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OCTOBER 23, 2024

Volume 18 • Issue 10

Missing Nicole Anderson \$45,000 Reward

By Sheriff Joe Leko

The Dakota County Sheriff's Office continues to investigate the disappearance of 56-year-old Nicole Anderson who left on foot from her Randolph Township home the morning of July 6th and did not return.



(continued on page 7)

Dundas Oktoberfest

On a warm, sunny, beautiful Saturday in September, hundreds of folks enjoyed Oktoberfest in Dundas! The downtown was alive with food vendors, beverage purveyors, local maker booths, horse carriage rides and chil-

dren's activities. The second annual Oktoberfest was a huge success! Last year's attendance exceeded expectations and this year there were even more people and activities! Dundas Oktoberfest continues to grow and



Alderks Selected for 2024 Wildlife Enhancement Award for Rice County



The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District has selected Larry Alderks of Dundas as the 2024 Wildlife Enhancement Award winner for Rice County.

Pictured to the left: Larry Alderks received the Wildlife Enhancement Award at the Rice County Fair in July. From left to right: Rice SWCD Supervisor Richard Peterson, Larry Alderks, Rice SWCD Supervisor Tim Little.

expand offerings in this local celebration. Just under two hundred kids enjoyed Barrel Rides through downtown Dundas and into Memorial Park. Farmstead Outdoor Adventures offered an Introduction to Kayak experience with a 45-minute venture on the Cannon River. A totally different way to see the community by connecting people to the river. And...What a fabulous nod to the history of Dundas, which exists due to its Grain Milling History on the Cannon River.

(continued on page 12)

Announcements

- **The Winter Parking Ban goes into effect on October 31st.** It is unlawful to park vehicles or equipment on a street or alley between 2:00am-6:30am. Vehicles in violation will be ticketed.
- **Early voting by runs to November 4th.** You may vote by mail or in person at Northfield City Hall. More information about mail in voting can be found at mnvotes.gov

City of Dundas Presents

TRUNK OR TREAT

6 TO 7 PM
Friday, October 25th

Memorial Park
214 1st Street South

The City of Dundas Parks and Recreation Board invites the community to a Trunk or Treat in Memorial Park. Area organizations and businesses will be there with decorated car trunks ready to hand out candy and prizes. Come join the fun!

Do you have an announcement?
Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

City of Northfield & Dundas Sign Funding Agreement For The New Ice Arena Project

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The City of Dundas and the City of Northfield took another major step in the new ice arena project. The Dundas City Council approved the cost-sharing agreement between the two cities, and the Northfield City Council approved the deal, which both passed unanimously. The agreements provide more information about how the project is funded.

The agreement uses net tax capacity to keep tax levels the same across the two cities.

(continued on page 6)



Dundas City Administrator
Jenelle Teppen



Northfield Mayor
Rhonda Pownell

Dundas City Council Reviews City Admin's Performance; Approves Construction Projects for 2025

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

At their October meeting, the Dundas City Council held their annual review for City Administrator Jenelle Teppen. The review was based on 7 different categories and whether each council member thought Teppen met the expectations in that area or not.

(continued on page 19)



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Join Us On

A Word from the Lord about Harvesting

By Pastor Marty Weigand

October is not only for football games and fall color; it's a month of combines, gravity boxes, and bright lights in the middle of a field as farmers work late into the night to get the harvest in. Listen to what the Bible tells us about a harvest time many years ago with God's Old Testament people Israel, and the lessons God has for us in this.

It was around 500 B.C.—the people of Israel had recently come back from 70 years of captivity in Babylon (present day Iraq) and were in their own land again. They were living in their own houses, which they had rebuilt, and planting and harvesting in their own fields again. But the harvest was not what they hoped. "You planted much, but harvested little," God told them through the prophet Haggai (Haggai 1:6 NIV).

Why was that? God explained it to them. "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? declares the LORD Almighty. Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I

called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands." (Haggai 1:9-11 NIV)

The people didn't want to be bothered with rebuilding the Lord's temple, which had been torn down when the Israelites went into captivity. They wanted to have their own houses and stuff all the way they wanted first. Only after that—maybe—would they find time to rebuild the temple. Logically, this should have resulted in greater harvests and more prosperity for them, since by not spending time or wealth on the Lord's house, they had more time and wealth to put into building their own houses and planting and tending their own fields.

But God didn't let it work out that way. He made it so that when they put God last in order to have more for themselves, they ended up with less for themselves than if they would have put God first.

God is still in charge today of how successful our work is on this earth—whether it's farming, factory work, construction, retail, or fixing up our own house or vacation home. He's also in charge of how our day goes—whether we have time to spare; or unexpected complications eat away all the extra time we thought we had set aside for ourselves.

When we put God last, in order to have more money for ourselves, or more time for ourselves, he may do like he did with the Israelites, and we end up with less money to spare to buy things we wanted to, or less time to enjoy them, then if we would have put the Lord first with our time, wealth, or energy.

The reverse is also true. God inspired the Apostle Paul to write these words to Chris-

tians in Corinth around 55 A.D., who were willingly taking part in an offering to help needy fellow Christians around Jerusalem. "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion." (2 Corinthians 9:10-11 NIV) Instead of the Christians making themselves poorer by giving away what they had, God would bless them and make them richer than if they hadn't given, so they could bless yet more people with their gifts. God can do

that with our time as well, blessing us so that when we take time to worship him, and to serve him by serving others, he lets our day go in such a way that we get more done and still have more time left than if we hadn't taken that time out to serve him.

Dear Christians in our community, let these things encourage you to do what your new Christian heart already wants to do. Put your Lord Jesus first, with your time and your wealth, in thanks to Him who put serving and saving you ahead of his own time, health and life; but then rose from the dead to live forever as your Savior!

Area Church Directory

Wake Up

"Young man, I say to you, 'Get up!'" — Luke 7:14

I am not a morning person. I wish I were. I have learned to get up early out of necessity, but it takes some time and coffee to get me going.

In our reading from Luke 7 today, we see a remarkable awakening. A young man has died. Jesus sees the funeral procession, and his heart goes out to the young man's mother, who is also a widow. He walks up to the funeral stretcher and says, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" Jesus uses a Greek word here that literally means "wake up." Jesus treats the young man as if he is not dead but asleep. And when he wakes up, the young man starts to talk, which seems like a funny detail to include. Maybe he is a morning person!

Later in the passage, the same word is used again. The crowd that had seen this miracle declared with awe, "A great prophet has appeared among us." More literally, this can be translated: "A great prophet has awoken among us!"—meaning that the people could see they were in the presence of someone specially sent by God. They didn't know much about Jesus yet, but they would soon learn.

I don't know if you are a morning person or not, but here is a helpful prayer we can offer anytime: "Jesus, please awaken me!" Ask the Lord to wake you up to see and care about the people around you.

Dear Jesus, as you worked your resurrection power in that young man, will you work the same power in my life and spirit today? Help me to serve you faithfully. Amen.

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404 Schilling Drive, Dundas

Lead Pastor: **Jed McGuire** • www.canvaschurchmn.com

Sunday service 9:00a.m. and 10:45a.m.

YTH Wednesdays at 6:30p.m. Canvas Recovery Group meets Thursdays at 6:30p.m.

LITTLE PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST 2980 130th St. E.

Pastor **Penny Bonsell** • pastor@littleprairieumc.org

507-663-6150 church phone • 651-503-4279 Cell

9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship; Sunday School & Nursery; Adult Group 8a.m.

CITY LIGHT CHURCH 2140 Hwy. 3 South, Northfield, MN

Pastor **Pete Haase** • 507-645-8829 Call for service times

LIFE21 CHURCH 2100 Jefferson Road (just north of Target)

Pastor **Brent Bielenberg** • 645-7730 life21church.com

10:00a.m. Worship Experience

NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

Pastor **Dan Runke** • 663-0133 • northfieldefc.org

9:30 a.m. Worship; 11:00 a.m. Christian Life Classes

HOSANNA CHURCH - NORTHFIELD 205 2nd St. S., Dundas

Pastor **Dean Swenson** • 507-664-9007 • www.hosannalc.org

Sunday: 9am & 10:45am Worship with Hosanna Kids Church ages 3-5th grade and Child Care for ages 6wks-3years at both services

Fellowship time with refreshments between services.

Wednesday: Middle School Ministry - doors open at 5:30; programming 6-7:15;

High School Ministry - doors open at 7pm; programming 7:30-9pm

MAIN STREET MORAVIAN CHURCH 713 Division St., Northfield

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Ellen Wilma Amy

Ellen Wilma Amy died unexpectedly at her home on Thursday September 26, 2024



Ellen Wilma Edelbach was born at home on the farm near Alma (Buffalo County) Wisconsin on September 13, 1935 to parents Melvin and Wilma

(Fink) Edelbach. She attended school in Buffalo County Wisconsin and began working out of the home for various farm families in her teenage years, and met her future husband, Loren Amy in 1951. Ellen and Loren married in Fountain City, Wisconsin on September 19th, 1953. They farmed on shares for several years near Kellogg, MN before purchasing their dairy farm in Dennison, MN in 1961. Ellen was a life long farmer and homemaker. Although they discontinued dairy farming in the early 1970's, Ellen and Loren continued raising beef cattle and working the farm. She provided daycare to several area farm families as well as many of her Grandchildren as the family grew. In later years, after Lorens retirement from McQuay, they were able to travel to see family, including Texas, Oregon, California, Arizona as well as many trips to Wisconsin Dells with the family, and continued to enjoy the farm. After Lorens death in 2009, Ellen continued to live and take care of the cattle on the family farm in Dennison, actively gardening, cooking, canning and continuing the traditions she loved so much. Ellen held a strong Christian faith and supported her children and family to the fullest.

Ellen is survived by her children, David (Mary) Amy of Dundas, Bonnie (Favorite Son-In-Law, Randy) Aschman of Faribault, Dallas (Rebecca) Amy of Dennison, Darwin (Lori) Amy of Dennison, Daniel (Sarah) Amy of Dundas, Jeff (Paula) Amy of Wells, and Joe (Michelle) Amy of Dennison, along with 21 Grandchildren, 31 1/2 Great Grand Children*, and many nieces, nephews and friends.

Visitation was at the Bierman Funeral Home Monday, September 30, 2024 from 4-7 PM, and one hour prior to funeral services at Dennison Lutheran Church Tuesday, October 1, 2024 at 11 AM with her final resting at Prairie Creek Cemetery, rural Dennison.

Lunch followed at The Fireside Lounge & Supper Club in Dennison.

Audrey Lyllis DeMann

Audrey Lyllis DeMann, age 92, died peacefully on Friday, October 4, 2024, at Millstream Commons in Northfield, Minnesota, with her family by her side.



Audrey was born to Bill and Elaine (McKinnon) Robbie on September 13, 1932 in Dundas, Minnesota. She grew up in Dundas with her three sisters Karleene, Millie, and Linda. She attended grade school in Dundas and graduated from Northfield High School. On January 23, 1952, she married Chuck DeMann, and they were blessed with four sons Jerry, Chip, Doug, and Chris.

Audrey and Chuck lived in Dundas, Lonsdale, Beaver Bay, Silver Bay, Duluth, and Baxter before returning to Dundas in 1972. Audrey was a homemaker and an active member of the Episcopal Church in Dundas. After her children were grown, she worked as a clerk at the Dundas Post Office for about 10 years. She was a wonderful grandma, who

was always up for an adventure, and her grandkids adored her. She was an avid storyteller and writer. She always had a story to tell or a mystery to solve. She proudly shared the stories that she had written with others. She enjoyed working on genealogy and had put together several family history books, and a book on the history of Dundas. One of her many talents was sewing, she could sew just about anything, including authentic Defeat of Jesse James Days dusters.

