frontier spokesperson took strong exception to the Commerce Department findings, which the company is still reviewing. "Frontier and its employees work hard to provide reliable, affordable telecommunications services to approximately 90,000 customers in Minnesota, many in rural communities where no other provider will invest in providing service," said Javier Mendoza, vice president of corporate communications and external affairs. "Frontier recognizes we experience service issues and delays from time-to-time with some of our customers. We are an ethical company committed to our customers and the Minnesota communities we serve. We take this matter seriously and will respond appropriately before the Public Utilities Commission."

The report highlights a situation in which state regulators may have acted too slowly in recent years to address a significant and systemic deterioration in the service provided by a regulated company. "The degradation of Frontier's operations in Minnesota, while it was operating under an Alternative Form of Regulation plan, cannot quickly, or easily, be resolved," notes the report. "Not only are there large numbers of serious violations, they are interrelated."

For example,

Commerce investigators noted that despite rules that require accurate record-keeping by regulated utilities, Frontier's records were "so deficient" that the department could not rely on them to determine if the company was meeting its obligations. Investigators concluded it will take "significant, multi-step actions by the Commission to set Frontier on a path to reach an acceptable level of performance." The investigators said the MPUC will need to ensure strict compliance with any orders it issues to the company and recommended that the commission not rely on Frontier's own records, unless a company executive is willing to personally confirm their accuracy.

The Commerce report includes nearly 250 pages of public comments that investigators urged MPUC members to read, to give them "a better appreciation of the customer experience and how the lives of the individuals, families, small businesses and entire communities have, and continue to be, negatively affected by Frontier's conduct."

The report also highlights failures by Frontier to adequately maintain its own infrastructure. "Consumers reported many instances of staggering deficiencies in Frontier's outside plant and its failure to repair reported damage or other problems with cable, poles, pedestals, and other infrastructure," noted the report.

A union representative for Frontier's technicians cited the company's unwillingness to invest in proper updates and repairs. "Frontier's lack of investment has led to deteriorating plant that is increasingly difficult for our technicians to maintain," said Mark Doffing, President of Local 7270 of the Communications Workers of America. "As a result, our technicians are forced to jury-rig quick fixes because Frontier won't repair or replace the damaged cables, poles, cabinets, other network infrastructure to ensure that customers receive the reliable, high-quality phone and Internet service that they are paying for," Doffing added.

According to the report, the company was able to provide receipts showing just \$605,000 in plant repair and rehabilitation over the past four years, an amount that Commerce investigators described as "extremely limited given the size of Frontier's service territory and number of customers in Minnesota."

While the complaints from Frontier customers were wide-ranging, several were frequently cited, including:

- Frequent and lengthy service outages, including loss of customer access to 911 emergency services.

- Delays in repairing and restoring service.

- Failure to provide expedited responses to service outages affecting vulnerable customers with medical needs.

- Failure to maintain and repair equipment, causing service outages and leading to public safety hazards such as lines and damaged equipment on the ground.

- Frequent billing errors, including inaccurate and unauthorized charges.

- Failure to provide refunds or bill credits for service outages.

- Lack of timely, responsive customer service, including lengthy call wait times, inaccurate information and "lost" repair tickets.

- Discriminatory practices such as prioritizing new service installations over repairs of existing service and providing slower repair services in rural areas compared to more populated areas.

With the findings and recommendations in the report, it's now up to the MPUC to decide how to effectively address the wide-ranging problems revealed in the investigation. No date for that decision was available as of press time.



A tree in Ceylon, Minn., is used to support the cables of an unfinished Frontier Communications telephone line project. submitted photo

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# ELY...Continued from page 1

Ely school board to reach an agreement on locating a facility on the school campus.

"We had several conversations with the ERCC officers and it seems like our missions are the same," Coyle said.

Jeff Sundell, a principal founder of the regional complex effort, agreed. "This is an extremely exciting time for us all. While there are many details to be worked out, our goal is to partner with community leaders such as Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital and others to provide for unmet healthcare needs of our community. We have incredible momentum, including many prominent partners interested in joining this movement,

and millions of dollars already pledged. As we firm up these plans, we'll be certain to keep our community informed, and to receive their ideas and input."

"The ERCC wants to build a center for health and wellness, and to offer services for unmet needs that other businesses currently aren't meeting," Coyle said. "And that is exactly the philosophy that we have here. We have always been in the sick-care business. You come to us when you are sick. It takes a lot of money to fix that. Health care is changing. We want to get in the well-care business. We want to keep you well. We want to help you with preventative stuff."

He compared the

EBCH perspective to the ERCC perspective. "They seem to match pretty well," he said. "We are doing a building project regardless. It makes sense if we can put our two buildings together and reduce a lot of the overhead costs."

The two groups put together a memorandum of understanding to show good faith as they explore a combined facility, Coyle said.

The ERCC brings a \$5 million grant to the table, along with an additional \$1 million in matching funds for their project that could include a swimming pool, gymnasium, fitness center, daycare center and community rooms.

"They are looking for about 20,000 square feet and we are looking at about

20,000 square feet," Coyle said. "Given the estimate of construction costs, we are looking at about \$24 million for such a facility." He acknowledged that no discussions have been held as of yet about what the building would look like or what would be in the building.

He said EBCH is also in discussions with the Ely Ambulance Service and any other partners who might want to be included in the project. "Our goal here is to do a project that benefits not only Ely, but Babbitt, Tower, Soudan, Embarrass, and Isabella. We want a project that draws people to us as a destination. We want a regional complex, a regional care center, a regional health and wellness center."

## Next steps

A regional architectural firm, Architectural Resources, Inc., of Hibbing, is conducting a 13-week "master building plan" process to develop building plans with a task force from EBCH and ERCC.

Similar to what ARI is currently conducting with ISD 696 and their building project, team leaders will be interviewed and infrastructure will be studied to develop a plan to move forward.

"We need to find out what we need to do, what should be in the building, what are some of the costs, and what it will look like," he said. "We will have listening sessions, because we can't

put something together without listening to the community. We want valuable input."

When asked why invest so much money in a small hospital, Coyle responded, "We are investing for the future. Even five years from now, we want this expansion project to set us up for many years. We want this to be a 20- to 25-year project. We want a comfortable, multi-use space that is patient-centered."

## Hospital growth a factor

Following a year of healthy financial growth and the development of a strategic long-term growth plan, Coyle said hospital officials realized the Ely health facility is growing faster than they have space for. "We are finding out that people don't want to have to travel for health services," he said. "We want to keep people as close to Ely as possible, and knowing that, we need to create more space for those specialists to come here," he said, to provide services like podiatry, cardiology, sedated dentistry, orthopedics, general surgery and others that would otherwise require patients to travel to Virginia, Hibbing or even Duluth.

Coyle said the hospital's goal is to partner with medical specialists and providers. "We have to give them a space that is convenient for them and makes them want to come here," he said. "We also want a space that is com-

fortable for the patient. We want (the space) to be highly professional, aesthetically pleasing and convenient to all of our other services like lab and X-ray departments."

The new building will be connected to the west side of the existing hospital facility near the existing ambulance garage and physical therapy entrance, and will incorporate a new main entrance to the hospital.

One of the main partners for the new hospital addition will be the city of Ely. "The timing couldn't be better for us," he noted, "because the city is putting in a new trailhead and extending Fifth Avenue West, and our new hospital entrance will be on the new street. It is perfect timing."

Coyle said a new entrance is needed to give EBCH an identity. "Right now, when you pull in, you are not sure where you're at. Our front door looks like a side door," he said. "Our goal is for you to pull in and know you are at ECBH. We will have people right there to greet you when you walk in the door, and volunteers to walk you to where you need to go on our campus."

He attributed the increasing volume of outpatient services at EBCH as a main justification for the need for expansion. "We are counting more labs, X-rays, chemo-therapies, infusion-therapies, general surgeries to the point where we are bursting at the seams."



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CITY OF ELY

# Ely Area Broadband Coalition submits grant projects

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely Area Broadband Coalition met recently to explore options for spending \$50,000 in grant funds from the Blandin Foundation as plans continue to develop a high-speed Internet network in the downtown business core.

“We are in the running for additional funding,” Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski told city council members last week, “and we had three different groups propose projects, including Hak Ely, Ten Below, in collaboration with Incredible Ely, and Arts in Ely.”

Langowski explained the projects that were to be submitted on Jan. 4. “For this round of \$50,000 grants we need to provide an overall proposal for all of the projects and they will award the funds in a lump sum. We will then administer the funds locally,” he said.

Hak Ely presented a plan to continue their vision of providing a platform for socializing, networking and connecting people and ideas. The facility is defined as a maker space with many high-tech offerings such as 3-D printing and computer networking. “They are proposing to improve the space to offer a more accessible and modern space,” Langowski said. He stressed that the Blandin funding needs to be used to expand the use of broadband and support community-wide utilization. A budget of \$24,000 was provided for their funding needs.

