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Volume 19 • Issue 1

Announcements

• **THE MAZEPPA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** sends out a **HUGE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT & ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT 2025!** LET'S ROLL & support us in building an additional building & make downtown Mazeppa beautiful with the new "RUMORS".

• **Celebrate Recovery meetings every Sunday night at 5pm at South Troy Church, 56817 Highway 63 Zumbro Falls, MN 55991.** (see ad on pg. 3)

• **Three Rivers Community Action** is currently accepting new Meals On Wheels clients in the communities of Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Goodhue, Pine Island, Kenyon and Wanamingo. Receive a hot meal delivered to your home by a volunteer at lunch time up to 5 days per week. To qualify you must be 60 or older, live within city limits, have limited mobility and/or are unable to prepare nutritious meals. The suggested donation is \$5-\$10 per meal. For more information on how to sign up for meals or to be a volunteer driver, please contact Dana Bergner at 507-421-6067 or dbergner@threeriverscap.org

• **The Zumbro Valley Food Shelf** is located at South Troy Wesleyan Church, 56817 Hwy 63, Zumbro Falls, MN. The hours are Tuesdays 11:00am-5:00pm and Thursdays 11:00am-6:00pm. Donations and volunteers are greatly appreciated. For more information contact Pastor Colleen Hoefl at 507-259-1442 or choeft52@gmail.com.

• **The Mazeppa Area Food Shelf, serving Mazeppa, Bellechester, and Zumbro Falls Area** is open the second Thursday of the month from 9:30-11 am and 3:30 - 5:30pm, and the fourth Thursday from 3:30 - 5:30pm. Food drop off locations are First State Bank of Red Wing, Mazeppa Branch, and Entry way to Mazeppa City Hall.

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

Barrel Hut Open For Business

By Beth Brekke

Looking for a household item, a necessity, a novelty or a gift? You may not need to go farther than downtown Goodhue to find

what's on your list. The Barrel Hut is a new business located in the former Larsen Industries building at 202 2nd Street North that promises "Big box store overstock items at

SERVING OUR HOMETOWNS

We want to Thank You for your continued support of the Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls Messenger this past year!



In an era of online everything, your monthly local newspaper continues with an unwavering goal to bring hometown news to you. (continued on page 5)

New Restaurant Opening in Mazeppa



The progress continues on the new building on Main Street, Mazeppa which will be the new restaurant in town.



Linda Eckhoff opened a new business in Goodhue in November. The Barrel Hut is wallet-friendly with merchandise up to 50% off suggested retail prices.

great prices". The store will be open from 10 am to 5 pm the first and third Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays of the month.

(continued on page 3)



From left: Scarlett Krusmark, Amelia Darcy, Eleanor Darcy, Raelyn Krusmark, Brettley Krusmark

Mazeppa Musketeers 4-H Club

Submitted

The Mazeppa Musketeers 4-H club applied for a grant through the 4-H food partnership challenge.

Using that grant, the club partnered with the Mazeppa food shelf and bought Christmas meals for 15 families in the community.

The Tale of a Town and Two Musicians

2024 was the year we lost both contributors to the "Where in The Hell is Mazeppa" song. By best research the song was penned by Mazeppa's own Skeeter Berg in the late 1950's.



Skeeter Berg



Bruce Bungum

(continued on page 6)

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Hope in the King



By Pastor Colleen Hoeft

With Christmas in the air- there's a spirit, a sense of hope all around. It's a lot like a child waiting at the window for Santa to arrive. Or the child that is waiting for Dad to come home or anticipating the arrival of Grandma and Grandpa. Maybe that was you, you kept looking out the window- you checked your watch or your phone numerous times to see the time. You waited with joy, anticipation, and an eagerness to see that person that you were waiting for. It was a hope that, that person would be there any minute. Waiting and watching looking out the window. That hope would be realized as that person arrived, or it would be crushed when they didn't show. The Hope believers have in the King is a sure hope- one that never disappoints. It is the hope that we have in God's promises and the hope that is available to each one of us.

First, what is hope? Our friend Miriam Webster says: Hope is: 1a: to cherish a desire with anticipation, to expect with confidence : trust, someone or something on which hopes are centered.

Hope is one of the most important emotions that we have. Hope drives us to stick with the task, to anticipate a better day ahead, even to follow a star. The wisemen- or magi were - hoping on a star! They recognized the signs

of the times and knew that it was the time for the King of the Jews to be born. Matthew gives us a short account of the journey of these people.