Audrey is survived by sons Jerry (Lesta Starr) of Shidler, OK, Doug (Becky) of Dundas, Chris (Danette) of Dundas; grandchildren Justin DeMann Smith, Troy DeMann (Alexia Fletcher), Leah DeMann, Elizabeth Sannes (Scott), Trip DeMann, Gus DeMann, Molly DeMann (Luke Winzig), Amanda DeMann (Meghan Carmona), Anna Edwards (Joel), Ashley Opatrny (Joshua), Jacob DeMann (Ashley Winzig), Travis DeMann (Stephanie); 20 great grandchildren; sisters Millie MacKay, Linda Lieske; and many other relatives and dear friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Chuck, son Chip, daughter-in-law Mary Jane Moline, and sister Karleene Adams.

A celebration of life will be held at 1:30PM, Saturday, October 26, 2024, at the Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home. Visitation will begin at 12:30PM. Private interment for Audrey and Chuck will be at Groveland Cemetery in Dundas.

Arrangements are with the Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home. www.northfieldfuneral.com

(obituaries continued on page 4)

Northfield Public Library

The bookmobile will be visiting Dundas!

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-Monday December 2nd
-Monday January 6th

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Dorothy Louise Vesledahl

Dorothy Louise Vesledahl, 94, of Northfield, formerly of Nerstrand, passed away on October 10, 2024 surrounded by her family at the Northfield Retirement Center.



Dorothy was born on June 11, 1930 in Dundas, MN to parents Howard William Grimes and Martha Josie (Jackson) Grimes.

She attended the Dundas School and Northfield High School. Dorothy worked as a waitress at the Sweet Shop and then as a clerk at the Paper Shop, both in Northfield. She married Elmer Vesledahl on October 18, 1947 at the Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Dundas. Elmer and Dorothy lived in Dundas for 2 years until moving to the family farm near Nerstrand where they had four children, Kenny, David, Danny and Sandy. Dorothy continued to work at the Paper Shop for 9 years then stayed home with the children and helped on the farm. The farm was also a favorite place for several nieces and nephews to visit and stay. In 1965 Elmer and Dorothy built their house on a portion of the family farm. Dorothy served on the Holy Cross Church council and was a Sunday School teacher. Elmer and Dorothy eventually became members of Vang Lutheran Church in Dennison where Dorothy served on the church council for a time.

Elmer and Dorothy loved spending time with neighbors, relatives and friends snowmobiling, fishing in Canada, going to the lake,

camping and playing cards. After Elmer retired, they made several trips south in the winter. They were active members of the Jesse James Wheelers local Good Sam Camping Club, once holding a State Good Sam Campout on their farm during the Defeat of Jesse James Days with over 300 campers. They hosted family reunion "Corn Feeds" at their home which was a favorite annual event of the extended family for many years.

Elmer and Dorothy cooked the pig and carved it at the annual Defeat of Jesse James Days Hog Roast during the 90's and early 2000's. They were at one point given a plaque declaring them the "Official Mom and Dad" of the Defeat of Jesse James Days committee.

After Elmer's death in 2004, Dorothy continued to live in the family home until the age of 93, mowing her 3 acre lawn until the age of 90 when she was "convinced" to let someone else do it. She loved mowing her lawn and was very particular about its appearance.

Dorothy was known for her chocolate chip cookies. Anyone who ever visited her was sent home with a bag of cookies. She made many quilts over the years and sewed hundreds of quilt tops for the Vang Church missions. She also sewed catnip pillows for the Prairie's Edge Humane Society for several years which she would donate to them. She made thousands of these and was featured in a front page newspaper article for doing so. She loved Thursday coffee at the VFW and monthly coffee with the Dundas ladies. In the past year she has loved playing bingo at the Northfield Retirement Community.

She enjoyed spending time at Ken and

Fern's cabin in Wisconsin with family and was always up for an adventure whether it be riding the ATV trails at 91 years old, visiting the winery, joining in the family "Olympic" games or going for a paddle boat ride with grandkids in her 80's. Her most recent adventure was declaring she was going on a motorcycle ride at the age of 93. The staff at Parkview East and her family made sure she got her wish and she rode a Can-Am Spyder several trips around the parking lot with her son.

She was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt and friend who was so loved and will be missed dearly.

Dorothy is survived by her children Ken (Fern) Vesledahl of Nerstrand, David (Jody) Vesledahl of Nerstrand, Dan (Donna) Vesledahl of Nerstrand and Sandy Vesledahl of Northfield; seven grandchildren Tara (Fred) Berndt, Kristy (John) Campbell, Holly (Cody) Carroll, Jacob Vesledahl, Carly (Alex) Strouth, Shannon (Jeremy Hullett) Vesledahl, Derek (Marilie) Vesledahl; ten great-grandchildren Connor Berndt, Claire Berndt, Carter Campbell, Kaylee Campbell, Cooper Campbell, Kinzey Vesledahl, Teal

Vesledahl, Gunnar Vesledahl, Isaac Carroll, Hans Carroll; several nieces, nephews; and many other family and friends. Dorothy was preceded in death by her spouse, Elmer Vesledahl; three sisters, and two brothers.

The family would like to thank the staff at Parkview East, the Northfield Retirement Community Enhanced Care facility and Minnesota Hospice for the wonderful care of Dorothy.

Memorials preferred to Prairie's Edge Humane Society, Vang Lutheran Church or Valley Grove Cemetery Association.

A funeral service was held at 11 AM, Wednesday, October 16, at Vang Lutheran Church, 2060 County 49 Blvd., Dennison. A visitation was held from 4-7 PM, Tuesday, October 15, at Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home and continued at the church one hour prior to the service. A reception followed the service at the church. Interment was in Valley Grove Cemetery, Nerstrand, MN.

Funeral arrangements are trusted to Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home & Crematory. www.northfieldfuneral.com



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Alderks Selected for 2024 Wildlife Enhancement Award for Rice County

(continued from page 1)

The Wildlife Enhancement Award recognizes individuals or organizations who do an exemplary job implementing conservation practices that benefit Rice County wildlife. Larry received the award at the Best of the Best Agricultural Award this past July during the Rice County Fair.

In 2011, Larry began volunteering with the Rice County Bluebird Recovery Program. For several years he would put up bluebird nest boxes; first at his house, then at his neighbor's homes, and finally at a cemetery and church nearby.

Today he maintains around twenty bluebird nest boxes.

Bluebirds began to decline in the 1920s with the introduction of European House Sparrows and Starlings. Their decline continued through the 1970s due to the loss of nesting habitat. The Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota began in 1979 through the

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. Since then, it has grown to monitor over 4,000 nests, including over 700 sites in Rice County. Last year, Rice County led the state in fledging bluebirds with 2,614 baby birds leaving the nest.

As a Bluebird Recovery Program volunteer, each week Larry inspects his nest boxes and removes non-bluebird species- wren/sparrow nests, mice, or wasps if they are found nesting in the box. He also counts the eggs or fledglings and removes any babies that have passed away. Finally, he cleans out the nest boxes in between broods to prevent parasites from infecting the nest.

Larry has also served as a past president of the Rice County Chapter of the Bluebird Recovery Program.

In 2018, Larry started volunteering with the Red Headed Woodpecker Recovery Project. He began improving the habitat in his backyard for the Red Headed Woodpecker. While his large yard is filled with old-growth oaks, he has also left several dead trees standing, which provides crucial nesting habitat, roosting space, and food storage for the unique woodpecker.

"The dead trees are called 'snags' and they are helpful to the birds because they hollow them out and build their nest in them," Larry explains. "The red-headed woodpecker and other bird species will also feed on the many insects that live within the dead tree," he added. Larry also supplements food for the woodpeckers by providing suet cakes in different areas around his property.

Larry also maintains two wood duck boxes on his property. He approached his neighbor



Larry Alderks stands next to one of the bluebird nest boxes on his property.



One of the wood duck nest boxes Larry maintains on Heath Creek.

who has property on Heath Creek and installed four nest boxes on their property which he maintains. The wood duck boxes were constructed by the Kenyon Sportsmen's Club, of which Larry is the president.

Finally, this past year, Larry started volunteering for the University of Minnesota's Ceder Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve near East Bethel, Minnesota. At the reserve, Larry worked with other researchers to help monitor the populations of different birds by surveying the reserve.

Three times during the summer, Larry drove through the reserve and stopped at various spots determined by GPS. During a five-minute period, he used a bird call identification app called Merlin, developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, to identify the

birds, determine their location, and how many are present. The research conducted on the reserve helps to determine the health of the ecosystem and influences the management of species with special concerns.

"I deeply appreciate all the beautiful things in nature. I just love to watch the birds and other wildlife in the yard and it has such a calming effect on our lives," said Larry. "I believe it's important to help wildlife out."

The result of Larry's efforts is a healthy habitat for bluebirds and other migratory bird species. The Rice SWCD thanks Larry for his commitment to improving wildlife habitat in Rice County. He makes an outstanding choice for the 2024 Wildlife Enhancement Award.

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City of Northfield & Dundas Sign Funding Agreement For The New Ice Arena Project

(continued from page 1)

This means a house in Northfield valued at \$350,000 would pay the same taxes on the ice arena as a house in Dundas valued at \$350,000.

This means Northfield will fund 88% of the project, and Dundas will fund the remaining 12%. The agreement is for 20 years, and the rates are fixed, meaning Northfield pay 88% for the entire 20 years. At the Northfield City Council meeting, Public Works Director and City Engineer David Bennett cited transparency and clarity as the main reasons the rates did not change yearly.

Northfield and Dundas leadership have both been asked if they are concerned that one of the partners may back out of the agreement. Northfield City Administrator Ben Martig said that there are two reasons he is not con-

cerned that Dundas will back out of the agreement. The first reason is the legally binding contract the two cities have signed, meaning that if Dundas failed to pay their portion of the agreement, Northfield could pursue legal action. However, Martig thought that the loss of trust would be more impactful than any legal action:

Northfield Mayor Rhonda Pownell noted that Dundas and Northfield are partners on many projects like the Northfield Area Fire and Rescue, the Mill Towns State Trail and other regional projects. In those partnerships, Pownell said the two cities have always maintained a good working relationship:

“We’ve been doing a lot of work to just really build those relationships, build trust and it would be foolish on anyone’s part to do anything to Disrupt that. I mean, it just really shows the strong connected professional we’re in this together. If you don’t have good relationships with your neighbors, that makes it far more difficult to work with one another, and the City of Dundas, Glenn Switzer, their council, Janelle Teppen, they’ve been doing just a really great job with their community.” – Northfield Mayor Rhonda Pownell on the KYMN Morning Show

Dundas Mayor Glenn Switzer noted that the Dundas City Council has backed the ice arena project unanimously for months:

“we can’t even step back there. It was a

unanimous vote. Without hesitation, there wasn’t any hesitation on our Council to be part of this.” – Dundas Mayor Glenn Switzer on the KYMN Morning Show

Dundas City Administrator Jenelle Teppen agreed with Switzer and Council:

“a new ice arena is a needed improvement in this community and I’m excited and proud of the Dundas City Council for stepping up and understanding that and making it again an easy process to go through” – Dundas City Administrator Jenelle Teppen on the KYMN Morning Show

The other two funding partners in the project are the Northfield Hockey Association and Northfield Public Schools. The hockey association has agreed to donate \$2 million to the project and land for the ice arena. The school district has agreed to lease the facility for 20 years at \$250,000 annually. The donation and school lease agreement will be approved in November. Bids for contracts will then be approved by the end of the year.