The collaborative Arts in Ely group has been working to develop a website to showcase the growing arts community in Ely and to promote art creation, experiences and collaborations. They have been working on this for about a year and are looking for assistance to finish their website. They

requested \$700.

Incredible Ely prepared four separate projects for consideration

Based on the newly-launched website, Elyite 2.0 would build upon that project by implementing an open directory that supports business listings, and volunteer opportunities into the existing website. “The project would provide full listings for all downtown businesses,” Langowski said. “All listings would be made available so that businesses may claim their listings and update their listing profiles. This would allow all businesses to be equally represented.” The budget for this project came in at \$8,600.

Incredible Ely’s Richard Stuart said information gathered from the business surveys completed in the last round of funding revealed that most businesses are not part of the Google My Business community. “Currently many businesses do not

have a listing and do not show up on a Google search,” he said. “Over 80-percent of searches never leave the Google site. This would allow all businesses to have a Google presence, and it would be at no charge to the businesses. Google My Business listings will make it easy for Ely businesses to manage their business profiles so that they can stand out online.” To provide this service to the 130 businesses in the downtown area, Stuart suggested a budget of \$9,514.

Other proposed projects were also discussed, including:

► **Community Building Skill Shares** - In an effort to support economic growth in the Ely area by connecting people, knowledge, ideas and resources, Ten Below Co-working will facilitate free professional development skill shares for local businesses to leverage the power of the internet and social media. Budget

\$5,980.

► **Proximity Beacons** for Hyperlocal Marketing- This project would utilize Wi-Fi enabled Bluetooth proximity beacons to deliver, fun interactive and unique experiences to visitors using beacons and proximity marketing. The beacons would generate additional awareness around park events in real time for visitors. Budget \$7,718.

► **Town of Morse - The Ely ABC** will continue to advocate for the expansion of high-speed Internet service in the township through a collaboration project with Frontier Communications.

## Other business

In other business, the council:

► Administered the oath of office to Angela Campbell as well as newly re-elected council members Albert Forsman and Heidi Omerza, and mayor Chuck Novak.

► Heard a report from Fire Chief Tom Erchul that the partial government shutdown in Washington, D.C., has prevented him from submitting a grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for replacement air packs for members of the Ely Fire Department.

► **Authorized** payment of \$700 in due for 2019 membership to the Range Association for Municipalities and Schools.

► Adopted the city of Ely Mission, Vision and Values Statement.

► Authorized city officials and staff to attend meetings outside of Ely.

► Approved the 2019 city of Ely fee schedule.

► Authorized the Knights of Columbus Council 3238 to conduct bingo on the following dates in 2019, Feb. 10, April 7, Nov. 17 and Dec. 15, at St. Anthony’s Church Hall.

## CLOSED...Continued from page 1

the shutdown to last for months, or even years, unless he gets a \$5.7 billion down payment on his border wall.

“I’m worried for neighbors who may need to apply for assistance through SNAP, which may also get shut because of the shutdown,” Starkovich said. “I’m worried about how we are going to bounce back from all of this. There’s not a lot of work around here to go around.”

To cope with an impending layoff, Starkovich said she will need a week or so to take stock of her situation. She said this is the first time in 20 years she will be unemployed and navigating what assistance is available to her will be a new experience.

She said, though, if she’s out of work a month or more, she may need to reconsider whether returning to her job with the tribe is the best fit for her and her family.

“It’s not because I am giving up on my reservation or my employer,” she said. “It’s because I can’t afford it. I don’t want to live on unemployment, I want to work.”

Speaking to *The New York Times* earlier this month, Bois Forte Chairwoman Cathy Chavers said the tribe may have to reduce to “minimal, minimal basic services” if the shutdown lasts through the end of January.

Already, tribal police officers are working without pay, and an all-staff meeting of tribal employees was to have

taken place on Wednesday morning this week. As of press time, the results of that meeting were not made public. Chavers did not return messages left with the *Timberjay* as of press time.

## Timber industry

While Bois Forte navigates its way through a loss of funding, the logging industry is faring better - for now.

Winter is the busiest logging season in the northeastern Minnesota, and Ray Higgins with the Minnesota Timber Producers Association said the Forest Service is allowing logging operations on federal lands to continue, but only on sales underway before the shutdown began in December.

“It’s hard to say how long the shutdown would have to persist before an impact would be felt,” Higgins said. “If this keeps going, they won’t be able to award any more bids. Prepping activities for new sales could be affected.”

Were the shutdown to linger into the spring, companies who bid on federally-owned land could be shut out of some logging contracts for next year.

Higgins said, however, right now the focus is on this season and the challenge of trying to fight through a more present concern—warm weather.

It’s too early to know

how much unseasonably warm temperatures the past few weeks will affect the annual harvest, but Higgins said they’re waiting for sustained colder temps to arrive.

“The roads go in and out of the woods, the harder they get, the easier it is to haul the timber out of the woods,” he said. “We need a good cold snap to solidify that.”

## National parks, Forest Service

Voyageurs National Park does remain open, for now, with limited park services being offered by the park’s non-profit association. The park’s Green Trail, a popular lake

trail, was staked prior to the shutdown, but other lake trails are unmarked and largely being left ungroomed. Grooming by nonprofit snowmobile clubs outside the park is well underway because those efforts don’t require federal funding.

Calls to the LaCroix Ranger District in Cook all went unanswered, with voicemail messages indicating the offices were closed indefinitely. Superior Forest Supervisor Connie Cummins directed the *Timberjay* to the Office of Management and Budget at the White House, but that phone line appeared to be out of order.



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# "I'll do my best to fill his shoes"

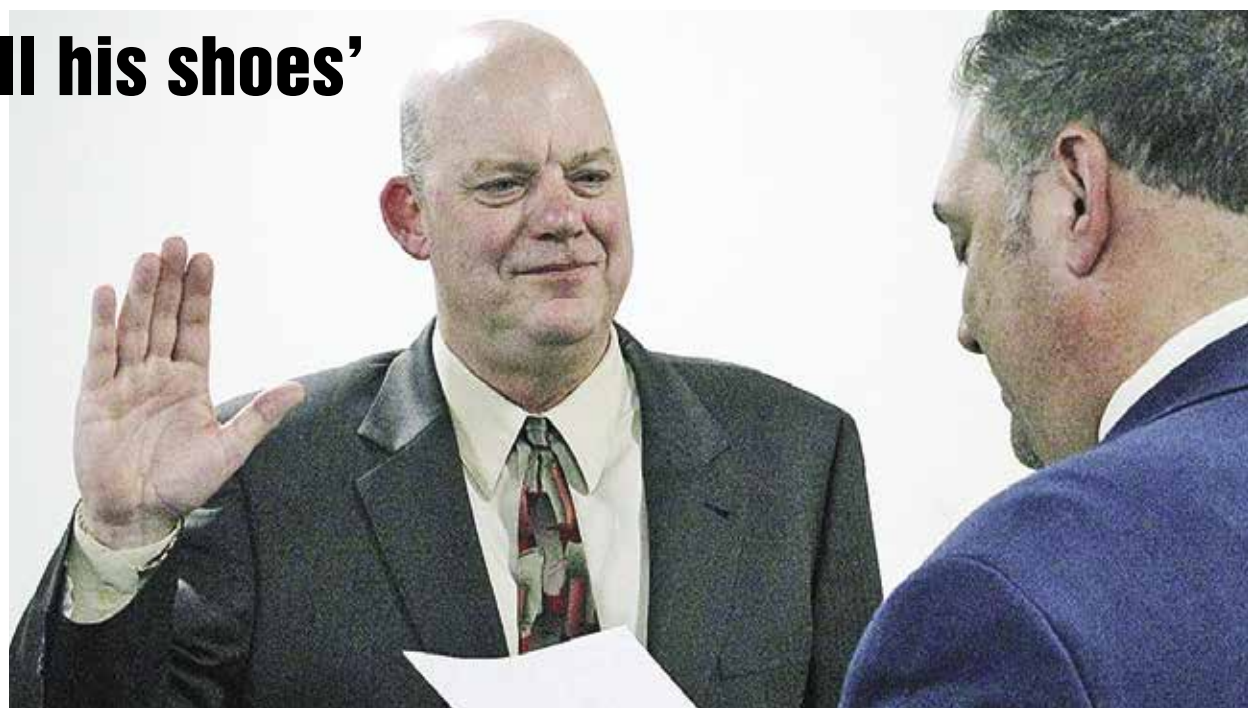
## Paul McDonald takes oath of office for District 4 County Commissioner

ELY — With a heavy heart Monday, just hours after the death of Tom Rukavina, new St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald took the oath of office for the Fourth District seat at the County Services building here.