"About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 2 "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2.

These astronomers, men of science recognized a star, and the signs associated with that star. They also understood the scriptures written about the coming of the King of the Jews too. (not a king like Herod, but one with a Spiritual emphasis) - They were hoping, and they were acting on that hope. They didn't wait around until He became an earthly king- they started out on their journey- up to two years before Jesus' birth to meet this new King. Their 'hope' was to see this child and give Him their worship. With that hope they headed toward Judea- When they arrived in Jerusalem; thinking a king would be born there, but instead they met Herod and discovered through the book of Micah- in the Old Testament- that the new King would be born in Bethlehem.

Their hope was realized once they found the child with his parents in Bethlehem. They were able to worship and bow before King Jesus as He sat on His mother's lap! They left rejoicing and hopeful for the future of the world, because of the arrival of King Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews said, in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

As believers we have faith in God. And be-

cause of that faith we have hope that everything He has planned will come true. There's a big difference between the dictionary meaning of hope and the Biblical meaning. True hope can only come from a relationship with God. True hope only comes though the God Factor. True hope knows that God always keeps His promises. Your hope must be based on the fact of who God is and nothing else. If God is not the object of your hope, then you don't have true biblical hope because the certainty has been removed. Without that certainty, your hope simply reverts back to a wish. We can have this hope as believers because we have the certainty that God does not lie! We have the certainty that God always keeps His promises.

If God has said it, you can trust his promise because it is impossible for God to lie. This trust therefore becomes an anchor for the soul. Anchors are designed to keep you steady so that you will not be moved. This anchor; that it is impossible for God to lie, is the foundation for your certainty and the backbone for your hope. It is the reason why you and I can have hope today.

Whether what you're hoping for is as simple as good weather for New Years Eve plans or a hope that the cancer will not return- you can place your hope in the certainty that Jesus Christ is the King. He is the one that came as a baby to Bethlehem. He is the one that healed the lame, the sick, the blind, got rid of demons and taught the multitudes. He is the one that went to the cross and died there. He is the one that went to the grave for 3 days and laid there. He is the one that rose victorious from the grave 3 days later!!! Our hope is secure- our hope is

in a God that created the world we live in, and He can raise the dead!!! Our hope has a sure and certain foundation when it is built on Jesus Christ.

Hope isn't delusional. It isn't denial. It doesn't ignore the real challenges, details of the diagnosis, or dwindling money in the checking account. It doesn't ignore the trouble, or make excuses, or deny danger. It is not pretending. Hope is acknowledging the truth of the situation and seeking God's direction in it. It's showing up and working through the hard stuff, believing that something better is possible. Persevering even when it looks hopeless. As we look towards the future we can Hope because we know that God is in control and that God always keeps His promises. Our hope is greater than any of our worries and fears. Hope in the King- He is here, and He is coming again.

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AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

Lightening Our Burdens

At that time I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone." — Deuteronomy 1:9

Moses, the leader of God's people during their long time of wandering in the desert, learned that he could not carry the heavy burdens of the people on his own. The Israelites had grown in number. Bearing their problems, burdens, and disputes was too much for one person to handle. So he shared the workload with other leaders from among the twelve tribes of Israel, and they developed a system that worked for everyone. (See also Exodus 18.)

New challenges are a part of life, and we cannot keep doing what we are used to if it no longer works. We can talk to a pastor, family members, close friends, or other trusted persons when our burdens are too much for us—emotionally, physically, or spiritually. Many of us today face an overload of situations that are causing anxiety in our lives: family concerns, financial troubles, broken relationships, work dissatisfaction, career pressures, societal issues. Struggling on our own is not healthy, and eventually we need help. The Lord wants us to share one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

As followers of Jesus, we can make the right choice by lightening our burdens. Jesus invites us to receive rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28-30). We don't have to carry our burdens alone. We can give them to the Lord.

Lord Jesus, thank you for bearing our burdens. We are not alone. You have given us people who love and care for us. Help us to find rest for our souls and strength to carry on. Amen.

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Barrel Hut Open For Business

(continued from page 1)

Signage will direct you to the East entrance in the alley behind the building.