The new ice arena, is expected to cost \$21 million and is expected to open in 2026.

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Halloween Party

Thursday, October 31

Dennison City Hall

5:00-6:30 P.M.

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Saturday, November 23

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Ribbon Cutting held for New Public Safety Center

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Last week, Rice County held the ribbon-cutting event for the new Public Safety Center, which will house the county jail, offices, equipment storage for the Rice County Sheriffs, and space for the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force. At the event there were several speakers including Sheriff Jesse Thomas, the Rice County Board of Commissioners, and county staff. The project has been a long one that started before the pandemic when the Minnesota Department of Corrections downgraded Rice Counties Jail to a 90-day facility. Rice County then had to build a new facility or spend an estimated \$1.5 million yearly to have other countries hold detainees. Sheriff Jesse Thomas said that he was “truly amazed with the outcome” of the safety center and expressed appreciation to the county government, the other members of the Sheriff’s Department, construction

crews, and Rice County residents and taxpayers.

The new safety center is an 83,000-square-foot facility with 76 beds for detainees. Among the new features is space for the Sheriff’s Office to store all its vehicles and equipment inside, which the current facility does not offer. There will also be training space for sheriff deputies as well.

The new county jail provides detainees more recreational opportunities and gym space. The new facility also includes a kitchen and laundry, so both services can be done in-house. Detainees will be able to apply for facility work details, which will allow them to work in the kitchen or laundry or do custodial work. That will allow them to get credit for future employment. Rice County Assistant Jail Administrator Stephanie Duhme said that the facility will be better for the community overall:

“The Public Safety Center Jail facility provides space and technology to enhance and create programs that will promote rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. As you know, most of all, the incarcerated returned to families and their communities upon release. The Dell design and amenities support for positive transition back into the community. ... Overall, the facility itself provides increased privacy, recreation, counseling space and dedicated health services.” – Assistant Jail



Pictured, from left, Commissioners Gerry Hoisington, Jim Purfeerst, Galen Malecha and Jeff Docken, Sheriff Jesse Thomas, Transition Team Lead/Asst. Jail Administrator Stephanie Duhme, Commissioner Steve Underdahl, Administrator Sara Folsted and Transition Team members, Sgts. Nick Bemis and Karie Francis. (Rice County photo)

Administrator Stephanie Duhme

Duhme, who was part of the transition team between the facilities, thanked the staff who worked extra hours to get the facility ready to open.

U.S Senator Amy Klobuchar spoke at the event by phone and put the current facility’s age in context.

“And I think what I learned here was your other law enforcement center has had been around since 1975. So I looked back at 1975. OK, you know, it was happening then. Jaws was the box office smash of the summer and a 17 year old Prince stepped in to a recording studio for the first time” – U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar speaking at the event

Klobuchar praised the work by the Rice County to support law enforcement:

“it’s going to be a symbol of your county’s proud commitment to support your law en-

forcement professionals. And when we invest in law enforcement, we invest in a safer and more prosperous America.”


The county held one open house of the facility for the public to tour yesterday and is now moving into the final steps before opening. On October 24th, the Minnesota Department of Corrections will review the facility to give the final approval for opening. Then, the Sheriff’s Department will begin moving from the current facility into the new safety center planning to open in November.

Rice County has an extensive page of information on its website about the new project, cost, project details, and reports from the state of Minnesota. Learn more about the project from Rice County Here: <https://www.ricecountymn.gov/563/Public-Safety-Center-construction-projec>



The Rice County Board of Commissioners, with Commissioner Galena Malecha speaking at the podium.

FOR COMMUNITY RELEASE



Dakota County Sheriff's Office
Joe Leko, Sheriff

Bulletin #24-4
10/01/2024

REWARD OFFERED


ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON

Nicole “Nikki” Anderson

- 5' 10"
- 135 lbs
- Last seen wearing a long grey sweater and camouflage pants.


Nicole Anderson was last seen in Randolph Township in Dakota County the morning of Saturday, July 6, 2024.

She was on foot and does not have her cell phone, wallet, or medications.



Last known image of Anderson ^ on 7/6/2024 at 08:54 hours.

The Dakota County Sheriff’s Office is offering a reward of \$5,000 for information regarding Nicole Anderson’s whereabouts or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance. Private parties have pledged an additional \$40,000 reward to be distributed independently of the Sheriff’s Office. Only tips received through the Dakota County Sheriff’s Office or Crime Stoppers that lead to the location of Nicole Anderson or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance are eligible for the reward.



Anyone wishing to provide a **completely anonymous** tip may contact Crime Stoppers at, **1-800-222-TIPS**, or www.CrimeStoppersMN.org

Reference DCSO Case # 24-000819

1-800-222-8477

Dakota County Sheriff’s Office | 1580 Highway 55, Hastings, Minnesota 55033
651-438-TIPS(8477)

FOR COMMUNITY RELEASE

Missing Nicole Anderson \$45,000 Reward

(continued from page 1)

The previous reward of \$5,000 for information leading to Nicole Anderson’s whereabouts or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance is now \$45,000. Private parties have graciously pledged an additional \$40,000 reward to be distributed independently of the Sheriff’s Office.

Only tips received through the Dakota County Sheriff’s Office or Crime Stoppers that help lead to the location of Nicole Anderson or prosecution of those involved in her disappearance are eligible for the reward.

We continue our exhaustive efforts to locate Ms. Anderson. This remains an active investigation and no further information will be released at this time.

Tip information can be shared via phone by calling 651-438-TIPS, via email at crime-andwarrantips@co.dakota.mn.us or online in the link ReportATip

Down on the Farm/ Up at the Cabin **The Second Winter**

By
Monica & Claudia Vanderborght

One year after Monica settled into her Wanamingo farm, Claudia and her husband joined her there. (Claudia's husband passed about one year later.) Monica would be in charge of the livestock (Claudia would help); Claudia would be in charge of the gardens and firewood (Monica would help). Both continued teaching: Monica in Apple Valley, Claudia as a substitute teacher in several neighboring school districts.

The previous winter had been long and cold (as winters in Minnesota are), but Monica had become comfortable running the downstairs fireplace 24/7. On warm days, Monica and the grandkids used the ATV and trailer to bring in load after load of firewood, filling the basement floor around the fireplace, hoping not to run out before the next nice day. Monica regularly checked the electric baseboard registers – seldom did they feel warm. That first winter, Monica's highest electric bill was \$280 – a fabulous improvement of the feared \$700 the previous owner had mentioned!

But Claudia was the expert on heating with wood. She could identify the different tree species (summer or winter) and knew their BTU capacities. Claudia was very particular about the firewood's dryness (both interior and surface moisture), and began stacking wood in a two-year rotation. She refused to run the chainsaw (which was fine with Monica, because she thought it was a lot of fun!), but Claudia was an ace at finding deadfall, hauling it to the house, using the hydraulic splitter, and stacking it. (Claudia loves stacking wood! She claims it's a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle.) Current year firewood was stacked in the pole barn – one area for kindling, another area for autumn / spring fires, and another for "rocket fuel" which would be saved for the coldest January and February nights. All the stacks were easily accessible and very stable (many years ago Claudia had learned to keep the firewood stacks from collapsing onto the cats while they inevitably climbed to the top).

They say that heating with wood heats you more than once. Monica's overgrown woods had a lot of deadfall; felling trees was unnecessary in the first few years unless the ATV trail needed to go through. But (in the warm days of August and September – before the

temperature dropped and the house needed to be heated) the deadfall had to be cut into fireplace-sized logs, carried to and lifted into the trailer, lifted out of the trailer (back at the pole barn), lifted onto the hydraulic splitter, tossed into ever-growing piles on the ground, then lifted one more time to be stacked. (Handling count: seven times). To keep the homefires burning, the firewood had to be loaded back into the trailer, driven to and then carried into the house, placed in stacks, and – eventually – loaded into the fireplace. (Handling count: four more times). So firewood heats you a minimum of 11 times, not counting burning it in the fireplace.

Occasionally, over the 20+ years that Claudia and Monica had been heating their homes with firewood, someone would claim burning firewood pollutes the environment. Not true. Anything that rots (meat, autumn leaves, dead trees) creates gasses, including carbon dioxide gas. Leaving a log to rot on the ground creates just as much carbon dioxide as burning that same log in the fireplace. Actually, burning a log releases just as much carbon dioxide into the air as the photosynthesis and carbon dioxide it took in to grow that log in the first place. If a forest is sustainably managed, burning firewood to heat one's home is carbon neutral. (And the newer wood stoves practically eliminate any soot that might escape into the atmosphere.) According to Jim Bowyer, professor emeritus from the University of Minnesota, there is no environmental reason not to use the wood on your property as a source of energy. (Source: Climate Curious: Is burning wood for heat carbon neutral, Elizabeth Dunbar, MPSNews November 9, 2019)

Claudia does not like garages. Yes, silly. She hadn't had one for years and learned to cover her windshield with a tarp for no hassle snow removal before driving. But she still did need a shelter for the car and we needed a better spot for wood. This time getting the building permit for a farm structure was easy. No big hoops to jump through with the county. The building would hold whatever machines it needed, including cars, and we had a specific area set aside for five cords of wood.

Before we knew it, fall had arrived and so did the school year. Monica was off every day to Apple Valley to teach fifth grade; Claudia was substitute teaching at the various high schools in the area. The chickens were happily laying eggs in the insulated coop, the cattle and goats got along great across their shared fences. A few big square bales were in the barn for the goats when it snowed (goats hate precipitation; who knew?). The dog was still enjoying the farm



(and after killing only 2 chickens learned to leave them alone). The only drama was between the cats: Claudia's cats did not like the upstairs neighbors at all (human, canine or feline), and the feeling was mutual. Everyone had settled into a comfortable routine.

But the days were getting shorter and colder. Caring for the goats was getting more difficult. The goats were mature, and had been purchased for meat. When Christmas

break came Monica decided it was time to take the goats to freezer camp before the new year. Monica didn't have a livestock trailer, but did have an older, somewhat decrepit minivan. It had worked to bring the kids home, now it would suffice to bring them to the butcher. Ten or so days later we picked up the boxes of meat. Those goats were loved TWICE!



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at Dennison Lutheran Church
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Join us for a special worship service at 10:30
with guitarist Todd Thompson. All are welcome.

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes **Tennessee Hurricane**



By Terry Campbell

This column is written by Messenger editor and Minnesota native Terry Campbell. Terry now splits his time between Minnesota when it's warm here and Tennessee when it's cold here.

On Friday September 27th the storm surge from Hurricane Helene struck the east side of Tennessee. Hurricanes don't usually affect Tennessee. But Hurricane Helene is one of the strongest to come ashore in many years. There is a town 30 miles south of us named Hurricane Mills, but it is only known as the home of Loretta Lynn.

There had been a couple days of warning about the impending storm as the weather forecast predicted where it would be heading, but the storm stalled out and dumped over twenty inches of rain in one day at the end of a week that had already seen almost a foot of rain. The mountainous terrain created

a deluge of water through the valleys. This was the worst flooding the area had experienced since 1916.