In a brief, somber ceremony, McDonald recited the oath of office from fellow Commissioner Mike Jugovich before a small crowd of family and friends.

"Tom was a friend of mine from grade school," McDonald said. "He may have been a little shorter in stature, but his heart was as big as a lion's. I'll do my best to fill his shoes and to help keep St. Louis County the best place in the world."

**Paul McDonald takes the oath of office in Ely.**  
photo by K. Vandervort



## TOMMY...Continued from page 1

Iron Range.

"Minnesota and the Iron Range have lost a true champion for workers," said U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar after hearing of Rukavina's passing. "Tom Rukavina understood the dignity of hard work and was a force for Iron Range workers and their families. He spent nearly three decades in elected office on the Range fighting for miners and bringing good-paying union jobs to the region."

He came from humble beginnings, growing up on the north side of Virginia. He worked as a milkman, drove a garbage truck, and worked for a time in a local taconite mine—jobs that frequently put him in contact with residents across the area. That undoubtedly proved useful when he ran for the Virginia School Board and won. He also served as a supervisor in Pike Township, where he lived most of his life. Along the way, he completed a degree in political science from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

In 1986, with the Iron Range in the midst of a collapse of the mining economy, Rukavina vowed to do what he could to help the Range recover and he won a seat in the Legislature that he would hold for the next 26 years. While a dedicated and progressive DFLer, Rukavina was a part-time partisan, who maintained good friendships across the aisle even as he railed against GOP opponents. At times, his comments got him in trouble with the Twin Cities media, but they only boosted his popularity at home, where he routinely drew 75 percent of the vote in his East Range district.

Among his many Republican foils, former Gov. Tim Pawlenty was probably his favorite target during Pawlenty's eight years in the Governor's mansion. Rukavina at one point filed suit against Pawlenty when he sought to raid a state fund dedicated to economic development efforts on the Iron Range.

Rukavina mounted his own impressive run for governor in 2010, but was ultimately not endorsed by the DFL. Mark Dayton went on to win election. Rukavina later filed a brief and unsuccessful lawsuit against Dayton when his fellow DFLer refused to back a copper-nickel mine proposal on the edge of the Boundary Waters.

"Mining is what we do for a living," Rukavina said at a hearing in Duluth two years ago. "It's what we've done for 135 years. And you people get to come up to the wilderness that you love, because of



**Above: Tom Rukavina is all smiles with students at the unveiling of the Tom Rukavina Engineering Center at Mesabi Range Community College in 2014.**

**Left: Sheldon Majerle, of Tower, laughs with his good friend Tom during a visit.**

Timberjay photos

stituents.

Rukavina's love for the Range and his willingness to work with others, no matter their political affiliation, brought in tributes from both DFLers and Republicans alike following his passing on Monday.

"He was a passionate and devoted public servant," said newly-elected Congressman Pete Stauber, who served alongside Rukavina for the past four years on the county board.

"Tom Rukavina was

known for his honesty, his authenticity, and his advocacy for those trying to build a better life for their families," said DFL Chair Ken Martin in a statement. "Today Minnesota lost a one-of-a-kind individual who left a deep impression on everyone who knew him."

Newly-inaugurated Gov. Tim Walz also weighed in with reporters on Monday. "I went up there [the Range] many times because people said, 'You have to work with Tommy Rukavina. See if you can get his support.' They also told me, if he doesn't swear at me the first time, he really doesn't like you."

It was that larger-than-life attitude that drew people to Rukavina, whether it was on the sidewalk during a campaign, or at a legislative hearing.

Rep. Pat Garofalo, R-Farmington, told MPR News he remembered a hearing on healthcare where he and Rukavina argued back and forth on varying points of healthcare reform in the state. But while they differed, Garofalo said he and Rukavina went on to become friends and were laughing about the exchange shortly after it happened.

Perhaps, though, the legacy that Rukavina has left on the Iron Range could be best summed up by his once political opponent, Dayton, when the former governor spoke following Rukavina's first retirement from politics in 2012.

"Tommy, you have been a terrific champion for the people of the Iron Range, for all of Minnesota. That's because you spoke from your convictions, from your heart and from your soul."

how we've taken care of the environment."

As a legislator, Rukavina championed new policies that required that mining companies maintain their infrastructure, even during shut-downs. The foresight allowed mines to quickly bounce back from economic downturns and even bankruptcies.

While a backer of the mining industry, he fought hardest of all for mine workers and, several years ago, sponsored legislation to study the long-term health effects of working in the state's mines. He also worked to get money from taconite companies to create endowments funds at various University of Minnesota campuses and Mesabi Community and Technical College that provided scholarships for students. Throughout his career, Rukavina was a consistent advocate for education, particularly higher education. He served as chair of the House Committee on Higher Education during his later years in the Legislature. In 2014, an addition to the Iron Range Engineering School was named for him, in honor of his efforts to bring four-year degree opportunities

to the Range.

Rukavina once said he was "the last socialist in the Minnesota Legislature", fighting for greater benefits for miners, supporting universal healthcare and passing a requirement that flags sold in Minnesota must be made in the United States. Rukavina, who was Croatian and Italian by heritage, took a liking to the sensibilities and politics of many of his Finnish neighbors. "He liked to say that he was a 'born again Finn' since his kids were half-Finnish and because he had 'sisu,'" said longtime friend Chuck Neil, of Embarrass. "He loved the socialist history, frugal nature and sisu of his Finnish neighbors, friends, in-laws and constituents," recalls Neil.

Hints of Rukavina's sisu were evident early on, including in his brief career as a ski jumper back when Lookout Mountain was home to its own ski jump. Neil recalls Rukavina's doggedness in later life as well, as he worked to expand his organic garden. "I watched him remove boulders of a size that younger, bigger and stronger guys would leave in the ground," remembers Neil. "Using only a breaker-bar the little big man would

keep at it until he got them out." Neil remembers that Rukavina, who lived most of his life on a relatively meager legislative salary, was never motivated by money. Rather, he enjoyed spending time providing free daycare for his grandkids and working in the garden and the woods—at least when he was raising hell on behalf of his con-

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## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Cade Goggleye ties for all-time scorer

## Grizzlies open year strong on the road at Red Lake, 82-54



by **MARCUS WHITE**  
Cook-Orr Editor

**RED LAKE** – North Woods senior guard Cade Goggleye will go down in the Grizzlies’ history books after he matched his own brother’s record of 1,719 career points in a match-up with Red Lake on Jan. 4.

The Grizzlies handily defeated host Red Lake, 82-54.

While Goggleye was setting records, the Grizzlies were a bit slow to get back in the groove after a two-week holiday break.

Freshman guard T.J. Chiabotti kicked the game into high gear in the second

half, sinking seven three-point shots on his way to a 30-point night. He added ten rebounds for the double-double.

Goggleye cousins, Cade and Darius, would each post 15 points for the game, adding seven and six rebounds respectively. Cade also had eight assists

and five steals.

Dylan Chiabotti rounded out the scoring with 12 points of his own.

The Grizzlies will continue life on the road this week, playing Mt. Iron-Buhl on Friday followed by the BOLD School at Duluth East on Saturday. The team heads to Hill City

on Tuesday.

The team had been set to play Two Harbors this week on Tuesday, but weather forced the game to be rescheduled to Jan. 28.

## NORDIC SKIING

# Ely boys take third at invitational

## Girls take tenth place overall in tournament with 50 schools statewide

by **JAY GREENEY**  
Sports writer

**GIANTS RIDGE**—The Ely Nordic ski team continues to excel, finishing third in the massive Mesabi East Invitational here on Saturday. More than 50 schools took part in the event, where all teams competed in both classic and freestyle.

The Ely girls team also offered a strong performance, finishing tenth overall.

Jasper Johnston led the way for Ely, finishing fourth overall in a very tight classic race. Nate Nettifee finished 25th while Raif Olson came in 31st.

“Jasper was only two seconds out of second place and 14 seconds out of first,” said Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson.

Kjetil Medttun was Ely’s top skier in the freestyle competition, coming in 16th. That was followed by James Schwinghamer in 22nd and Ethan Bremner, who finished in the 45th spot.

Brooke Pasmick provided the top finish for the Ely girls team when she took 16th in the classic. She was followed by Ana Bercher in

46th place and Lucy Stouffer in 88th.

Kalyssa Eilrich took the top spot in the freestyle when she finished 18th. Next was Cora Olson and Julia Schwinghamer who came in 34th and 43rd.

This was a good test for the Wolves as it brought plenty of competition from all over the state. “Ely had a great day. Better than expected,” added Anderson. “This meet is a good confidence booster for all of them as we enter the

real race season.”