Linda Eckhoff originally started marketing overstock merchandise from her garage in Hammond, WI. She opened the Goodhue location in mid-November after moving back to her hometown to help care for her father, Donald Hadler. She currently has a Facebook page named What-T-Do where you can find updated information and special offers. On-

line sales may be added in the future but right now you can explore the renovated shop space where you will find everything from batteries to boots to blankets.

Linda says blankets, other bedding and towels have been good sellers. You might find cleaning supplies, office supplies, tools or even the kitchen sink but quantities are limited. All items are overstocked inventory from "big box stores" (such as Target) that she purchases by the pallet or semi load from online auctions. The lots are labeled as "household", "holiday", "health and beauty", or other general categories but the exact contents are a mystery until they arrive and are unpacked.

The merchandise is new and unused but may not be in original packaging or perfect condition. When her purchases arrive, Eckhoff sorts and inspects everything to ensure that it is in working condition. She notes any flaws and prices items accordingly. The Barrel Hut advertises as "wallet-friendly buys for smart, economical shoppers" with most items up to 50% off the suggested retail price. Drones will fly off the shelf while other hidden treasures may go through a series of discounts, or even eventually be free.

A retail store is a welcome addition to Goodhue. The Barrel Hut reported strong sales during the Christkindmarkt. Continuing to Shop local is a great way to support the community.



The Barrel Hut offers big-box overstock retail shopping in the former Larsen Industries building shop area.


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Questions?

Contact Pastor Colleen Hoeft at celebraterecoverysouthtroy@gmail.com or 507.259.1442
 Visit southtroywesleyan.org for more information

OBITUARY

John E. Betcher

A memorial service for John E. Betcher was held Thursday January 2, 2025 at 10:30 AM at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, rural Goodhue. The Rev. Marty Weigand officiated. Interment of the urn followed at the church cemetery. Visitation was one hour prior to the



service at the church.

Mr. Betcher, 80, of Mazeppa, died Monday December 23, 2024 at his home while under hospice care.

John Edward Betcher was born April 6, 1944 in Zumbrota, the son of Lauren Edwin Betcher and Evelyn Johanna (neé Raasch) Betcher. John was a graduate of Zumbrota High School with the Class of 1961. He married Adeline Sommerfield on June 15, 1963.

He began his off-farm working career as a pea viner stacker at the age of 15, worked for Olsen's unloading feed in Zumbrota, and later working at the foundry in Lake City. He was always farming. While working out, he worked for Ken Sommerfield Construction, and he sold seed corn.

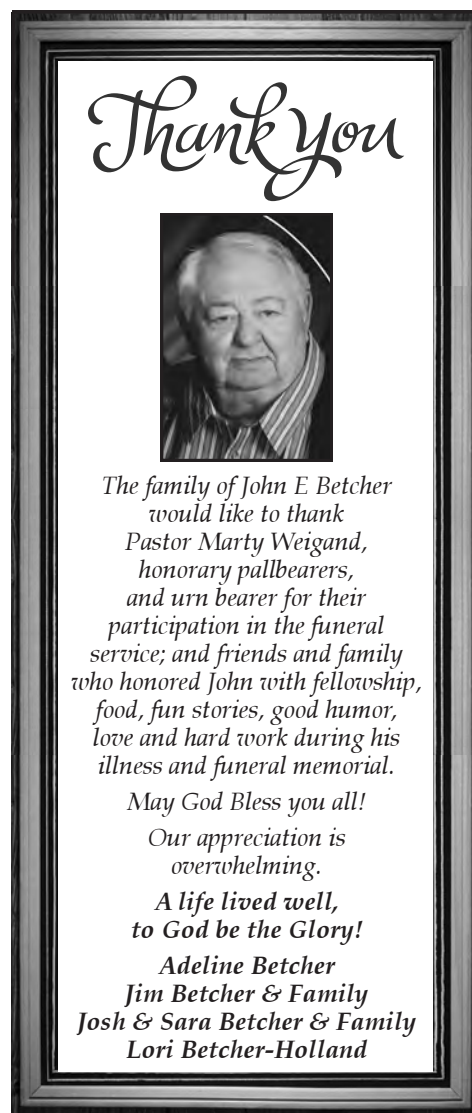

On February 1, 1975 he purchased the Schmit's Garage and it became Betcher Implement. With the expansion of his business he moved to the Chestnut Avenue location, with a new building and on June 1st a new partner and name, B&B Implement. He was in business for 33 years.