Local efforts to rescue families cut off by the destruction began with private helicopter pilots flying stranded people to safety aided by independent drone operators scouring the hills for signs of life. One man signaled with a large bathroom mirror to flag down help. Tempers flared when FEMA showed up and told the helicopter pilots they would be arrested if they refused to cease the flights. The airlift issue was resolved a day or so into the disaster but the fiercely independent locals had already had their fill of the feds. Private donations were brought in and dispensed from a school building until FEMA arrived and confiscated the inventory. Then the donations were redirected to churches, which were allowed to distribute freely to the needy. Church group t-shirts were handed out to all volunteers as workers wearing the garments of a religious organization were not hassled. Reports of trailers full of water, food, sanitation items and clothing being told to turn around a leave by FEMA officials fueled the public distrust. Some started using four-wheel drive trucks to take the supplies to four wheelers which could reach farther into the hills where the natives resided. From there horses and hikers with backpacks pushed on even further. For some reason many Gen 5 smart phones went into SOS mode and wouldn't communicate when the power grid failed. A few of the residents already owned Starlink Internet systems and were able to communicate with the outside.



Mules were used to haul whiskey into the affected areas for those who were suffering from DT's which was reminiscent of hundreds of years prior when mules were hauling moonshine out of the Tennessee hills.

In our hometown of Dover, Tennessee three large trailers were filled with donations in a couple days during a friendly competition between out friend Madison Campbell and Sheriff Frankie Gray. Madison has a 1977 black Trans Am and the Smokey and the Bandit challenge was underway. They were East bound and down, loaded up and truckin' supplies to Marshall, North Carolina loaded with bottled water, baby formula, diapers, blankets, non-perishable food items, can openers, garbage bags and work gloves. The Cumberland Power Cooperative sent

some local linemen and trucks to help restore power to east Tennessee and the western Carolinas. One thing the linemen were requesting was Benadryl because the wasps had been displaced as well and were very aggressive and stinging workers trying to do their jobs.

My wife ordered some 10-gallon handheld sprayers from Harbor Freight to be sent to a guy near the flood area who was painting them black and distributing them with bottled water to be used as portable shower units for those with no running water. The sun would heat up the water for a primitive hot shower. Based on the scale of the destruction it may be months before power is restored in the mountain communities.

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A Minnesotan: **Water Show**



By RosaLin Alcoser

Over the course of my life I have attended and taken part in a number of festivals. From county fairs to street festivals and town festivals I've been to just about little of everything. The most recent one I've had the pleasure to attend was Mantorville's Marigold Days.

The main reason I went to Marigold Days this year is because one of my friends asked me to come down to the firefighter show. Which I readily agreed to do. Now I had never been to a firefighter show before, however, my brian immediately went to the lumberjack show. Which I have seen before. Even though I knew that

was probably not quite the same thing.

I did go in with the assumption that it would be somewhat similar. Instead of watching lumberjacks do their thing we would get to watch firefighter's run their drills. Which sounded like a great time to me.

Well first off I was wrong, that's not what we were going to see. Secondly it was so much better than that. It turned out that it was a firefighter water battle.

If you are like me and have never seen or heard of a firefighter water battle before then you are missing out. Teams of two to three firefighters faced off against each other in the middle of the street with the fire hose. Over their heads was a long rope pulled between two poles.

The rope had a marker in the center and a knot on either end with a big black ball hanging from it. They would pull the ball into the middle and then spray it with the water trying to push it to the other team's side.

Each round lasted one minute or until one of them made the ball hit the other side's knot.

As white jets of water shot out of the fire hoses. Crossing with one another while fighting for control of the ball. It was one of the most existing things ever to watch and something that I now feel should be at more town festivals.

Meet the Candidates for Northfield School Board

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Northfield School Board is the main oversight group of the Northfield Public Schools, composed of 7 members who serve a 4 year term. Their approval is needed on all major policy changes, budget allocations, and tax referendums.

Each voter can vote for up to 4 candidates in the school board election in 2024.

Candidates:

Amy Goerwitz (Incumbent)

Tristan Cox

Maggie Epstein

Iris Lee

Claudia Gonzalez-George (Incumbent)

Corey Butler (Incumbent)

Andreas Thurnheer

Amy Goerwitz Candidate Interview:



Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

Northfield School Board, 2017-present

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

Amy Goerwitz

Northfield Rotary Club

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

It has been my honor to serve on the Northfield school board for eight years. Additionally, I have been a school volunteer in various other ways for the last 30+ years (photographer, teacher's helper, ECFE board, field trip chaperone, SIT Team, parent booster, point-settia distributor, etc.). I have advocated for the Northfield School District for over 20 years, writing letters and visiting state politicians. I am also a proud parent of two NHS graduates. I have always had an interest in education and a desire to enhance the educational experience both of my children and all district students.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I am proud of all the school district has accomplished in the last eight years and wish to continue making a positive difference for our district students, staff, families, and community. I am excited about the possibility of a reimagined high school and wish to see this project through to completion.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

The biggest change I support is having a later start time; ideally sometime between 8:30-8:50 a.m. for the high school and middle school. The research is all there, and it is clear that a later start time helps teenagers whose

body clocks are designed for a different sleep schedule than adults. We also have local data and anecdotal information from the pandemic that the later starting time that e-learning allowed was very appreciated by most students and parents. Over the last 30 years many other Minnesota school districts made this change. We just need to figure out how to make a later start time work for us.

What does being a leader mean to you?

For me, being a leader means gently guiding and positively impacting outcomes; working together to accomplish goals; encouraging, motivating, and inspiring district staff & students; and providing the support and tools necessary for the district to do its best work, all to ensure our vision to "prepare every student for lifelong success by developing critical thinkers who are curious and ready to engage in our society."

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

There was a huge decline in birth rate after the Great Recession of 2008 creating a decreased student population that affects almost all school districts in Minnesota (and the U.S. for that matter). Overall, we expect Northfield's enrollment to go down a total of 10%, or approximately 400 students. We are currently several years into this expected gradual decrease and have already gone through two budget prioritization processes to prepare for further reductions to student numbers and to keep our district finances solid for the next several years. The good news is that in general the U.S. student population numbers are expected increase again in the 2030s.

However, to take advantage of that increasing birth rate we need to make Northfield attractive to young families and to create more housing for them. While housing is not an issue that the school district can fix, we can certainly work with other government entities (cities, townships, and counties) to encourage more housing development.

We can also work with our Minnesota state government, which will be funding fewer students overall, to advocate for more revenue per pupil to help make up the difference, basically asking them to distribute the same total dollars to the school districts.

One solution that the school district does oversee is making sure that our district is attractive to families by providing modern learning facilities and offering our students an excellent education. Attracting young families not only helps our school district, but it will help keep our local economy thriving.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

I support the referendum 100%. To attract new residents, we need to show that we care about our schools. To provide a top-quality education, we need to update the high school, our flagship school. The school board put a lot of work into addressing the question of what to do with a 1960s-era school with mechanical systems at the end of their lives, 40 entrances, accessibility issues, insulation R-values of 1.9 (when the code for schools is

14), HVAC equipment situated outside and ductwork on the roof, inadequate and aging classrooms, and more. Our half-and-half solution—renovate half the high school and rebuild half—will provide us with a modern high school that we can be proud of and expect to last at least 50 years. For more information about the referendum and to find a date to take a tour so you can see for yourself, go to <https://northfieldschools.org/reimagine/>.
Campaign Website & Social Media
n/a

Tristan Cox Candidate Interview:



Tristan Cox

Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

n/a

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a

part of. (if any)

Friends of Way Park board member (2022-present), Friends of Downtown Northfield board member (2003-2006), School District Finance Advisory Board member (2018-2021),

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I am a parent of 3 kids, 2 of which attend Greenvale Park Elementary. I am a former Northfield High School teacher and I am a

strong believer and supporter of public education in Northfield and throughout Minnesota. I regularly attend school board meetings and I pay attention to legislation that impacts public education. I talk to teachers, administrators, parents, students and stakeholders often and I enjoy learning about how a variety of community members engage with our K through 12 schools.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I want the best for my children and for all students who attend Northfield Public Schools. I care about the Northfield community and want to help ensure we continue to have strong and vibrant public schools. As a former teacher I know how impactful education is for students and families and I look forward to helping current and future students achieve academic success through my service on the school board.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

I would like to help craft an updated cell phone/smart phone use policy at Northfield High School.

What does being a leader mean to you?

To me being a leader means being in touch with stakeholders, working on gathering data, constantly learning about our school district and those who are a part of it and using what I learn to help guide policies that are in alignment with the mission of our district, the values of the community and the best interest of stakeholders.

(continued on page 11)

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Meet the Candidates for Northfield School Board

(continued from page 10)

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

I would work with fellow board members, administrators, teachers and staff to understand what are the significant elements of academic achievement that we as a school district need to focus on at the elementary and secondary levels. I would also work to ensure we have sufficient staff to help our students meet their academic goals and ensure that our curriculum is meeting the needs of students and stakeholders so all students are ready the next grade level and career and/or college readiness.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

It is clear that we as a community need to invest in Northfield High School as we have for the past 6 decades and it will truly take a community effort to ensure we are able to secure resources in an equitably and sustainably now and in the future. One of the responsibilities of school board members it to disseminate information to all stakeholders regarding bond and levy questions. As a member of the school board I will work toward that goal.

Campaign Website & Social Media
<https://tristanforschoolboard.com/>

Maggie Epstein Candidate Interview:



Maggie Epstein

Board and served a two-year term (2017-2018).

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

I served on the Friends of Way Park Board for six years (2016-2022).

I served as a parent representative on the Design Team for the new Greenvale Park Elementary School (2019).

I joined the district's Legislative Action Committee last year because I felt the need to speak out more at the state level to advocate for increased funding for schools.

Last year, I volunteered weekly in the Greenvale Park Elementary School Media Center.

My husband and I are licensed foster parents

in Rice County (2021-present).

I sing with the Northfield Youth Choirs in their HS/Adult choir. I play pickleball at the Northfield YMCA and through Northfield Public Schools Community Education.

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I believe that schools change lives and strengthen communities. As a parent and foster parent in the district, I am deeply invested in ensuring that our schools provide safe and enriching spaces to learn. I also want the teachers and staff who work with my children to be supported and celebrated. I have a broad understanding of issues in education thanks to my bachelor's degree in American Studies and Educational Studies from Carleton College and a master's degree in Learning and Teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. For six years after graduate school, I worked at a non-profit organization providing professional development for K-12 teachers. I learned about the invaluable expertise of our educators and the importance of supporting them in their vital work. I next worked as a librarian for ten years, first at a public library and then in various research instruction and access services roles at St. Olaf and Carleton. As an engaged community member here in Northfield, I have shown my dedication to service and would be grateful for the opportunity to serve the district in this role.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I believe that public education is key to a thriving democracy. Every student deserves access to an excellent education, and it is the responsibility of school boards to craft policies and foster values that ensure high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all children. I would be honored to serve the Northfield community as a member of the School Board.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

School board members should be engaged community members who come to meetings prepared to discuss and vote with an open mind. The board as a whole should serve in the role of well-informed guide to ensure that the district adheres to its stated vision and strategic commitments. In order to fulfill this important role, school board members should consider district-wide needs and ensure that all policies are fair and equitable. Finally, the board must hire and evaluate a superintendent who will implement district policies and create a culture of excellence and care. I hope to accomplish my goal of serving as a responsible, prepared, and forward-thinking board member.

What does being a leader mean to you?

One of my core values is service to others. I am particularly committed to service that enhances the lives of children. In our role as foster parents, my husband and I serve one or two children at a time, in a deeply intensive way. As a school board member, I will serve in a role that makes a difference for many more children at a community-wide level. To me, being a leader means listening actively, maintaining high ethical standards, and taking on leadership roles that align with my core values.