Giants Ridge is host to the state meet and Ely took some time recently to get familiar with it.

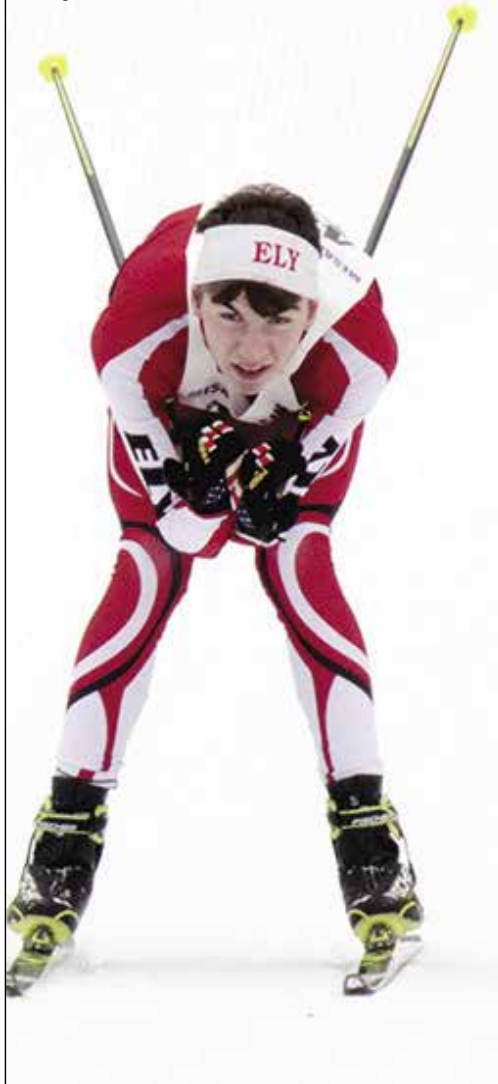
“Our team spent three days skiing at Giants Ridge over break and got in about ten hours of training over three days,” said Anderson. “They are lucky in that they know the courses at Giants Ridge really well and can ski them very effectively.”

Next up for the Wolves

See **NORDIC...** pg. 2B



**Below: James Schwinghamer; at left: Kalyssa Eilrich.** photos by Jerritt Johnston



## Sports week

### BOYS B-BALL

**Friday Jan. 11**  
North Woods at Mt. Iron-Buhl, 7:15 p.m.

Ely at Nashwauk-Keewatin, 7:15 p.m.

**Saturday Jan. 12**  
North Woods at BOLD (Duluth-East), TBD

**Tuesday Jan. 15**  
North Woods at Hill City, 7:15 p.m.

Ely hosts Big Fork, 7:15 p.m.

### GIRLS B-BALL

**Tuesday Jan. 15**  
Ely at Cherry, 7:15 p.m.

**Friday Jan. 18**  
North Woods hosts Nashwauk-Keewatin, 7:15 p.m.

### HOCKEY

**Friday Jan. 11**  
Ely hosts Bagley-Fosston, 6 p.m.

**Friday Jan. 18**  
Ely at May-Port, 7 p.m.

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Grizz face challenges in New Year



by **MARCUS WHITE**  
Cook-Orr Editor

**FIELD TWP**— It’s been a tough start to the new year for the Grizzlies girls basketball squad as they dropped two of three games since the start of the month.

On Tuesday night, they fell 89-50 to Mesabi East.

Regan Ratai and Kate Stone led the team on offense, with 11 points apiece, while Sasha Strong and Brynn Simpson rounding out the top scorers with eight and five points respectively.

It was a similar story on Monday night in Virginia, as the Grizzlies fell 82-50 to the Blue Devils.

The Blue Devils dominated in the first half, outscoring North Woods 42-19. The Grizzlies found better footing in the second half, but were still out-

scored 40-31 in the stanza.

Strong and Bria Chiabotti led the team with 12 points apiece, with Stone adding 10 points to the final tally.

North Woods notched their first win of the new year on Jan. 3, downing Northeast Range, 67-38. Nicole Olson would lead the Grizzlies in this match with 14 points. Stone and Strong would round out the team with 12 and 11 points respectively.

While the Nighthawks lost the game, Shayler Lislegard led all scorers with 23 points. Casey Zahnow added 11.

Northeast Range has another extended break, playing Cherry at home Jan. 24. The Grizzlies also have the week off, facing Nashwauk-Keewatin next Friday, Jan. 18.

Tipoff for both games is 7:15 p.m.

**Bria Chiabotti up for a shot over NER’s Natalie Nelmark.** photo by C. Stone.

## HOCKEY

# Wolves lose close one

by **JAY GREENEY**  
Sports writer

**ELY** – It seems the Timberwolves have been playing catch-up most of the season. Saturday proved a repeat performance as Lake of the Woods handed them a 7-4 loss.

The Bears put two on the board early in the opening period before Ely’s Austin Meskill put one in the net off an assist from Nick Mattila. Lake of the Woods added one more before the buzzer sounded on the first period, to take a 3-1 lead.

It was rinse and repeat in the second stanza, as the Bears put two more on the board before Mattila added one more for the Wolves on an unassisted goal. Lake of the Woods would add one more late to give them a commanding 6-2 lead.

Ely drew first blood in the third as Luke Olson

hit the net with assists going to Nick Mattila and Dalton Schreffler. The Bears quickly followed with one of their own before Olson scored his second of the period with an assist from Schreffler to finish out scoring for the game.

It was a closer game than the score might suggest, as the Bears outshot Ely only narrowly, 23-19. Ely took advantage of the power play as they converted two of four opportunities compared to just one of two for the Bears. The Wolves committed five penalties for 18 minutes compared to six for the Bears, for 12 minutes in the box.

Ely goaltenders stopped 16 of 23 shots while Lake of the Woods kept 15 of 19 shots from hitting the net.

The Wolves were fresh off back-to-back

See **HOCKEY...** pg. 2B



GIRLS BASKETBALL



Erika Mattson avoids the Vikings defense. photo by J. Greeney

Wolves trample Vikings

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

ELY— Junior guard Erika Mattson had a huge night on Monday as she sunk 11 three-point shots enroute to a game total of 44 points to lead the Timberwolves to a 69-36 win over Littlefork-Big Falls. Ely jumped to a quick lead, outpacing the Vikings 38-13 in the first half, and never looked back.

While Mattson posted a personal best scoring performance, she had plenty of help along the

way. Junior guard Brielle Kallberg worked the boards like a demon, grabbing 20 rebounds in addition to scoring four points, while senior guard Lida Dodge posted 12 points and junior Winter Sainio added seven.

“Erika had the rhythm and confidence against Littlefork and it was fun to watch,” said Ely Head Coach Darren Visser. Mattson was, without question, in the zone, as she missed just four of 15 shots from behind the arc. “Overall lately we have struggled some to put

together a complete game, but against Littlefork, we played a great team game,” he added.

Monday’s win was the latest in a trio of victories for Ely to start the new year. Playing in Silver Bay on Friday, the Timberwolves held the Mariners to just 21 points in a 49-21 rout. Mattson proved top scorer in that game as well, pouring in 24 points and adding seven rebounds. Kallberg added 15 along with 12 boards to notch a double-double. Sainio and Gabi Omerza added four points apiece.

The Timberwolves started the new year with a 69-43 win over visiting Nashwauk-Keewatin. Mattson and Kallberg again led the show, with Mattson pouring in 28 points, while Kallberg added 22 along with nine steals to narrowly miss a double-double. Dodge, Sainio, and Omerza each added four points.

The Wolves were set to host Northeast Range on Thursday, with tip-off at 7:15 p.m. They visit Cherry, now 10-2, next Tuesday.



Seanne Prigge goes for the goal. photo by J. Greeney

HOCKEY...Continued from page 1B

wins when they hosted International Falls on Friday night. The Broncos’ offense was too much as they easily won 8-0.

The Broncos outshot Ely 56-13 as International Falls put pressure on the entire game. The Broncos scored three goals to open the game, firing 22 shots on goal in the opening stanza. Ely managed just five shots

for the period.

The Broncos added three more in the second period, out of 19 shots on goal.

Penalties dominated the third period, with eight penalties called against the two teams after two penalty-free periods to start the match. Ely spent 22 minutes in the box on five penalties while the Broncos had

just three infractions leading to six minutes of penalty time. The Broncos took advantage, adding one more goal on the power play.

Next up for Ely is a home matchup on Friday with Bagley/Fosston with a 6 p.m. scheduled start.

Ely boys lose first match of the year

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

GREENWAY— The Timberwolves faced tough competition against a tall and physical Greenway squad here on Tuesday night, dropping their first boys basketball match in nearly a month, 73-61. “We played well for most of the game but just couldn’t handle the size of Greenway,” said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. “They were just too big for us and we didn’t rebound well against them.”