He is a lifelong member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, where he served as treasurer and trustee, and for many years he was on the cemetery board. Also, he is a past-president of the Mazeppa Lions, a member of the National North American Dealer Council, with which he won a trip to Washington, DC as recipient of the Dealers' President Award. He was Mayor of Mazeppa for six years, a member of the Mazeppa EDA, all while continuing his favorite pastime, farming.

John is survived by his wife of 61 years, Adeline Betcher; his son James Betcher; daughter Lori Betcher-Holland, son Josh (Sara) Betcher; 9 grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter; sisters Janette Ecklund, Shirley (Jack) Rosener, Sylvia Hoffman-Franke; brother-in-law Roderick (Gail) Sommerfield; as well as nieces and nephews. Also surviving is a dear friend and caretaker, Jakki Browneyes.

He was preceded in death by his parents Lauren and Evelyn Betcher; his wife's parents Emil and Lorraine Sommerfield; a son John A. Betcher; as well as brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Following the memorial service, friends were invited to join the family and relatives at the Mazeppa Community Center for food, fellowship, and further remembrance.


Thank you

The family of John E Betcher would like to thank Pastor Marty Weigand, honorary pallbearers, and urn bearer for their participation in the funeral service; and friends and family who honored John with fellowship, food, fun stories, good humor, love and hard work during his illness and funeral memorial.
May God Bless you all!
Our appreciation is overwhelming.
A life lived well, to God be the Glory!
Adeline Betcher
Jim Betcher & Family
Josh & Sara Betcher & Family
Lori Betcher-Holland

The Importance of Time Spent Outdoors for Children



By Brian Kettering, Director of Day Camps at Camp Victory Zumbro Falls, MN

The concept of designated “outdoor time” is a mostly recent phenomenon. Some folks born in a year that starts with the number 19 can remember a time where your mother gave you a designated inside time, one that was typically tracked by sunsets or streetlights. With the rapid rise of technology, specifically the advancements of the smart phone, social media, and video games, the tides have turned drastically. Gone are the days where the after-school activity was to ride your bike to the

park, throw a baseball in the yard with dad, or skip stones at your favorite creek or pond. Now have come the days of digital homework assignments, unlimited movies and television streamed to your home, and online video game stores with flowing discounts that seem to keep the wallet of a gamer ever so light. With all the great reasons to stay inside, why would anyone bother going outside? Perhaps an even more specific question is necessary: as a parent living in the middle of the digital revolution, why should I send my kids outside more often?

As an avid outdoorsman, I can think of about 20 good reasons to go outside, but I’ll keep it simple and offer three reasons every child should spend some time outside nearly every day.

- A study in Denmark showed that significant time spent in “green spaces” (ones with natural plant life) had been shown to decrease mental health diagnoses in adolescents. We live in an unprecedented age when it comes to our awareness of mental health, especially for our younger generations. Every little piece of our lifestyle influences our mental health, and most studies agree that time spent in nature can have a very positive influence on it.

- Time spent outdoors can work wonders for you and your child’s physical health just as well. Regular time spent in nature can improve your cardiovascular, respiratory, and muscular health, as well as strengthen your senses by working out your eyes, ears, and nose!

- Time spent outdoors allows your mind a place to imagine. Imagination deprivation is deteriorating the joyful, youthful spirit of our adolescents today. In the book *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, the duo explores the psychological and sociological damage that can (and does) exist when children are deprived of unsupervised, unstructured play time. There is absolutely no better space for the cultural remedy of imagination deprivation than in the great outdoors.

Perhaps you know all of this, but you’re wondering, “where do I start?” It can certainly be difficult to cultivate a lifestyle that creates space for outdoor time from scratch, especially in urban environments. Here are some tips for easing into it:

- Start small. Consider taking a short walk every other day as a family during pleasant seasons and playing in the snow for thirty minutes during colder ones. Nothing is too small to try!

- Find community-oriented, family-friendly sports options. I once played with a regular ultimate frisbee group against children as young as 10 years old and adults as old as 70, all on the same field. It was casual enough to be safe but competitive enough to be fun. It was also a great opportunity for multi-generational engagement.

- Consider adding an outdoor hobby to your family that provides natural rewards, like gardening, foraging, or fishing. There are numerous books, YouTube channels, and podcasts about all three things, and Amazon has



all the tools you need to get started affordably.

- Consider attending a family retreat or family camp at your local summer camp! Perhaps I’m biased towards camping as a camp professional, but I have seen, heard, and experienced wonderful family development and outdoor engagement happen at camps all over the country.