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

Because of lower birth rates and a lack of housing, declining enrollment is an issue that the district will most certainly have to deal with over the next several years. First, I would work with my colleagues on the board to recommend that the superintendent develop a thoughtful process for engaging with teachers, staff, parents, and community members. This process would be intended to gather recommendations for dealing with any budget shortfalls that might result from declining enrollment. The board should require that the process be open and transparent. I would then participate in that process in the role of active listener while also bringing my own values to the table. I believe in the importance of accessibility for all students and staff, workplace satisfaction and retention of excellent teachers, and multiple pathways for students after graduation.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

I am in favor of all three questions put forth in the 2024 Referendum. I closely observed the process as the district and board worked with experts in school construction to develop the current proposal. I believe it is a fair proposal that can and should be supported by the community.

First, I support question one because renovating the high school and adding a classroom tower would provide a vastly improved learning space for students and a better workplace for teachers. It would also improve the safety of the building which currently has too many exits.

Second, I support question two because adding much-needed gym space would free up gym spaces at the elementary schools that are currently often occupied by high school sports and activities. This would increase opportunities for young learners, community education classes, and general community members to utilize the elementary gym spaces.

Third, I support question three because geothermal energy will allow the district to reduce future operational costs while also reducing harmful emissions. Our school district will be able to spend more money on educating our students rather than heating our buildings.

The reality is that a "No" vote will actually increase the amount of money our community will spend on the high school in the coming years. Delaying this much-needed project means that we will spend money in the short term to repair and replace failing infrastructure (heating and cooling, windows, etc.). While we are making these repairs, construction costs will continue to rise and we may eventually be unable to make the needed changes to update our learning spaces for modern-day education. Over the long term, this means burdening our children with both an outdated learning environment and the future costs of repairing and renovating a building that has already lived its useful life. The time is now to complete this project.

Campaign Website & Social Media

Accounts

<https://www.unitedfornorthfield.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/maggieepstein-schoolboard>

Iris Lee Candidate Interview:



Iris Lee

Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

n/a

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a

part of. (if any)

American Society of Professional Journalists

What qualifies you for the office you're running for?

I am a mother of five NHS graduates, including a Special Ed. student. I attended schools in Europe and the US, and I believe that my experience as a parent, in addition to my education and profession (journalism, law, history, business admin.) makes me a good candidate to serve on behalf of Northfield parents.

What inspired you to run for office?

During COVID I basically served as my daughter's assistant teacher. I came to the conclusion that the curriculum left much to be desired, and that if I wanted to make changes, I should do something proactive, rather than just complain, so I decided to put my name in the hat!

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

I would like to ensure that all curricula, instructions, administrative regulations and directions are fact-based and free of ideological influence. I would also like to ensure that students, their education, and experience are not damaged by cell/smart phone use.

What does being a leader mean to you?

A leader is someone who listens to everyone and carefully considers all viewpoints and is not afraid to make decisions, however unpopular, based on what he or she believes will deliver the best results for the community.

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

First of all, we must find out why enrollment is declining. Is it higher taxes in the district? Are more parents home-schooling their children? Before devising a plan to deal with declining enrollment, we must discover the reason why.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

Ever since I moved here 25 years ago, Northfield residents have taken pride in the outstanding quality of education in our school district.

(continued on page 14)

Dundas Oktoberfest

(continued from page 1)

Back on solid ground, people enjoyed the North Star Cornhole Tournament which took place on the street in front of Martha's and the L&M. Cornhole was a big success and will be back next year. Another favorite was back this year, the horse drawn carriage rides. A huge shout out and thank you to Bob Matthies and his beautiful horses. Horses are truly a people magnet!

And what's an Oktoberfest without music! The day began with the family friendly group of Todd'n Tina, delighting children with their music and jokes. So much fun to see young children dancing on the stage and having a blast! The Bavarian Musikmeister's then took the stage to entertain the crowd and engage with the audience. Don't know who had more fun, the 35-piece band or the audience, as they sang together the German drinking song Schnitzelbank and did German Line Dancing! If you missed it this year, no worries, The Musikmeister's will be back next year.

The day was perfect to sit, chat with old and new friends and enjoy a brat, pork sandwich, pretzel or cheese curds. Thank you, Little Prairie United Methodist Church, Martha's Eats & Treats, Ruth's on Stafford, and The Dukes! And what better to go with great food but great beverages. This year, like last year, mugs were available for sale to fill with your favorite beer, cider, root beer or lemonade. This year's mug was different from last year's



mug and next year there will be a different mug. Make sure to bring your mug back to fill next year and the next year and the year after...or get the new style mug. Many thanks to Chapel Brewing, Keepsake Cidery,

(continued on page 13)



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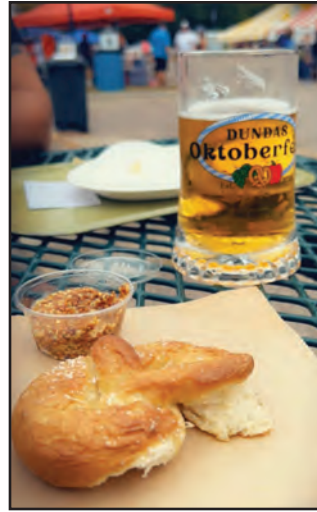


Dundas Oktoberfest

(continued from page 12)

Little Prairie Church and Martha's for the beverage selections!

Oktoberfest is a community wide celebration meant to benefit all. The committee members would like to thank all the local makers, food and beverage vendors, volunteers, sponsors and City of Dundas, who made this all possible! We could not have done this without all your support and guidance. We will be back next year on Saturday, September 20th, and if you'd like to be a part of this, we'd love to see you. Until then, Gemütlichkeit!



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Meet the Candidates for Northfield School Board

(continued from page 11)

The potential benefits of investing 95\$ million of taxpayer money in a new high school have been very well advertised, but I don't believe the district has sufficiently explained to residents the alternative options, as well as the financial burdens on future generations of taxpayers. Northfield taxpayers have already seen their property taxes increase by 45% in the last three years. Now we are talking about \$95 million for a new high school and the City of Northfield's current list of projects* that will cost taxpayers almost 160 million* (not including a .5% tax increase proposal from Rice County for a new jail). I don't think residents have had an opportunity to discuss all these very momentous and expensive plans.

*\$60 million water treatment plan

\$31 million bike trails,

\$24 ice arena project

\$31 million bike trails,

\$10 million park plans

Campaign Websites & Social Media

n/a

Claudia Gonzalez-George Candidate Interview:



Claudia Gonzalez-George

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

I am a member of the Cannon Valley Friends Meeting – a Quaker church in Northfield.

I am a member of the Northfield Garden Club and of the Spanish Book Club at the Northfield Library.

At work, I serve on the Public Safety Advisory group and am co-facilitating a professional group for non-academic administrative support personnel at St. Olaf college.

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

A good board member is someone who keeps students first, can work collaboratively with the other board members and their only employee (the superintendent), is a good listener of all district stakeholders, and is engaged in the work of the district at a governance level. I believe I am highly qualified for this position as I have served in this very capacity for nearly 4 years now. I was a

Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

I am currently an elected school board member of the Northfield School Board. I was elected to a 4-year term in 2020.

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

classroom educator for 6 years in a previous community. I have been involved in some form of education most of my life from teaching adults to read to encouraging student development in college students. My classroom experience was with 3rd and 2nd graders. Having been directly involved in education gives me a unique perspective as I hear from district staff regarding what the district needs. I am a consensus builder which means I look for ways to arrive at hard decisions after helping all parties consider each others' perspectives. This is a good trait to have as a school board member in this highly collaborative work.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

Being on the school board has been very meaningful and satisfying work. Proper, reasonable, and representative governance of our local school district by elected community members is a noble responsibility which requires time, dedication, seriousness, sacrifice, and a collaborative attitude. I enjoy being a part of a team that together builds something much bigger than themselves. The work of the school board is to govern the district through policy, budgetary decisions, legislative advocacy, and via the hiring and evaluation of the superintendent. This work has allowed me to bring my unique perspective to the table to shape direction and culture in the district alongside 6 other elected officials and our superintendent. I want to stay in the office of school board member, so that I can continue to care for students' experiences. I want to continue to partner with our district staff to see all of our young neighbors receive an exceptional education that prepares them for the future.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

My hope for myself in my 2nd term would be to continue building our board into a strong governing body that advocates at the capital, connects with all district stakeholders in positive ways, and continues to relate to each other respectfully. I would also like to renew our conversion around early school start time. Research shows that high school students need to start later in the morning and young elementary students need to start earlier in the morning. Other MN schools have successfully implemented this schedule and I want to help Northfield have that conversation again.

What does being a leader mean to you?

Kamala Harris' recent phrase about the measure of a leaders' strength is who you lift up resonates with me at many levels. Leadership is about helping others maximize their potential. It is about working and caring that we all succeed because none of us has to fail in order for all of us to succeed, another Harris phrase that speaks loudly for me. A leader is not someone who takes all the credit and blames others when things don't work out, but instead a leader is someone who works with the whole team, sorting out talents and gifts for the good of all, and someone who problem solves at all times rather than looks for blame. A leader is someone who coordinates the team with inspiration, gratitude, and an ability to make the final call.

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining

enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

Declining enrollment is not an isolated problem of the Northfield Public Schools, but instead a nation-wide phenomenon. Our unique challenge is that as we begin to experience declining enrollment we won't have neat ways to reduce our expenses as we will have district-wide impacts, so our expenses won't change much, but our revenues will change dramatically. It's not a problem that can be fixed by the school board alone. We will have to encourage the city to make family homes a priority to build in Northfield and to attract more businesses. We will have to work with legislators to increase per pupil funding and provide for special education. We will have to have challenging conversations regarding our programming. Declining enrollment is a serious challenge that impacts funding our district staff and programs.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

As a current board member I worked on and voted to send this referendum to our voters. I hope all three questions pass, but I absolutely need Q1 to pass. The HS needs updates and many students, staff, and parents agree. The high school has needed updates for a long time and while we have not neglected it, there are some needs such as HVAC and insulation that our Long Term Facility Maintenance fund cannot pay for on its own.

Campaign Website & Social Media

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudia-gonzalez-george-for-school-board/>

<https://www.unitedfornorthfield.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/claudiaforscheolboard/>

Corey Butler Candidate Interview:



Corey Butler

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

Northfield School Board 2020 – Present

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

Minnesota School Boards Association, Associations North, & Former board member, Health Community Initiative

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I take my role on the school board seriously. As vice chair, I engage with constituents, prepare for meetings and committee assignments and participate in good-faith conversations with my peers to help move our district forward in the best interests of our students. It's been an incredibly fulfilling four years and I hope the good people of this district support me to serve them and our students, staff and administration for another four years.

I've completed all four phases of the MSBA Learning to Lead Workshop series, earning my Leadership Development Certificate. I

also attended the negotiations seminar in preparation of joining the district negotiations team. Concurrently, I earned a 60-hour Management Practices Certificate from the University of Minnesota College of Continuing & Professional Studies. Highlights of that program included courses covering leadership skills, emotional intelligence, coaching, problem-solving and allyship.

I've served as board vice chair for the past two years, running meetings a few times in the chair's absence.

Professionally, I manage communications for a professional association serving CPAs and accountants. I spend much of my time breaking down complex laws and rules, both enacted and proposed by lawmakers in Minnesota and in Congress. Previously, I was an education reporter for five years, digging into the financials and operations of districts, developing relationships with adults and students, and spending time in classrooms highlighting the excellent work happening there.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I'm the parent of two children in the district and I'm married to a townie. My mother is a school bus driver and my dad was a school custodian. Public education has played a significant role in my life, and I am forever grateful for the adults with whom influenced me to achieve what I have in life.