Senior guard Patrick Vanderbeek led the way offensively for the Wolves, pouring in 35 points. He got some help from junior forward Dylan Fenske, who added 11 points, but it wasn’t enough to top the Raiders.

Tuesday’s loss ended Ely’s latest winning at four games.

In action last Friday, Jan. 4, the Wolves outpaced host Silver Bay 61-50. “We struggled a bit on both ends of the floor but came away with the victory,” said McDonald.

Vanderbeek had another good night offensively, posting 30 points, while junior guard Eric Omerza just missed a double-double with 12 assists and nine rebounds. Fenske added 12 points and six boards to round out the top performances.

Ely heads to Nashwauk-Keewatin on Friday night. They’ll be back at home next Tuesday, hosting Bigfork. Both times have a 7:15 p.m. start.

NORDIC...Continued from page 1B

is the Cook Invite on Saturday with the meet scheduled to start at 11 a.m. They head to the Two Harbors Invite on Tuesday with a 11 a.m. start time.

TOP ELY INDIVIDUAL BOY FINISHERS

- 4. Jasper Johnston 15:26.7
- 25. Nate Nettifee 16:52.2
- 31. Raif Olson 17:12.0
- 16. Kjetil Medttun 15:35.2
- 22. James Schwinghamer 15:55.6
- 45. Ethan Bremner 16:45.6

TOP TEN BOYS TEAM RESULTS

- 1. Forest Lake 523
- 2. Stillwater Area 497
- 3. Ely 491
- 4. Grand Rapids 487
- 5. Superiorland 484
- 6. St Paul Highland Park 446
- 7. Roseville Area 446
- 8. Sartell High 437
- 9. Marshall 431

- 10. Duluth East 419

T O P E L Y INDIVIDUAL GIRL FINISHERS

- 16. Brooke Pasmick 20:00.1
- 46. Ana Bercher 21:40.9
- 88. Lucy Stouffer 24:04.0
- 18. Kalyssa Eilrich 18:24.0
- 34. Cora Olson 19:28.8
- 43. Julia Schwinghamer 19:54.5

TOP TEN TEAM GIRL RESULTS

- 1. St Paul Highland Park 525
- 2. Duluth East 513
- 3. Forest Lake 491
- 4. Wayzata 488
- 5. Stillwater Area 478
- 6. Grand Rapids 467
- 6. Winona 467
- 8. Andover 453
- 9. Alexandria Area 451
- 10. Ely 446



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# Obituaries and Death Notices



## Melvin R. Luloff

Melvin R. Luloff, 79, of Lake Vermilion-Cook, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019. A memorial gathering was held on Wednesday, Jan. 9 at Washburn-McReavy Eden Prairie Chapel. A memorial in Cook will be held at a date to be announced.

Melvin made his home on Lake Vermilion in Cook. He was a general building contractor in the Twin Cities and on Lake Vermilion. He loved hunting turkeys and pheasants and adored his Springer Spaniels.

Melvin is survived by his wife, Nancy; children, Dan (Cindy), Susie (Todd) DeRenzis, Jim (Jennifer) Erickson and Cindy (Kevin) O’Connell; eight grandchildren; sister, Susan; beloved dog, Zeus; and many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by five of his siblings.



## Robert L. Stevens

Robert “Bob” Louis “Turtle” Stevens, 67, of Lake Vermilion-Tower and Virginia, passed away with his family by his side on Friday, Dec. 21, 2018. He died after a long, hard three and a-half-year battle with neuroendocrine cancer. He was a unique and special man who will live forever in our hearts. A Celebration of Life was held on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, at Bauman-Cron Funeral Home Chapel in Virginia.

Bob was born in Minneapolis on Feb. 28, 1951, to Ray and Bernice (Hennum) Stevens. While he was still a toddler, the family moved to Biwabik, where Bob graduated with the class of 1969. After high school, Bob attended college in Menominee, Wis., but left in 1973 to work in the mines and electrical construction.

In June 1976, Bob met his soulmate and the love of his life, Elizabeth

Padgett of Cloquet, at the Tower Root Beer Stand. After a six-month whirlwind romance, Bob and Liz were married in Cloquet on Dec. 18, 1976. They had just celebrated 42 years of marriage. Bob and Liz had three children, Zebulon, Sarah and Hannah, and are currently raising two of their grandchildren, Luna and Anish.

They made their first home in Soudan, built a basement home in Pike-Sandy Township, moved to Hudson, Wis., and eventually relocated back to the Iron Range, settling in Virginia in 1993. After spending the summers of his youth growing up on Lake Vermilion, it was his dream to have his kids and grandkids love The Lake as much as he did, so in 1987, they bought their first cabin on The Lake. The Lake was his sanctuary and his happy place that he loved the most all of his life.

Bob had been an instructor in Electrical Controls and Maintenance at Mesabi Range College since the fall of 1993. After being hired to teach, Bob completed his degree at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menominee, on what he referred to as the 25-year plan. He held a BS in Vocational Education from Stout, an MS in Electronics and Computer Technology from Indiana State University, and an Automated Systems Diploma from the Eveleth Area Vocational Technical Institute. He was very proud of the fact that he was able to return to the Range, teaching in the program he graduated from in the early 80s. He enjoyed going to his job every day, and never considered it work. He got great satisfaction out of teaching, always leaving his students with a story relating to the lesson at hand.

He was a jack-of-all trades who could do anything - from building and remodeling homes to car repairs to painting beautiful oils. It was Bob’s Grandpa Hennum, his father Ray, and teacher Dan Saarela from high school shop class who gave him his love of woodworking. Bob was a rock collector; everywhere he went he took home rocks to add to his collection or to use in some building project he had going. He loved to deer hunt at the shack, duck hunt the Vermilion River, fish wherever they were biting on Lake Vermilion, sail on his sailboat, and enjoy campfires by The Lake. Bob was first and foremost a family man, always placing his family above all else, whether it was taking them on numerous adventures or just being there for them. Some of his happiest times were spent playing games with or telling folktales

and stories to his kids or grandkids.

He will be missed and cherished by his wife, Liz; son, Zebulon and his children Luna and Anish of Virginia; daughter, Sarah (Keith) Knudson and their children Bo, Alden, Chase, Everett, Liam, Cash, Isla, Carys and Tyce of Wuori Township; daughter, Hanna (Bjørn Åge) Haugen and their children Helén, Philip and Louis of Tranby, Norway; dad, Ray (Carolyn) of Lake Vermilion-Tower; siblings, Don (Della) Stevens of Circle Pines, JoAnne (Jim “Louie”) Lewis of Steamboat Springs, Colo., and Dick (Eva) of Mound; father-in-law, Doug Padgett of Lake Vermilion-Tower; and many dear relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Bernice Stevens; and both sets of grandparents.



## Shirley A. Seinola

Shirley Ann Seinola, 81, of Rochester, former longtime resident of Cook, passed away on Friday, Dec. 28, 2018, at Seasons Hospice House in Rochester. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Cook with Father Nicholas Nelson officiating. A reception in honor of Shirley was held following the service at the church. Warren Mlaker played the Button Box in her honor. Interment was at St. Bridget’s Cemetery in Greaney Township. The family suggests donations to Seasons Hospice, 1696 Greenview Drive SW, Rochester, MN 55902. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Shirley was born to Victor and Mary (Vukelich) Zgaynor on March 27, 1937, in Cook. She grew up in Celina and attended school in Alango. She graduated from Alango High School in 1957. She was united in marriage to Ronald “Ron” Seinola on Nov. 2, 1957, in Greaney. Soon after graduation and her marriage to Ron, Shirley decided to pursue a health care degree, graduating from the Radiography Program at St. Luke’s Hospital in Duluth. Shirley and Ron moved back to Cook, where they remained living at the same resi-

dence on Johnson Road Extension for almost 60 years. They raised their family there and Shirley continued her lifelong dedication to health care service in Cook.

Shirley worked at the Cook Hospital and Care Center, and at Scenic Rivers Health Services. Although formally trained as an X-ray technologist, she also learned about laboratory medicine and was instrumental in maintaining the laboratory services at the Cook Hospital. She completed her career as a medical assistant at Scenic Rivers Health Services, where she retired in 2002. In all, Shirley worked almost 40 years in health care in Cook, where she helped to care for so many people in the region. She simply loved her work and the people of the region.