I hope you feel encouraged to start including regular outdoor time into your family rhythm. Get out, get moving, and watch your child’s mental, physical, and imaginative health improve!

Denmark study source: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6421415/>

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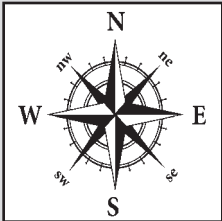
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

I Can Fix Most Anything



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.

Spending my life as a farmer I have learned to repair most types of equipment. To begin with it was a necessity. Farming in the mid 1980's was a survival mode existence. I took it for granted, if it broke you ran it into the shop and made it unbroke. Most farmers shops are a testament to that. There are parts saved and stored from the past fifty years, because one day you are certain you will need it to fix something. Or just create something new to fit an application the market hadn't come up with yet. There is a magazine called Farm Show, which is full of inventions from farm shops made by creative farmers across the country.

Often times I would think on it over night to come up with a solution. I find that the longer one mulls a project over in their mind, the more likely it is to work. And more than not there are multiple designs to get it to work right. But I often surprised myself with creative ways to rebuild something.

Someone who didn't grow up with a father who farmed may not have any idea that probably nothing is unfixable. We come from a society which throws things away rather than repair them. But I am glad I have enough influence from previous generation

to do otherwise.

My step-daughter brought something home from the big city this summer. It was a collapsible grocery cart. Living in the city, it is simpler to walk to the market and back, than to drive and look for a parking spot on the busy streets. Wheeling bags is much easier than carrying them. It had collapsed, but not in the way the makers intended for it to. She assumed it was not fixable but brought it home to me because it had four perfectly good wheels on it. I was told I could have it for the parts. She had seen the covered parts graveyard I called the shop. She knew it would have plenty of company here. It was a tangle of metal tubes, chrome plated steel basket material, rods and wheels.

I looked at it and visualized how it was constructed to neatly fold up and stow away and yet instantly deploy into a usable cart again. I guess kind of like a transformer to the younger reader. Imagining the way it was intended to function, I realized the pivoting rivets had simply given up holding it together. Eyeballing the size of the hole that was left, after I extracted the cheap Chinese connectors, I went to the bolt drawer and brought back some #12 x 2" stove bolts and locking nuts. A couple minutes later it was as good as new.

She was quite surprised to find that the little cart was ready for a new life. It went back to the big city to help with domestic chores when she returned. For me it was just another day of fixing things.

This fall she sent back something she found



in her apartment. She saved it for me and thought it would have some value. It was a 5/16" flange nut and a 3/8" fender washer on a 3" carriage bolt. She probably doesn't know that I use flange nuts and fender washers all the time. Flange nuts have a wide washer attached to the base of the nut and fender washers are super wide washers, atleast four times the width of standard washers. When working with wood or metal with oversized holes one needs the extra washer width. But she knows I can fix things. And I have the affirmation that someone from a younger generation acknowledges that. And that is quite satisfying for an old guy to see.

SERVING OUR HOMETOWNS

(continued from page 1)

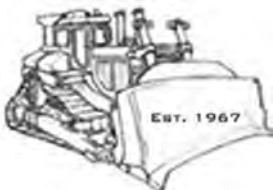
Thanks to local advertisers and your voluntary subscriptions, we are in your mail box each month.

Without this support, we would not be here. We hope you continue to see value in the Messenger. While there are plenty of social media sources and on line sites out there, most don't deliver the hometown news and message like we try to do here.

Every year, many local newspapers are forced out of business. We have watched this happen many times in recent years in small rural communities.

With our small staff of 2.5, we understand this challenge first hand here at the Messenger, which is why we publish the Messenger in its monthly format.

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A Minnesotan: Sledding



By RosaLin Alcoser

2025. How can it already be 2025? It feels like not too long ago we were ringing in the new decade. I could take the time to talk about the first five years of the 2020s, but instead I'm going to talk about sledding. More specifically the first time that I went sledding.

Recently my mom was telling me about how her neighbors were taking their one-year old grandchild out for their first time sledding. Which got me thinking about the first time my sister and I went sledding.

We moved to Minnesota from Arkansas the fall of 1999; meaning that I was old enough to remember the first time that I ever saw snow. Which frankly TV Christmas specials did not prepare me for. It turned out to be cold, wet and we learned the hard way that there's a difference between powdery snow and wet snow.