Serving — and continuing to serve — allows me to contribute in a meaningful way, advocating for a vital educational system that is critically important to our society, locally and at large.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

Should I be fortunate enough to return to the board, I will continue the work my colleagues and I have accomplished the past four years.

This means lifting up and supporting students academically, mentally, socially and emotionally. This means strengthening relationships with our 16 employee groups and aiding them in their invaluable work for our students. This means representing the interests of all constituents on the board. This means working with my fellow board members, modeling what a quality, engaged board member is.

This means finding solutions — both in contract and policy — to recruit, retain and grow quality staff in what has become an increasingly challenging educational talent pipeline. This means leading the board in the role we are elected for — oversight of the district through the work of the superintendent, not running the district ourselves. Lastly, this means always striving to be better so I can better serve others.

What does being a leader mean to you?

Leadership is offered and modeled in many ways. I believe my leadership style is adaptive, assessing the situation and people involved in any circumstance, and leaning into different styles to get the most out of an individual or a group, as well as myself. I do this both in my board work and in my career.

(continued on page 15)

Meet the Candidates for Northfield School Board

(continued from page 14)

Though I may be known by some for hardly ever being short on words, I take special care in making sure I listen closely, ask plenty of questions in seeking to understand and deeply reflect on the information I collected.

In a school board setting, we need to be a collaborative group, working together for the benefit of our schools, students and staff, rather than adversarial. A practical, calming and firm voice is necessary in these situations.

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

Declining enrollment is not unique to Northfield. The United States has seen a significant decline in birthrates the past two decades, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2007, the United States produced 14.3 births per 1,000 people. In 2022, it had steadily declined to 11.1 births per 1,000 people — nearly 23% lower.

Our school board and district take financial stewardship seriously, which is why two of the

past three years we adjusted our budget to reflect current and projected enrollment declines. We are entrusted with state and federal funding, as well as generous local financial support through our operating levy, to provide the best quality education we can for our students, which means recruiting and retaining quality teachers and staff. This is good governance.

Northfield schools have been and remain a destination district for students and families. Historically, more students open enroll to our schools than those who opt for other options.

We live in a time where parents have a choice about where to send their children to school. This is great! Even with its stellar reputation, the Northfield district isn't going to be the best fit for every family. Some need a different size school system. Some prefer an online avenue. Some prefer a project-based focus offered by our friends at Prairie Creek Community School and Arcadia Charter School. Some want a parochial experience. It's great students and families have these choices in today's world and I empower them to make the choices that best suit their children's needs to prepare for their lives after graduation.

In the end, our district needs to continue fostering a culture of academic excellence and a sense of belonging. This will help us remain a strong offering and build on our stellar reputation.

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

I will answer this question from two perspectives.

The first is as a sitting board member who supported the ballot initiative. For the better

part of two years through two separate cycles, the current and most immediate past school boards engaged with the community on this topic and, ultimately, decided to move ahead with a proposal.

Getting to that final proposal was an exercise in good process, ultimately creating the three-question ballot and ensuring the most important priority, the replacement of the primary academic space, while addressing many other core issues with the current high school, was included in Question No. 1. This is within range of what the community indicated it would financially support through a scientifically sound survey.

Question Nos. 2 and 3 are also important, bringing forward a new four-court expanded gym, which addresses many academic and community needs, as well as a geothermal option to heat and cool the high school. But No. 1 is by far the priority for me.

Ultimately, I feel the board needed to present practical options to the community (with options ranging from doing nothing to building a new school). The board is not approving the project; we send a conceptual proposal to the community on which to decide on Nov. 5. This is as democratic as it gets, leaving the decision to the voters.

The second perspective is as a property owner. I am an emphatic three yeses to support these bond questions. It's time.

Campaign Websites & Social Media
<https://www.facebook.com/CoreyforNorthfieldSchools>

<https://www.unitedfornorthfield.com/>

Andreas (Andy) Thurnheer
Candidate Interview:

No photo given.

Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

n/a

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

I am not involved in any civic organization other than the Rice county DFL organization.

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I have more than 40 years private sector experience mainly engineering and automation in the Food Industry. I grew up in Switzerland and attended their school system which is a bit different. The Swiss school system is K9 followed with typical apprenticeship and additional engineering specialization. Later in my life a job assignment brought me to Minnesota. I came to Northfield in the late 1990's. Our family had two girls attending the Northfield schools. I would contribute innovation and experience to the school board.

My business and engineering experience will bring a fresh perspective to the district's infrastructure conundrum. We are faced with declining enrollment, aging and inefficient

school buildings, soaring energy expenses and ever increasing operating costs for the coming years. It is not only declining enrollment and soaring costs, it is also finding a good middle ground between needed smart investments and financial burden on the community

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I believe parent involvement and community representation are important on a school board. Our two children went through the district K12 education. My goal is to leave the Northfield School District and the community financially and academically better than when I joined.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

For me, the most important thing is to ensure the district has the financial and human resources and support its needs to educate and prepare our students. Adequate funding helps us keep reasonable class sizes and employ qualified teaching staff. It also helps us to provide the academic support in a fast-changing world and create or sustain opportunities that support the student interest. Representation of the community's financial interests and sustainability are important. In a declining enrollment environment some reorganization, reassignment and finally budget cutting is not avoidable. The current High School "reimagine" needs refinement and competitive input by another architectural firm with engineers to develop a final project the taxpayer can afford. The infrastructure needs to be adapted to climate change and soaring energy costs. All seven school buildings will need long-term energy and real comfort improvements. Defining long term guidelines and policy changes will guide how to move towards the community's "net zero" goals. Northfield is at a crossroad. It will take a joint effort with input from the superintendent, board, educators and community to find the most efficient, affordable rebuild of the High School

What does being a leader mean to you?

The school Board with the Superintendent is a team running the Northfield public schools. The school board represents the community interest and sets the policy background to operate the schools. As a member of the school board I would bring my experience and expertise and will look for other Team members to do the same. Leadership is listening and learning from the team members and outside sources. Leaders do not always know the answer or solution for every problem but are able to do the research in an effort to address the challenges. Multiple perspectives and open discussions are required to find the best solution. After 40+ years in industry, I have learned to engage others in the process.

One of the most significant issues facing the Northfield Public Schools is declining enrollment. For Example, a decline of 14 students is approximately a decrease in \$100,000 of funding for the school district. How would you work to address declining enrollment in the Northfield Schools?

See text

Are you in favor of the 2024 Northfield Schools Referendum? Why? or Why not?

See text



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Election Explainer: Northfield Schools High School Referendum

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Introduction:

In the spring of 2024, the Northfield School Board voted to renovate the Northfield High School. Since the school district is using bonds to pay for the renovations, the project needs approval from voters. The renovation project has been split up into three separate ballot questions. Question 1 is the base-level renovation of the school, while questions 2 and 3 would be additional add-ons.

Question Text:

- Question 1: Shall the board of Independent School District No. 659 (Northfield Public Schools), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$95,380,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, replacing a portion of the high school building with new construction, renovations, improvements, and upgrades to the high school building, facilities, site, and systems, and purchasing equipment and furnishings? BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

- Question 2: If School District Question 1 above is approved, shall the board of Independent School District No. 659 (Northfield Public Schools), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$18,725,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, the construction of an expanded gymnasium at the high school? BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

- Question 3: If School District Question 1 and School District Question 2 above are approved, shall the board of Independent School District No. 659 (Northfield Public Schools), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$6,975,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, the construction and installation of a geothermal heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system at the high school? BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

Summary

Written by Northfield Public Schools

If Question 1 passes, the plan includes a 120,000-square-foot multi-story classroom addition. It involves strategically demolishing the D, H, M and S wings (102,000 square feet) and renovating the remainder of the existing square footage. Cost: \$95.38 million.

If Question 2 passes (contingent on Ques-

tion 1 passing), the plan features a gymnasium addition big enough for four full-sized basketball courts. It would dramatically improve indoor physical education, athletic and community recreation access. Cost: \$18.725 million.

If Question 3 passes (contingent on Questions 1 and 2 passing), the plan includes installing a geothermal system to heat and cool the building. Cost: \$6.975 million.

What Your Vote Will Do

Written by the KYMN News Staff

Question 1

A YES VOTE would result in renovating a significant portion of the Northfield High School, focusing primarily on the high school's classrooms.

It would address issues in the school, like safety concerns (too many doors, sufficient storm shelters), updates to classrooms and science labs, and improvements in heating and cooling.

It would increase school district property taxes.

Question 2

A YES VOTE would expand the high school's athletic facilities, including enough space for Varsity Sports and Physical Education Classes in the winter.

It would increase school district property taxes.

Question 3

A YES VOTE would install a geothermal system to heat and cool the high school.

This is projected to lower the school district's utility bill and free up more general funds for teaching.

It would increase school district property taxes.

Question 1

A NO VOTE would result in no renovations or expansions of the high school. It would also prevent questions 2 or 3 from being implemented.

Current facility issues would not be addressed, and district officials believe that this will get worse in future years, requiring more of the general fund to go to facilities instead of teaching.

It would keep school district property taxes at the current rate.

Question 2

A NO VOTE would result in no renovation or expansion of the high school's athletic facilities. It would also prevent question 3 from being implemented.

Question 3

A NO VOTE would result in no installation of a geothermal system and use the current facilities system for heating and cooling.

FISCAL CONSEQUENCES

Data provided by
Northfield Public Schools
Total Cost

Question 1 cost: \$95.28 million

Question 2 cost: \$18.725 million

Question 3 cost: \$6.975 million

No vote: there would be no property tax increase. However, current facilities issues would not be addressed. Leading to future costs, likely higher maintenance costs, for the school district.

Tax Increase Impact

For a home valued at \$200,000, taxes would increase by:

Question 1: \$152 per year (\$13 monthly)

Question 2: \$39 per year (\$3 monthly)

Question 3: \$15 per year (\$1 monthly)

Total (if all three questions pass): \$206 per year (\$17 monthly)

For a home valued at \$350,000, taxes

would increase by:

Question 1: \$307 per year (\$26 monthly)

Question 2: \$77 per year (\$6 monthly)

Question 3: \$29 per year (\$2 monthly)

Total (if all three questions pass): \$413 per year (\$34 monthly)

For a home valued at \$500,000, taxes would increase by:

Question 1: \$471 per year (\$39 monthly)

Question 2: \$115 per year (\$10 monthly)

Question 3: \$43 per year (\$4 monthly)

Total (if all three questions pass): \$629 per year (\$52 monthly)

WHAT THE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES ARE SAYING

Answers are from the KYMN Election Guide and have been shortened.

IN FAVOR:

Amy Goerwitz:

"I support the referendum 100%. To attract new residents, we need to show that we care about our schools. To provide a top-quality education, we need to update the high school, our flagship school."

Maggie Epstein:

"I am in favor of all three questions put forth in the 2024 Referendum. I closely observed the process as the district and board worked with experts in school construction to develop the current proposal. I believe it is a fair proposal that can and should be supported by the community."

Claudia Gonzalez-George:

"As a current board member, I worked on and voted to send this referendum to our voters. I hope all three questions pass, but I absolutely need Q1 to pass. The HS needs updates and many students, staff, and parents agree. The high school has needed updates for a long time and while we have not neglected it, there are some needs such as HVAC and insulation that our Long Term Facility Maintenance fund cannot pay for on its own."

Corey Butler:

"I am an emphatic three yeses to support these bond questions. It's time."

NEUTRAL:

Tristian Cox:

"It is clear that we as a community need to invest in Northfield High School as we have for the past 6 decades and it will truly take a community effort to ensure we are able to secure resources in an equitably and sustainably now and in the future."