Shirley’s other passion and greatest joy was her family and spending as much time as she could with them, especially her grandchildren. She treasured her grandsons and was always doing something special for them or sending them cards and letters with special messages. When her two great-granddaughters came along later in Shirley’s life, she was overjoyed and showered them with love. Shirley always looked forward to all her family returning home for various family events. She was a superlative cook. Shirley especially loved to see her family at “the Camp” near Cook where they were together for so many family times and many Thanksgiving meals. Shirley also made sure that her family would take an annual vacation together. They would vacation to Rainy Lake in International Falls or Fenske Lake Cabins in Ely. She really enjoyed those focused times with the family; as they tell it, she was a pretty good fisherwoman. Shirley loved spending time outdoors; during the summer, she could always be found in one of her many flower gardens with her husband Ron by her side. Sadly, her beloved husband passed away in 2017.

Shirley is survived by her daughter, Jody Seinola Dearth of Rochester; son, Scott (Geri) Seinola of St. Charles; grandsons, Daniel Dearth of Rochester, Benjamin (Rebekah) Seinola of Winona and Jared (Hannah) Seinola of St. Charles; great-granddaughters, June Marie Seinola and Teagan Ann Seinola; and sister, Beverly (Wally) Helmbrecht of Blaine.

Shirley was preceded in death by her parents, Victor and Mary; and husband, Ron.

## Thomas M. Rukavina

Thomas Martin “Tom” Rukavina, 68, of Virginia, passed away on Monday, Jan. 7, 2019, at University of Minnesota Medical Center in Minneapolis. Services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 19 at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Virginia. Visitation will be held on Friday, Jan. 18 at Range Funeral Home in Virginia from 5 to 7 p.m. and will continue on Saturday at the church from 9:30 a.m. until the 11 a.m. service. Full obituary to follow. Arrangements are pending with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

## Helen R. Kallio

Helen Ruth Kangas Kallio, 91, of Ocala, Fla., formerly of Virginia and Embarrass, died on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2019, at the Superior Residences Assisted Living facility in Ocala, where she had resided since July 2018. A private family burial will take place this summer at the Embarrass Cemetery. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home of Virginia.

She is survived by her sons, Ronald (Rebecca) Kallio of New Port Richey, Fla., and Thomas (Patricia) Kallio of New Brighton; daughter, Peggy (Gary) Ahistus of Ocala, Fla.; six grandchildren; and eleven great-grandchildren.

## Leonard R. Pylka

Leonard Raymond Pylka, 99, formerly of Aurora, and originally of Embarrass, passed away peacefully with his children by his side on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, at Chris Jensen Health and Rehabilitation Center in Duluth. He had requested that no service be held at this time; there will be a graveside service in the spring at Forest Hill Cemetery in Aurora. Local arrangements are by Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Aurora.

He is survived by his daughter, Peggy (Doug) MacDonald of Duluth; son, Bruce (Susie) Pylka of Sawyer; grandchildren, Shelly (Doug Koda) Crist, Jason (Mina Yee) MacDonald, Chad (Jessi) Pylka and Wade (Courtney Keyler) Pylka; great-grandchildren, Auston, Dylan, Finley, Mason, Emilia and Easton; sister-in-law, Anerva Pylka; and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Martha V. Norha

Martha Violet Niemi Norha, 89, of Virginia, originally of Embarrass, passed away on Monday, Dec. 31, 2018, at Essentia Health St. Mary’s in Duluth. A funeral service was held on Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019, at Messiah Lutheran Church in Mt. Iron with Pastor Joyce Piper officiating. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her children, Margaret (Joseph) Sullivan, Rebecca (Robert) Enger and Amy Norha; grandchildren, J. Matthew Sullivan, Nick Sullivan (Amber Dennis), Ryan (Jessica) Enger, Paul Enger Esq. (Alex Berns), Martie Enger, Holly Norha and Sophia Norha; great-grandchildren, Emma Sullivan and Mariah Neely-Enger; sister, Lillian Angelo; and sisters-in-law, Bertha (Charles) Maki and Joyce Niemi.

## Laura A. Burton

Laura Angeline Buckingham Burton, 89, of Babbitt, passed away on Monday, Dec. 31, 2018, at Northern Pines Care Center in Aurora. Per her request, no services are planned at this time. A graveside service will be held in the spring at Argo Cemetery.

She is survived by her children: Bonnie Jean Olson and children; Connie Olson, Shanon (Keith) Urbanski and sons Anthony and Zachary; Barbara Jo Kupka (Lawrence) and children; Christine (Scott) Hautala and children; Lindsey (Aaron) Hallman, Allyson, Lance Kupka (Kathy) and children; Nicholas Tiedeman, AnnMarie; Heather Tomczak (Joseph) and children; John and Olivia. Beverly Jon Hill (Jonathon) and children; Tina Strange and Tricia Gray (Jason) and children; Jordan, Jadin and Jasmine Taylor; four great-great-grandchildren; sister, Dorothy Hugget; sister-in-law; Carol Buckingham; and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Carole A. Nelson

Carole Ann Nelson, 83, of Babbitt, died on Sunday, Dec. 30, 2018, at the Essentia Health-St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth. Memorial services were held on Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Babbitt with Pastor Jonathan Varn officiating. Inurnment will be in Argo Cemetery in Babbitt at a later date. Memorials are preferred to the Good Shepherd Ladies Aid of Babbitt. Arrangements are by Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Aurora.

She is survived by her children, Diane (Fred) Cooke, David Nelson, Mike (Vicki) Nelson, Sherry (Gene) Maki, Kevin (Mary) Nelson, Steve Nelson, Robert Nelson and Judy (Steve) Ginther; eleven grandchildren; twenty great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren; brother, Thomas Dubbe; sister, Audrey (Keith) Parker; and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Greg Rebeau

Greg Rebeau, 67, of Lake Vermilion, passed away suddenly on Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, after suffering a cardiac event. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

He is survived by his brother, John (Julie) Rebeau; his daughter with Kathy Boyer, Cassie (Finn) Jacobsen; granddaughter, “Hollywood”; niece, Jess (Trevor) Rebeau; and several cousins.

## Phyllis Alvin

Phyllis Noren Alvin, 93, of North Branch, originally of Soudan, died on Christmas Day 2018. A memorial service will be held in May 2019.

She is survived by her children, Candace (Larry) Anderson of North Branch, Jill (Jack) Graser of Naples, Fla., Tom (Shelley) Alvin of Verado, Ariz., and Jon Alvin of Center City; grandchildren, Andrea Moen, Ryan (Michelle) Moen, Peter

(Connie) Alvin, Jonathan (Christine) Alvin, Zack (Amanda) Alvin and Jennifer (Ari) Zainudden; and nine great-grandchildren.

## Kenneth M. White

Kenneth Michael White, 56, of Cook, died suddenly on Friday, Dec. 21, 2018, at the Cook Hospital. Funeral services were held on Saturday, Dec. 29 at Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Aurora with

Pastor Jim Stevens officiating. Burial was in Forest Hill Cemetery in Aurora.

He is survived by his mother, Virginia Park; stepmother, JoAnne (Don) Strandlund; siblings, Virginia Crews, Wilfred (Stephanie) White, Kimberly (John) Schick, Richard (Tracee) White and Kelly (Jill) Park; step-siblings, Waylan (Karlyn) Lundquist, Julie (Bruce) Miltz, Karen (Scott) Kroll, Tom (Shannon) Lundquist, Jackie Marie Schumacher,

Christine (Ronald) Adams, Tammy (Mark) Langfeld, Patrick (Diane) Park and Cindy (Jeff) Hancock; and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Leonard M. Rent

Leonard Martin Rent, 90, of Embarrass, and formerly of Aurora, died peacefully on Friday, Dec. 14, 2018, at Northern Pines Nursing Facility in Aurora. A Funeral Mass was held at Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church in

Aurora on Friday, Jan. 4, 2019.

He is survived by his very special friend, Carla Olson of Embarrass; daughters, Cyndee (Brian) Forsman of Aurora and Sandy (Tony) Addy of Virginia; son, John Rent of Chicago; grandsons, Arik (Jessica) Forsman of Duluth, Nick (Angel) Addy of Gilbert and Jon (Kristi) Addy of Mt. Iron; and great-grandchildren, Amelia, Arlo and Zinneä.





# Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

CITIZEN SCIENCE

## Northern finches and a few oddities highlight bird counts

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — An abundance of northern finches, along with a few surprises, proved the main story of Christmas bird counts held across the area. Count participants in Ely recorded 844 pine siskins, a new record. “The

pine siskin numbers completely blew everything out of the ballpark,” said Norma Malinowski, of Ely, who is one of the compilers of the count. Indeed, at 844 individuals, pine siskins accounted for nearly one of every three birds recorded during the Ely count. Pine siskins are small brown-streaked birds with flashes of yellow on the

wings. Like most northern finches, they feed primarily on the seeds of conifers. Counters in Ely also saw large numbers of pine grosbeaks, which have been abundant at most area feeders this winter. But the 181 grosbeaks recorded in Ely was just a fraction of the record-setting grosbeak tally on the Aurora count, where

participants recorded 485 pine grosbeaks, the highest ever in the 39-year history of the count. Two experienced Ely participants spotted a golden eagle, the first ever for the Ely count. While distinguishing a golden eagle from an immature bald eagle can

See COUNTS...pg. 5B



Left: Pine grosbeaks were abundant at several area bird counts this year.  
file photo



LIFE IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

# Like a picture postcard

An El Niño winter is leaving the North Country frequently frosted

It seems that every winter paints a different portrait of the North Country. Sometimes hard and brutal. Other times, like this winter, showing a softer side. The effects of another still-developing El Niño in the Pacific, combined with the steady warming of our winters in general, has kept the North Country under a consistent pattern of warmer-than-normal temperatures since early December. We’ve seen such patterns before, where a colder-than-average fall season transitions to a mild winter. We still have the back half of the winter to go, of course, so it’s too early to say how we’ll rate this season when it’s all said and done.

It seems no matter the weather, winter here offers something unique, that reminds me again why winter has become my second favorite season (fall, of course, is everyone’s favorite time in the North Country). When we meet people who spend their winters in warmer places, they often wonder why anyone would choose to live here through the dark and cold of winter.

My response is always the same. Winter here is like living in a Christmas postcard—the kind where the snow lies heavy on spruce and fir and the smoke trails from the chimney of the little log cabin in the woods. “Wishing you Peace on Earth,” it usually says, and I think to myself there’s no need for wishing. This is our life in the North Country.

Then there are the mornings like we’ve had recently, when our confused jet stream pushes mild and moist air far beyond its normal range for this time of year, and coats our world in hoar-frost.

As I’ve written before, my wife Jodi and I live on a ridge overlooking the Lost Lake Swamp, a miles-long peatland full of interesting stories I’ve related on these pages for decades now. While our view is spectacular in any season, the view of the frosted forest stretching for miles is the most spectacular vision of all.

Hoar-frost is more common here in late winter, as the increasingly regular intrusions of milder air begin to herald the eventual arrival of spring. But in the depths of January, when our air masses typically originate in the dry Arctic, hoar-frost is far from common.

Hoar-frost forms most often as milder air, laden with moisture, comes in contact with a cold surface, whether it’s the windshield of your car, or the frozen needles and branches of trees in the forest.

It often arrives on a west breeze, and you can feel the moisture as it moves through the woods. It often begins with a morning fog, which lifts later in the day to peeks of sun. When those first rays of sunlight strike the frosted trees, it’s nothing short of breathtaking.

That’s why when I think of those who spend winter to our south, I mostly just feel sympathy. In so much of the country, winter is just a nuisance, not really a true season like we experience here in the North Country. The summer warmth is gone, but the cold doesn’t really linger. Snow comes as a sloppy mess, sending inexperienced drivers spinning, then quickly disappears.

Here, winter is real, even in a mild El Niño year like we’re experiencing now. And it has a beauty that is unsurpassed.

Above: A birch and aspen ridge, with white pine and spruce in the foreground, all flocked with hoar-frost.

Below: The frosted needles of a white spruce on a ridge overlooking the Lost Lake Swamp.

Bottom: More early morning hoar-frost.

photos by M. Helmberger



Why live here in winter? I often think of a friend from Ely who likes to say he could be making \$40,000 more a year if he lived in the Twin Cities. But he says the view from his window is worth at least \$50,000, which means he’s \$10,000 ahead on the deal. That’s the kind of math I can get behind.

MINNESOTA

## Strommen named DNR Commissioner

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Sarah Strommen has been appointed as Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources. If confirmed by the Senate, she would be the first woman to hold the DNR’s top administrative position.

“Sarah Strommen built her career integrating science and policymaking across several sectors, and has a deep understanding and appreciation for our natural resources,” said Gov. Tim Walz in a statement. “She embraces our vision for One Minnesota and will work to build consensus among citizens and stakeholders alike.”

Strommen said she’s excited to take on the DNR’s top job. “Minnesota has a strong outdoor legacy, and I am excited to work collaboratively with staff, stakeholders, and everyday Minnesotans to enhance our diverse and first-rate outdoor experiences for all.”

Strommen, 46, brings more than 20 years of experience to the DNR, with a focus on integrating the field of biological science with citizen education and public policymaking. After graduating college, Strommen used a Fulbright research scholarship to do field work in Costa Rica, and subsequently earned her masters’ degree in environmental management from Duke University.

In addition to research, Strommen worked in the nonprofit sector, serving as Policy Director for Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness and as Associate Director of the Minnesota Land Trust. She joined state government in 2012, serving as the Assistant Director and Acting Deputy Director for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. Since 2015, Strommen has served as Assistant Commissioner for the divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Parks and Trails at the DNR. After serving several terms on the Ramsey City Council, Strommen was elected as Mayor of Ramsey in 2012 – an office she held until May 2018. While in public office, she worked to develop innovative and effective ways of engaging citizens in the local decision-making process.

Strommen now lives in Plymouth with her husband, son, and two dogs.



Sarah Strommen



MARSHALL HELMBERGER



ON THE TRAILS

With recent snowfalls, the trails are looking good

REGIONAL — It's time to hit the trails! Recent snowfalls have significantly improved snowmobile trail conditions across northern St. Louis and Lake counties, according to the latest report from the Department of Natural Resources. While some wetland areas are still waiting for grooming, most of the Arrowhead Trail and portions of the Taconite Trail are now groomed.

The Arrowhead is now listed as in good to very good condition, while the Taconite Trail is listed in good condition. Most other upland trails maintained by area snowmobile clubs are also groomed or are mostly groomed and are in good to very good condition. And with mild temperatures continuing in the forecast, there's little excuse not to get out and enjoy the season.

Be safe and alert while traveling the trails



LAKEVERMILION — The Vermilion Penguins Snowmobile Club is advising area riders to be cautious and courteous while riding on area snowmobile trails, including those on lakes. The club stakes approximately 60 miles of trails across Lake Vermilion, which are designed to give riders access to a number of mainland trails that both the Penguins, the DNR, and other snowmobile clubs maintain across the area. As with any winter activity, however, the club is advising riders to stay alert when riding the lake, because obstacles, like ice roads, can and do appear. "Just because the route is there doesn't mean it is

hazard free," said the club in a statement. "Riders need to keep this in mind when crossing the lake. Remember, the lake is public and snowmobilers are just a small portion of the public. Other users such as fishermen, cabin owners, skiers, and hikers all use our great resource for activities throughout the winter. As a common courtesy, we need to respect other users that might be enjoying nature as we are. Please be mindful of other snowmobilers and take the time to mark a hazard such as a plowed road with something as simple as a balsam bough." Other hazards on the lake are newly-made ruts, slush, pressure ridges and snow drifts. These obstacles can come up quickly and be very dangerous to riders, advises the club. So, when riding, ride to the conditions and don't use the staked trail as a race track. BE SAFE.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
22 12					23 12					28 17					27 13					26 12				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
12/31	21	13	0.23	2.1"	12/31	19	12	0.24	3.2"	12/31	na	na	0.11	1.5"	12/31	16	-11	0.15	2.0"	12/31	19	12	0.24	3.2"
01/01	15	-23	0.00		01/01	15	-26	0.05		01/01	13	-22	0.00		01/01	0	-26	0.00		01/01	13	-25	0.05	
01/02	6	-25	0.00		01/02	1	-28	0.00		01/02	-2	-22	0.00		01/02	12	-8	0.00		01/02	-5	-18	0.00	
01/03	22	-3	0.01		01/03	21	-5	0.00		01/03	23	-7	0.00		01/03	39	16	0.02		01/03	23	-3	0.00	
01/04	37	22	0.00		01/04	35	15	0.00		01/04	37	21	0.01		01/04	36	21	0.00		01/04	38	15	0.00	
01/05	35	13	0.00		01/05	34	8	0.00		01/05	33	8	0.00		01/05	30	18	0.00		01/05	33	8	0.00	
01/06	32	15	0.00		01/06	30	8	0.00		01/06	32	13	0.00		01/06	27	12	0.00		01/06	32	13	0.00	
Totals			0.01	36.8"	Totals			0.05	30.4"	Totals			0.01	36.1"	Totals			0.02	NA	Totals			0.05	28.55"

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Keller tapped as DNR's new big game program head

REGIONAL — Minnesota's new big game program supervisor will be Barbara Keller, an experienced wildlife researcher and manager who begins overseeing the state's deer, elk and moose populations for the Department of Natural Resources on Feb. 1. "Barbara has a strong background in all aspects of managing deer, moose and elk populations, which will be an asset here in Minnesota," said Paul Telander, wildlife section chief. "We had an exceptional pool of candidates for this position and are looking forward to the skills and experience Barbara will bring to Minnesota's

big game program." Keller has over 12 years of experience in wildlife management, research and diseases. Since 2016, she has been the cervid program supervisor for the Missouri Department of Conservation, where she oversaw management of Missouri white-tailed deer and elk populations, including the chronic wasting disease program. Keller also set statewide deer regulations and helped supervise the development of regulations for what will be the state's first elk hunting season. The primary responsibilities of the big game program supervisor are to manage deer and elk popu-

lations and harvest seasons and to work with groups and individuals interested in big game management to address the expectations of a diverse public. Keller attended Northland College in Wisconsin and received a bachelor of science degree in natural resource management, has a master's degree in wildlife science from New Mexico State University, and a doctorate degree from the University of Missouri in wildlife science. Her research includes studies on bighorn sheep, bison, pronghorn, elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer populations in the western U.S.