That first snow in 1999 we had no idea what we were doing when it came to playing in the snow. So after our mom bundled us up in our new snow gear, told us not to breathe through our mouths so our lungs wouldn't freeze, and sent us out the door. We decided to try our hand at sledding.

There were two problems with this idea. The first was we had not idea how to sled. The same TV specials that hadn't prepared us for snow also hadn't given clear instructions on how to sled. The second problem was that we did not own sleds.

Not having sleds didn't really stop us from going sledding though. Instead we tried a couple of things. First we tried using cardboard boxes, which as you might imagine did not work at all. To this day we agree it was our worst attempt in this endeavor. After that we tried using our plastic alligator teeter totter and toddler rocky horse. Both of which worked better than the boxes.

Neither of which worked out well for my three-year old self. Or at least not as well as they did for my older sister. When she tried it she went down the hill, However, when I tried it I just fell over into the snow. So I ended up deciding that the best option would be to simply roll down the hill. Which really wasn't so much of sledding as it was just rolling down a hill.

I think soon after that first attempt our parents did get us saucer sleds and those worked way better then anything that we had tried to use as sleds. Once we had sleds and got the hang of sledding it did become a favorite winter activity for the Alcoser sisters.

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Troop 76 Meets a Legend

By Cheri Roshon

How many people do you know who have actually met a former President of the United States? Well, since former President Jimmy Carter recently passed away at age 100, I was asked to share a story about our Wanamingo Scout troop 76, and how in 1997, the boys and their leaders had an opportunity to meet him, and get a picture with him, too!

It started with a trip to the Florida Keys, while attending the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base program on New Year's Day in 1997. This program teaches kids how to snorkel, scuba dive, and kayak, as well as being able to see creatures from the sea that you'd never find in Minnesota!

The first days they stayed at the Florida Sea Base, a national scout camp at Islamorada, Florida, where they stayed in the dorms. The first day there, they went to Pigeon Island and learned about the historic 7 mile Bridge, and had a history tour. It was there that they learned about and experienced snorkelling and sailing.

The fourth day, they took a boat to Big Munson Island, a small deserted island, 6 miles from the base. More snorkelling and kayaking, as well as viewing and petting the native key deer that reside there. They saw sting rays, sea turtles and a variety of salt water fish, sponges and coral. They also fished and caught 3 to 5 foot barracudas!

While fishing on New Year's Day, some of the boys got seasick, so they decided to rest at a small island called Pine Key, where by coincidence, they saw former President Jimmy Carter and his family. They were on vacation there, and the boys asked permission to talk to him, and get a few pictures! What an experience to have! He was the 39th President of our country, serving from 1976 to 1981. He ran for a second term, but was defeated by Ronald Reagan. He was a Navy officer, a governor, an author of 32 books, and started



Scouts and leaders of Troop 76 who went to Pine Key. Front, kneeling, from left to right Cory Berg, Ben McBroom, Eric Kittleson, Jesse Anderson, Kyle Nerison. Back Island Mate Dave, Peggy Prigge, Larry Van De Walker, Peter Greseth, Aaron Haugen, Trevor Prigge, Robbie Wilkenson, Michael Rath, Don Rath, Nathan Trost, Stu Ohr and Island Mate Joe.

The Carter Foundation with his wife Rosalyn. He taught Sunday School, and was an advocate for social justice.

If I ever got to meet a former President, Jimmy Carter would have been the one I would have wanted to meet. While he held a controversial position while in office, due to his very liberal views, he accomplished so many things in his lifetime after his term, that he is one of America's heroes. Always a human rights advocate and a humanitarian, he served Habitat for Humanity for a week out of every year until he was unable to participate. He was instrumental as a diplomat in the Panama Canal construction, and in the FFA program. He even received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. He holds the title of the oldest living president, the longest married president (75 years) and has too many accolades to list. I would encourage you to look into his life for a very interesting biography of a man who wasn't afraid to stand up for what he believed in, and always took action

for the betterment of our citizens. RIP, Jimmy!

The Tale of a Town and Two Musicians

(continued from page 1)

In the late 1970's it was recorded by Bruce Bungum, who was releasing an album under the name James Blue. Bungum, a Kenyon native residing in Kasson, had a local musical following in Minnesota and the recording received airplay on a number of radio stations from Rochester to the Twin Cities in 1978. Bungum went on to record a few more albums but never made it on the national scene.