AGAINST:

Iris Lee:

"The potential benefits of investing 95\$ million of taxpayer money in a new high school have been very well advertised, but I don't believe the district has sufficiently explained to residents the alternative options, as well as the financial burdens on future generations of taxpayers. Northfield taxpayers have already seen their property taxes increase by 45% in the last three years."

Andreas (Andy) Thurnheer:

"The current High School "reimagine" needs refinement and competitive input by another architectural firm with engineers to develop a final project the taxpayer can afford. The infrastructure needs to be adapted to climate change and soaring energy costs. All seven school buildings will need long-term energy and real comfort improvements. Defining long term guidelines and policy changes will guide how to move towards the community's "net zero" goals. Northfield is at a crossroad. It will take a joint effort with input from the superintendent, board, educators and community to find the most efficient, affordable rebuild of the High School"

Want to learn more about the renovation project? Visit one of the school district's public events. For more information see kymnradio.net.



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For something different

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www.kymnradio.net

Explainer: Rice County Sales Tax Referendum

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Some Background Information –

The Rice County Public Safety Center:

Minnesota Department of Corrections inspectors had long identified the need for additional housing space in the Rice County Jail, but in late 2019, the department notified county officials it planned to reclassify the jail, allowing it to hold individuals a maximum of 90 days. DOC inspectors also noted the need for additional program and leisure activity space. A reclassification would be

costly for the county. According to a 2022 estimate, it would total \$1.5 million annually.

In May 2021, the Board of Commissioners voted to build an 83,000-square foot Public Safety Center that includes a 76-bed jail, the county's Emergency Operations Center, and offices for Rice County Sheriff's Office staff and the regional drug task force off Hwy. 3 on the northern edge of Faribault.

In July 2022, the board approved the sale of \$48.86 million in bonds to finance the project.

Question Text:

Shall Rice County be authorized to impose a three-eighths of one percent (0.375%) sales and use tax for a period of up to thirty (30) years, commencing on April 1, 2025, for the purpose of financing the Public Safety Center at a principal cost not to exceed \$48,000,000, plus associated bonding costs and interest? A YES vote means that the majority of the costs would be financed through the sales and use tax which would remain in effect for 30 years or until the bonds are re-

tired, whichever comes first. A NO vote means that the majority of the costs would continue to be financed through property taxes for 30 years or until the bonds are retired, whichever comes first.

Summary

Written by Rice County

The Rice County Board of Commissioners on Aug. 13, 2024, agreed to ask voters whether to pay the debt incurred from the construction of the new Rice County Public Safety Center — set to open in late October — through a .375% sales tax increase. If a majority of voters vote no, the Board of Commissioners will continue using property taxes to repay the debt. If approved, the tax would take effect in 2025 and last a maximum of 30 years, though it would end sooner if the bonds are repaid earlier than anticipated.

By increasing the sales tax, non-residents who shop in Rice County would also contribute to the debt repayment. The local sales tax follows the state sales tax and doesn't apply to essentials like groceries, medication, baby products, clothing and motor vehicles. If the referendum fails, Rice County will have to pay for the debt through regular Property Taxes, which could lead to future increases.

If funds raised each year exceed the annual debt payment, the county CANNOT spend that money on other projects.

What Your Vote Will Do

Written by the KYMN News Staff

A YES VOTE would increase the Rice County Sales Tax by 0.375% to pay for the debt from building the Rice County Public

Safety Center. The funds from this increase can only be used for this purpose.

A yes vote would not increase a sales tax on essential goods like groceries, medication, baby products, clothing, and motor vehicles.

A NO VOTE would not increase Rice County Sales Taxes.

However, a no vote would not stop construction on the Safety Center project (set to open in October). The debt from the project would be paid from the regular property tax levy.

Rice County Commissioners have indicated that without sales tax, future property tax increases for the project would be possible.

Fiscal Consequences

Data provided by Rice County

The proposed local sales tax would be 3/8 of a cent or .375%. For example, if someone spent \$5 on a cup of coffee, 2 cents would go toward the local sales tax (if approved) or 38 cents on every \$100 of taxable purchases for 30 years. This would generate an estimated \$3 million each year.

In a study done for Rice County, a University of Minnesota Extension community economics educator estimates nearly 33% of the local option sales tax would come from people living outside Rice County.

On the KYMN Morning Show, Rice County Commissioner Galen Malecha said the following:

"I can't tell anybody how to vote right that they have to choose on their own, but I myself am going to be voting in favor of it because it takes it off the property tax. If you're not a high user of good, you won't be paying a lot."



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Meet the Candidates for Rice County Board of Commissioners - District 1

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Rice County Commission oversees all of the county departments, including the sheriff, planning/zoning, and highway department. There are 5 commissioners, each representing part of Rice County and serve a term of 4 years.

District 1 includes: the cities of Dennison, Dundas, Nerstrand, Northfield (Precincts 1, 2 and 3), and Bridgewater, Cannon City, Northfield, Richland, Walcott and Wheeling townships.

Candidates:

Erik Sahlin

Jim Purfeerst (Incumbent)

Jim Purfeerst

Candidate Interview:



Jim Purfeerst

2012-2020

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a part of. (if any)

Rice County Extension Committee, Northfield Transportation Advisory Board, Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Advisory Board, Zumbro Watershed Board, Rice County Transportation & Ditch Committee, Chamber of Commerce Ag Business Committee, Rice County Fair Board, St. John's United Church of Christ, Rice County Mental Health Advisory Board, Rice/Steele 911 Board, Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Rice County Historical Society, Rice County Farmers Union, Rice County Farm Bureau, MN Agriculture & Rural Leadership Alumni, Faribo SnoGo Club, Paradise Center for the Arts, Elks Club

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I believe my experience as a current Rice County Commissioner and past Soil & Water Board Supervisor, highlights my qualifications and leadership skills to serve effectively as Rice County District One Commissioner. I feel I bring a wide variety of life experience and personal strength to this position. I understand the value of hard work, dedication, compromise, and the importance of ag and economic development for Rice County. I am an active listener, an experienced ag business owner with strong financial management skills, and I have a common sense approach

to get things done. I am knowledgeable of county governmental processes and have strong relationships with Rice County residents, Rice County staff, and elected officials. I am a lifelong resident of Rice County and have been actively involved in community volunteerism. I enjoy working together to find creative solutions, I care deeply about the future of Rice County, and I am committed to leading in a positive, effective manner.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

As a lifelong Rice County resident and 5th generation farmer, I am committed to a bright future for Rice County! Rice County has been a great place to raise my family – my wife and children all live and work in Rice County. Serving as a Commissioner allows me to gather constituent input and ideas to help ensure Rice County is a great place for future generations to live and thrive. I am committed to strong business and economic growth, a healthy sustainable environment, safe communities, and quality services which lead to future success for Rice County residents.

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

I am committed to continued economic and ag development, strategically attracting businesses which offer livable wages and good benefits. This broadens our tax base and helps residents thrive. Having a range of affordable housing continues to be a concern in Rice County. I am committed to continuing to explore public/private partnerships which can support expanded housing opportunities, which will in turn attract businesses and a workforce that lives in Rice County. Governmental transparency is important, and something that I believe can be improved upon. I hear from constituents that some county systems are complicated and confusing. I hope to continue to serve as a liaison to lessen constituent confusion and help streamline processes. I'd also like to see more transparency and communication about county spending and budgets. There has been improvement in communications and expanded public comment opportunity over the last two years, however I believe this can be expanded. Transparency and open communication is important so taxpayers can understand how their investments benefit themselves and their community.

What does being a leader mean to you?

Leadership begins with listening and being accountable, honest and open to diverse opinions. Being able to compromise and bridge differences in order to gain greater understanding is critical, with the goal of finding optimal solutions for the betterment of Rice County.

What do you believe the biggest issue facing Rice County in the future is? Is the Board of Commissioners already or addressing it or would like to work on this issue more?

Finding ways to keep taxes affordable while providing essential services for county residents is an ongoing issue, which includes unfunded governmental mandates. The Board, along with county administrative staff continue to evaluate ways to work efficiently and minimize local tax burden, as well as advocate for change in mandated processes. Affordable housing and limited workforce

numbers are also significant issues facing Rice County. It's hard to attract businesses without a trained, competent workforce and adequate housing. We need people to live AND work in Rice County. These issues are being addressed by County government, however we need ongoing input, assessment and evaluation in order to find creative solutions and partnerships which are cost effective and sustainable.

Campaign Websites

Campaign Facebook

Erik Sahlin

Candidate Interview:



Erik Sahlin

part of. (if any)

As a parent of two teens, I'm an active member of the parent community of Northfield Public Schools, supporting the learning environment there, as well as activities including bowling, band, track, cross country, swimming, orchestra, and choir. I'm a member of the Nerstrand Conservation Society, working to protect the values of the broader Nerstrand community, the Big Woods Corridor, and the Prairie Creek watershed. I'm a member of the Valley Grove Preservation

Please list any current political offices you hold. (if any)

n/a

Please list any previous political office you've held. (if any)

n/a

Please list any civic, community, or professional organizations/clubs your a

community, supporting my parents as they have led efforts over decades to maintain and restore the Valley Grove Church stone and wooden church buildings, and to protect the surrounding lands. I'm an adult advisor for the YMCA Center for Youth Voice, Youth in Government program, supporting teens in the calling that "democracy must be learned by each generation." And as part of my service on the Board of Commissioners, I will be building relationships with every community organization I can in District One, so that I'm in the best position to serve the entire community.

What qualifies for the office you're running for?

I've always believed that service is about setting a high standard. And while I hadn't planned to run for office until just this past May, I'm stepping up to the responsibility. I'm meeting with Rice County staff, observing Board of Commissioners meetings, talking with leaders in business, farming, and nonprofit work, reading county reports, and visiting with every voter I can reach. I'm grateful to be able to learn more and more about District One and how to best represent all of us who live here. Professionally, I draw on my extensive background in business operations and communications. That means I have the skills needed to evaluate financials, work plans, and cost-benefit issues. It also means that I'll be able to help Rice County with a major weakness—communicating responsibly and effectively with the public.

District One is the one district in Rice County with a good balance between rural and town areas.

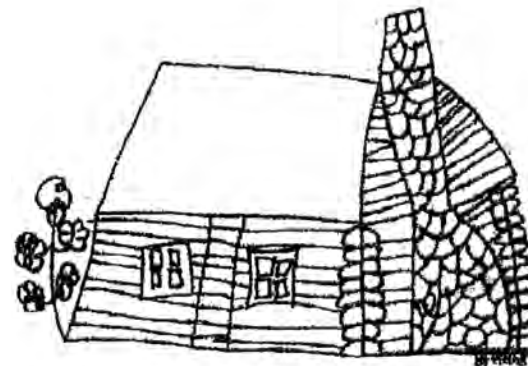
(continued on page 19)

Harvest Thyme Craft Show

Saturdays: September 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26

Sundays: September 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27

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Meet the Candidates for Rice County Board of Commissioners - District 1

(continued from page 18)

For me, growing up just outside of Nerstrand, I was always one of the “rural kids” — especially when I was bussed all the way to Faribault for junior and high school. But at the same time, I went to church in Northfield and spent a lot of time at St. Olaf College where my mother taught the flute. After years away, I moved back to the county, and now I’m raising my kids in southern Northfield, close to Dundas. My life experience here in District One of Rice County means I am in an excellent position to work with neighbors across rural and town communities, and build connections between lifelong and newer residents.

What inspired you to run for office? If you are running for reelection why do you want to stay in office?