COUNTS...Continued from page 4B

be tricky for the inexperienced birder, Malinowski said she's confident in the identification since it was two expert birders who saw the bird and made the call. The gradual disappearance of some northern bird species seemed to be confirmed even as a new, more southerly, bird species appeared on the scene. Neither the Ely nor the Isabella counts included any spruce grouse, which had been routinely sighted in years past, in at least

low numbers. At the same time, the Aurora count recorded its first-ever wild turkeys, yet more evidence of this species' steady encroachment into the North Country. Whether it's climate change, the now-widespread practice of deer feeding, or both, that is altering the range of the wild turkey is unclear at this point but Malinowski, who actually spotted the birds during the Aurora count, said they were present at a residence that feeds large numbers

of deer. In Isabella, Malinowski and count coordinator Steve Wilson, of Tower, can certainly lay claim to the most effort expended for the least number of birds. The two gluttons for punishment spent the day breaking trail on snowshoes through two feet of powder. During one three-hour stretch on their arduous trek, the pair failed to spot a single bird. They don't call it the Silent North for nothing.



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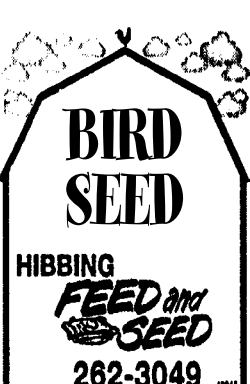
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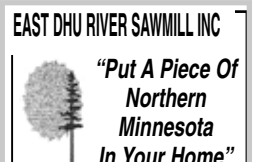
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### ACROSS

- 1 Ship parts
- 6 One in a veil
- 11 Very small:  
Prefix
- 15 Sealed, say
- 19 Early TV's  
Stu
- 20 Posteriors
- 21 Stick — in  
the water
- 22 Songwriter's  
creation
- 23 Martin  
the ticket  
collector?
- 26 Actor Bana  
or Stoltz
- 27 Pay to play  
poker
- 28 Game with  
Wild cards
- 29 Clinton the  
doctor?
- 31 Caught at a  
rodeo
- 33 Pollen lover
- 34 Hardly fresh
- 35 Worldwide
- 38 Ellington the  
Peppermint  
Pattie factory  
worker?
- 45 More greasy
- 49 Ending for  
Israel
- 50 Ilk
- 51 Car owners'  
org.
- 52 Kelly the  
minister?
- 54 "Let's go!"

- 55 Former Apple  
messaging  
software
- 57 See  
64-Down
- 58 Primate  
studier  
Fossey
- 59 Benny the  
golfer?
- 61 Markey and  
Bagnold
- 63 Actor Hinds  
of 2017's  
"Justice  
League"
- 65 Negligent
- 66 Sen. Kirsten  
Gillibrand's  
purview
- 67 Bailey the  
philosopher?
- 72 Folder flap
- 75 Meal tie-on
- 76 Rice-based  
Spanish dish
- 77 Ivory's  
counterpart
- 79 Benatar the  
dairy owner?
- 85 Fuzzy stuff
- 87 Departure
- 88 Standoffish
- 89 Karmann —  
(bygone VW  
sports car)
- 90 Nolte the  
clockmaker?
- 92 Skeleton part
- 93 +
- 94 Ariz.-to-Kan.  
dir.

- 95 Girls in the  
family
- 96 Liotta  
the lamp  
designer?
- 100 Gets dilated
- 102 Basic deg.  
for designers
- 103 Supermodel  
Carangi or  
actress Scala
- 105 End profit
- 110 Behar the  
chef?
- 116 Airport stat
- 117 Hotel chain
- 118 Morales of  
film and TV
- 119 Arden the  
demolition  
contractor?
- 122 Shady giants
- 123 Get-out-of-jail  
money
- 124 Super-mad
- 125 "The Flea"  
poet John
- 126 Blog addition
- 127 Pot for stew
- 128 Lauder of  
makeup
- 129 Evil smile

### DOWN

- 1 Get gold, e.g.
- 2 Target  
Center, e.g.
- 3 Smacks
- 4 Spork parts
- 5 — -cone
- 6 "Viva  
Zapata!" star

- 7 Alter totally
- 8 Reply to  
"Who's  
in charge  
here?"
- 9 Bounced  
down the  
court
- 10 Actress  
Davis of two  
"Matrix" films
- 11 Spam, say
- 12 Langston  
Hughes  
poem
- 13 Athletic team  
assoc.
- 14 Film anew
- 15 Not wobbly
- 16 Throw
- 17 Troop body
- 18 Pt. of MIT or  
STEM
- 24 Nuclear  
reactor tube
- 25 Polar vehicle
- 30 Polar pixie
- 32 Curved arch
- 36 High jump on  
a skateboard,  
informally
- 37 Lacking a  
key, in music
- 39 "Semper Fi"  
mil. branch
- 40 Weirdo
- 41 Rubik of  
cube fame
- 42 Aiea's island
- 43 Broccoli —
- 44 Kit — (candy  
bars)

- 45 Poet Nash
- 46 Twisted wit
- 47 — lazuli
- 48 Frosted
- 53 Abbr. on a  
pay stub
- 54 "Please,  
Mommy, will  
you let us?"
- 55 "Veni," in  
English
- 56 Nero's 160
- 59 Villain in  
Disney's  
"Aladdin"
- 60 Waitress on  
TV's "Alice"
- 62 Spruce (up)
- 64 With  
57-Across,  
Ali ring  
strategy
- 68 Abate
- 69 "Fighting" Big  
Ten team
- 70 Cut, as pizza
- 71 Cold and wet
- 72 Like poison
- 73 Japanese  
cartoon art
- 74 Measures of  
memory
- 75 Scaring cry
- 78 — noire
- 79 One of  
Henry VIII's  
Catherines
- 80 Et —
- 81 Mug in a  
pub
- 82 Jamaican  
citrus fruit

- 83 Mean ruffian
- 84 Wife on "The  
Addams  
Family," to  
her hubby
- 86 Cover for a  
truck bed
- 90 Crystal  
rubbers,  
perhaps
- 91 Jab deliverer
- 93 Control in a  
clinical study
- 97 Certain wind  
player
- 98 Very loudly,  
musically
- 99 9-to-5er's  
weekly cry
- 101 Main dish
- 104 Art house  
film, often
- 106 Went  
aboard
- 107 Nitrogen  
compound
- 108 Words after  
all or hole
- 109 San Fran  
griddler
- 110 All-terrain  
vehicle
- 111 Fjord city
- 112 Tasty tubers
- 113 Egg-shaped
- 114 Eye,  
in Paris
- 115 Nut with  
caffeine
- 116 Rock finale?
- 120 Perched
- 121 LP replacers

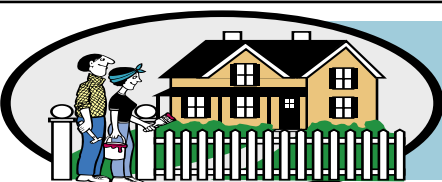
## Weekly SUDOKU

### Answer

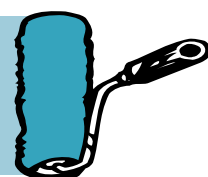
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8	2	6	1	7	5	4	3	9
3	5	9	4	8	6	1	2	7
4	9	3	5	1	2	8	7	6
2	1	7	9	6	8	3	5	4
5	6	8	3	4	7	9	1	2
9	8	5	6	2	1	7	4	3
7	4	2	8	3	9	5	6	1
6	3	1	7	5	4	2	9	8

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110	111	112					113	114	115					116				117				
118							119						120					121				
122							123					124						125				
126							127					128						129				





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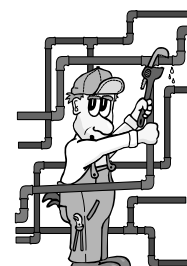
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