Skeeter Berg passed away in February and Bruce Bungum, passed away in November of this past year.



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Planks for Spinal Health



By Shauna Burslem, D.C.

When it comes to spine health, planks are one of the best exercises you can integrate into your routine. I've worked with countless individuals who struggle with posture issues and lower back pain, and often, the root cause lies in weak core muscles. Planks are brilliant because they engage your entire core, including the deep abdominals that support and stabilize your spine. Unlike crunches or sit-ups, planks put minimal strain on your spine while effectively building strength in the muscles that keep your back aligned. What I love most about planks is their versatility—they're accessible whether you're a seasoned athlete or just starting your fitness journey. Holding a proper plank position trains your body to maintain a neutral spine, which is crucial for standing, walking, and even sitting. I can't stress enough how this translates into everyday life. Think about it—every step you take, every chair you sit in, benefits from a steady foundation. Over time, strengthening these core muscles through planks can reduce back pain and improve your posture dramatically. Beyond just physical benefits, planking is a mental game too. It's about holding still, focusing your breath, and staying present. For many of us, experiencing back pain can feel physically and emotionally draining. Planks are a way to fight back—both strengthening the areas involved and empowering you to take charge of your spine health. Remember, consistency is key. Start small, even if it's just 20 seconds a day, and watch your spine and entire core grow stronger over time.

New RSV vaccine update: Moderna halted its clinical trial of experimental mRNA vac-

cines for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in babies after the shots were linked to severe side effects. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) disclosed this week in a briefing document that rather than protecting babies as anticipated, the vaccine likely caused higher rates of severe RSV illness among the vaccinated babies enrolled in the Phase 1 clinical trials. The FDA document also stated that enrollment is now on hold for all investigational trials for RSV vaccines for infants and toddlers under age 2 and children ages 2 through 5 who haven't previously had RSV illness. Among the children who developed symptomatic RSV disease, 26.3% in the vaccinated group progressed to severe disease, while only 8.3% of those in the placebo group did. The illnesses were attributed to vaccine enhanced respiratory disease (VAERD) — a phenomenon that occurs when vaccination promotes immune responses that exacerbate the disease caused by subsequent infection with the germ the vaccine was meant to protect against. At this time, vaccine makers are developing 26 different RSV vaccines or monoclonal antibodies for all age groups.

Echinacea has been used for generations as a natural remedy to support the immune system, especially during cold and flu season. Modern studies now back up what others instinctively knew for so long - echinacea is packed with compounds that help bolster the immune response, making it easier to fend off common illnesses. What makes echinacea so special is its ability to increase the activity of white blood cells, our body's natural defense army. Think of it as a booster for your immune system, encouraging it to work harder when you're feeling run down. Whether taken as a tea, capsule, or tincture, echinacea has shown promise in reducing the severity and duration of colds when used at the first sign of symptoms.

It is important to care for our bodies naturally, especially during the colder months when colds and fatigue seem to be lurking around every corner. If you're not already reaching for echinacea when you're feeling under the weather, I'd say it's worth giving it a try as it is a big help boosting immune system function.

**Information and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and may not reflect those of The Messenger.*

Side Effects



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

What are the results of the choices you and I make? In this season of reflection and re-setting, we can see how a choice made last year or a few years ago resulted in a specific outcome. Some outcomes lead to regret, other outcomes lead to surprises. It is a unique quality of human life to be able to reflect on the past and to make choices for the future. As you look toward the new year before you, I want to provide some thoughts to help you make wise choices for your health goals.

We have grown up in a society that provides a variety of quick "solutions" to our problems. All the best results are presented, but the side effects are not discussed or rapidly by-passed. Warning labels may be added, but few people have taken the time to read the labels. Remember, the primary objective of marketing is to sell, and not to provide full disclosure. Consider the side effects of these popular options being presented in the current market:

Ozempic: A recent injectable drug designed to help those managing diabetes to maintain healthy blood sugar levels, this medication has become popular for "off-label" use as a medication to promote weight loss. Possible side effects stated on the official website for Ozempic includes – nausea, constipation, stomach pain, and vomiting. More serious side effects can include – inflammation of the pancreas, kidney problems, gallbladder problems, and an increased risk of thyroid cancer. Without insurance this medication may cost as much as \$1000 per month. The medication does not instruct you on how to eat and how to build a healthy lifestyle for a long healthy life. Do you want to be dependent on this medication?