I was inspired by a large group of neighbors working to protect the Big Woods Corridor in our district from a pit mine operation. We set aside our personal lives for weeks to do essential work the county should have done—like evaluating the claims of the mining

company, and researching groundwater sensitivity. And we had to press repeatedly for real public participation opportunities. I kept thinking that there must be better ways to conduct county business. So my involvement went from concern about health, safety, and environmental impacts, to disappointment with the response of elected county officials, to the motivation to run for office and be a better voice for everyone in District One. This is why my campaign slogan is “from the Big Woods to a better Rice County.”

What is something that you would like to accomplish while in office?

It’s time to fix Rice County’s broken process for public participation, and here’s why: We have so-called public hearings that don’t work for the public, regularly scheduled at times when working families cannot attend. Public notices follow the letter of the law—fine print and legal language at the back of the Faribault Daily News—but they clearly don’t give the public the information they need: At a recent public hearing, just *one* of Rice County’s 67,000 residents was present to speak on a major county issue. There are many other examples of this problem, unfortunately.

With our process for public participation broken, a risk is that Commissioners’ decisions can be more influenced by special interests than by the public. In addition, without effective communication to the public, District One neighbors are caught off guard by things like an unexpected asphalt plant, or the unprecedented \$48 million county jail tax question on the Nov. 5 ballot. As a result of all this, our Commissioners miss the opportunity to understand public

concerns, and our Rice County government falls out of touch with the people it serves.

As your Commissioner, I’ll be dedicated to fixing Rice County’s process so that public input and communication are taken seriously.

What does being a leader mean to you?

For me, being a leader has always started with the question, “How can I help?” ...Followed quickly by, “What do I need to know?” and “Who needs to be involved?” My model for being a good County Commissioner is to be like a good neighbor—communicating in a straightforward way, treating others with kindness and respect, helping when needed, and staying out of things when not needed. In an elected office, I believe being a leader also means (1) responsibility to be upfront with the public about tough issues; (2) responsibility to use the office to help people in need; and (3) responsibility to act in a way that reflects well on the community.

What do you believe the biggest issue facing Rice County in the future is? Is the Board of Commissioners already or addressing it or would like to work on this issue more?

There’s no single issue facing Rice County that is separate from all the rest: economic development, social services, housing, transportation—they’re all related. That said, one clear theme stands out from talking with voters: we need to do better in how we care for our natural resources so we can all live well, so our county can thrive. Water we can’t drink coming out of our home wells? Air we can’t breathe downwind of landfill fires? Farmlands being fragmented? Our Big Woods area hit by poorly planned development? It doesn’t need to be this way. Rice County could be a leader in taking on these kinds of problems—making improvements in zoning and planning, strengthening our Comprehensive Plan, taking advantage of Minnesota state tools for better resource management, and advocating actively at the state level for necessary support and funding.

While this is all on the radar of our current Board of Commissioners, we’re not seeing the kind of commitment and coordinated action we need from Rice County.

Campaign Websites
Website – Facebook

Dundas City Council Reviews City Admin’s Performance; Approves Construction Projects for 2025

(continued from page 1)

The review also looked at the nine goals the city council had set for Dundas; reviewing progress of them and readjusting as needed. Mayor Glenn Switzer said that the council was very happy Teppen performance:

“So we’re very excited. We’re very happy to have Janelle here and she represents the city of Dundas as you would know and the forum very professionally on and off.” – Dundas Mayor Glenn Switzer on the KYMN Morning Show

One of the major accomplishments that Switzer noted was that Dundas has consistently grown for the last 4 years attracting

new business and housing.

Also at the meeting the council approved plans for a new water main to be installed in 2025. Currently the Millstone and Stoneridge developments are served by one water main. In 2025 a water main would be installed on Dundas Boulevard (the road that runs parallel to the railroad tracks in that neighborhood) to provide a second connection. Creating a second connection to the subdivisions which would provide service if a water main shutdowns or a break were to occur and improves water flow for fire hydrants. Construction on the project will take place in 2025.

Dundas Works To Expand Sidewalk Network Around Highway 3

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The City of Dundas is working to expand its sidewalk network around County Road 1 and Highway 3. Earlier in September the city council signed a grant agreement with the State of Minnesota, where the state will fund the majority of the project. Currently there is no safe way to cross highway 3 in Dundas, here is City Administrator Jenelle Teppen:

“With the help from our local legislators, we received a grant from the state for \$362,000 to complete the trunk, Hwy. 3 County Road 1 pedestrian crossing. So there’s a light at Hwy. 3 and County Road 1 One so that we will be installing pedestrian crossings. You know, the whole flashing light across that right now, there’s not a Safeway to get across Hwy. 3 in Dundas really.” – City Administrator Jenelle Teppen on the KYMN Morning Show

The council took the next step in finalizing the project. The plan would create a network of sidewalks that would run from the Cannon Valley Cinema/Slumberland building down past Tractor Supply to the Dundas Dome and also up to Highway 3 and County Road 1 where a pedestrian crossing would be installed. After working with the property owners, the council approved an easement that will allow for a new sidewalk portion near tractor supply.

Construction on the project will take place next year.



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Daily life is still difficult to afford

By: SENATOR BILL LIESKE

The other day I read a story about soaring credit card debt that shocked me, but didn't surprise me. Credit card debt in the U.S. hit another record, hitting \$1.14 trillion. When you think about it, it makes sense. The price of groceries, rent, and gas has shot up over the last few years, and people are having a really hard time keeping up. To make matters worse, credit card interest rates are also reaching record highs – in August, the average new credit card interest rate was 24.84%. For those already struggling, carrying a balance means sinking deeper and deeper into debt.

Just last week, Neel Kashkari, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, gave the economy an "A," pointing out that

the labor market is strong and inflation is coming down. But Kashkari also admitted that prices are probably not going to drop back to where they were before inflation spiked.

Kashkari's comments completely miss the stress and anxiety regular families are facing every day around rising costs. His honesty about prices never coming down also offers little comfort to the people in our area who are still feeling the effects of that runaway inflation, many of whom are continuing to live paycheck to paycheck or piling up credit card debt to make things work.

I hear regularly from folks who are still feeling squeezed. I talked to a man in his 30s recently who told me he is considering moving back in with his parents because the economy is so tough. I know others who did make that move because rents are so high. There are countless stories like this. These people aren't loafers; these are hard workers in a variety of fields with good jobs and college degrees. Despite their different backgrounds, they're all facing the same issue:

life is just too expensive.

It's no surprise then that consumer confidence is at its lowest level since 2021. A recent story in Semafor noted the biggest drop in consumer confidence in three years happened last month. The economic stresses are putting a strain on working families.

We have to remember that a big part of these soaring costs comes from government policies that affect how much we pay for goods and services. Here is just one example: in 2023, Democrats indexed the gas tax to inflation, meaning it will increase every year automatically. This tax hike directly affects transportation costs, which are a significant component of the final price of goods like groceries. The higher the cost to transport goods, the higher the prices at stores.

Here is another: in Minnesota, we have some of the highest corporate taxes in the country. Those costs get passed down to consumers in the form of higher prices. Businesses that have to pay more in taxes and comply with expensive regulations and mandates end up charging more for their products.

I know the blue collar, working man side of us may feel like cheering high corporate taxes. After all, it's discouraging when we see big business profits soar while we struggle. The unfortunate reality is our state's high taxes don't hurt the big businesses, but they do hurt the little guy and they definitely hurt us consumers. Whether it's the cost of groceries, rent, or fuel, Minnesota families are paying more because of the policies enacted in St. Paul.

You should be able to afford to live a lot easier than this. We need to take a hard look at how high taxes and overregulation are making life unaffordable for the average person. We can't undo the Democrats' mistakes of the last couple of years, but cutting taxes, reducing unnecessary regulations, and putting more money back in people's pockets

should be the focus of our economic policies starting right now. Because while some experts may think the economy is doing fine, the reality for many Minnesotans is a daily struggle.

Lieske praises Northfield/Loon Liquors development grant

Senator Bill Lieske (R-Lonsdale) praised an announcement that Northfield has been awarded \$29,795 in state funding for the Loon Liquors development project. The grant, provided through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) Redevelopment Grant Program, will help cover the cost of asbestos abatement at the former Northfield News building.

The grant marks the latest step in turning the 7,200-square-foot building into a craft distillery. The project is expected to create five new jobs, retain nine existing jobs, and bring \$1 million in private investment to Northfield's downtown area. In addition, the redevelopment will increase the city's tax base by \$18,200 annually, further enhancing the community's economy.

"This is a prime example of what Northfield is all about—local businesses growing and contributing to the strength of our community," Senator Lieske said. "This grant ensures that Loon Liquors can expand and continue its success right here in town."

The redevelopment of the Northfield News building is especially meaningful for Loon Liquors. As a locally owned and operated business with a decade of success under its belt, this expansion allows Loon to remain rooted in the community that helped it grow while welcoming even more visitors to Northfield. With plans to create a "destination distillery" that offers tours and showcases the craft of distilling, the new facility will play a vital role in Northfield's economic development and tourism efforts.

DUNDAS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Monday, September 23, 2024 7:00 p.m. City Hall

Present: Councilors Luke LaCroix, Ashley Gallagher, Grant Modory, Luke Swartwood
Absent: Mayor Switzer

Staff: City Administrator/Clerk Jenelle Teppen, City Engineer Dustin Tipp

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Modory called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by LaCroix, second by Gallagher, to approve the agenda. Motion Carried Unanimously (MCU)

CONSENT AGENDA

- Regular Minutes of September 9, 2024
- Disbursements - \$56,965.47

Motion by Swartwood, second by Gallagher, to approve the consent agenda. MCU

REGULAR AGENDA

- Consider Approving Quote for Truck Bed and Equipment

Staff reported that the City Council previously approved a similar quote from a different vendor but that vendor was not able to fulfill the order in the timeframe that they had originally represented. The quote from Crysteel includes a temporary truck bed that we will be able to return for a credit when the permanent truck bed and equipment is installed in March of 2025.

Motion by LaCroix, second by Gallagher, to approve quote from Crysteel Truck Equipment for Truck Bed and Equipment for \$70,328. MCU

- Consider Approving Grant of Permanent Easement for Public Sidewalk Purposes

The easement across a vacant parcel along Schilling Drive will allow the City to connect the sidewalk from the north to the south ending at Menards.

Motion by Swartwood, second by Gallagher, to approve Grant of Permanent Easement for Public Sidewalk Purposes MCU

- Consider Approving Proposal for City Photos/Videos for Marketing

Council member Swartwood would like the City Council to have some input or review of the plan for what the photos/videos will be used for. Staff will return to the Council at a future date with a proposed plan for review and comment by the City Council.

Motion by Gallagher, second by LaCroix, to approve Proposal from Jonny Weaver for City Photos/Videos for Marketing. MCU

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

City Engineer – Dustin Tipp

City Engineer Dustin Tipp reported that the new light poles along Railway St have been installed and that the sidewalk that runs adjacent to the trail will be removed and the turf restored.

He also reported that WSB has begun the design and preparation of construction plans for the TH 3/Cty Rd 1 sidewalk/trail/pedestrian access project.

Lastly, he reported that the signs prohibiting semi-truck traffic in the Millstone/Stoneridge and Forest/Depot Streets neighborhoods will be installed by October 15. He also reported that WSB was able to submit a request to Google Maps to indicate that truck traffic is now prohibited along those streets.

ADJOURN

Motion by Gallagher, second by LaCroix, to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM. MCU
Minutes prepared by Jenelle Teppen, City Administrator/City Clerk

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