Omeprazole/Prilosec: A popular medication for providing relief from acid reflux. Common side effects include – body aches, loose stools, dizziness, muscle pain, sneezing, or unusual drowsiness. The medication is meant to decrease the amount of acid pro-

duced in the stomach; however, the medication moves through the entire body and will decrease the amount of energy that cells produce for daily activity, which can result in muscle spasms and tiredness. Additionally, the decreased acid in the stomach allows for increased bacteria and viruses to pass through the stomach into the intestines where imbalances will result in more severe health issues.

The short-term relief provided by this medication has negative long-term results.

Statin medication: One of the most popularly promoted medications in the past 20 years for the purpose of lowering total cholesterol. The side effects listed by Mayo Clinic and known to be associated with statin medications include – muscle pain, liver damage, and increased risk of diabetes. Females are at greater risk of side effects, and individuals over eighty years old, as well as those who drink alcohol. Statin medications not only reduce the production of cholesterol, but also reduce the production of CoQ10, an important energy molecule essential for healthy cell activity. When you take a statin medication, you are slowing down the production of cholesterol, and many other activities in your body. As noted in a previous article on "Cholesterol Truths" the benefits of taking statin medication are about 1% improvement compared to not taking statin medication. Changes to what you eat and when you eat make a greater difference to your cholesterol measures.

To be fair, there are side effects associated with certain foods as well. However, these side effects are easily managed and often related to over consumption.

Dairy – overconsumption can lead to constipation

Red Beets – overconsumption can result in red colored stool

Tomatoes – may increase acid reflux. Balance with consuming celery stalks or celery juice.

Vitamin C – overconsumption can result in loose stools

Magnesium – overconsumption can have a laxative effect

Knowing the side effects places you in a better position to manage your life and your health goals. Your body genetics successfully operate on the nutrients provided on a daily basis. Your body is asking for more nutrients. Every health challenge you face in the year ahead has a nutritional answer to it. Your health challenge is not a result of a medication deficiency.

Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. I can help you realize greater health freedom in 2025. You can contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

**Information and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and may not reflect those of The Messenger.*

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Wabasha County Public Health and CARE Clinic are providing a Dental Clinic and Flu Vaccine Clinic on January 31, 2025

CARE Clinic will be providing dental care to qualified uninsured and publicly insured residents of Wabasha County at the Wabasha County Public Health building (411 Hiawatha Dr. E, Wabasha, MN). Minnesota Health Care Program enrollees (including Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, and South Country Health Alliance) are accepted. Uninsured adults are encouraged, but not required, to pay a discounted nominal fee for services. Services will include Children & Adult Cleanings, Sealants, and Fluoride Treatments. Appointments for the Wabasha County location are limited, and interested patients are

urged to call 651-388-1022 to schedule an appointment. Patients are asked to arrive 30 minutes early to complete required paperwork.

For more information, contact CARE Clinic at 651-388-1022.

Contact: CARE Clinic Phone: 651-388-1022 Email: info@careclinicrw.com Website: www.careclinicrw.com

Wabasha County Public Health will be providing Flu Vaccine to qualified uninsured and underinsured residents of Wabasha County at the Wabasha County Public Health building (411 Hiawatha Dr. E, Wabasha, MN).

Appointments are limited, and interested patients are urged to call 651-565-5200 to schedule an appointment. Patients are asked to arrive 30 minutes early to complete required paperwork.

For more information, contact Public Health at 651-565-5200.

Farmworkers and farm owners, particularly those who work on poultry and dairy farms, may be exposed to H5N1 influenza (also called avian influenza or highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)). Routine service providers for farms such as veterinarians, truck drivers, and hoof trimmers, as well as family members who live on the farm, may also be exposed to H5N1.

Contact: Wabasha County Public Health Phone: 651-565-5200 Website: https://www.co.wabasha.mn.us/index.php

Wabasha County Public Health y CARE Clinic están ofreciendo servicios de clínica dental y clínica de vacunas contra la influenza el 31 de enero del 2025.

CARE Clinic prestará asistencia dental a los residentes del condado de Wabasha que reúnan los requisitos necesarios, tanto para las personas que tienen seguro público como para quienes no lo tienen, en Wabasha County Public Health building (411 Hiawatha Dr. E, Wabasha, MN). Se aceptan a las personas inscritas en el Minnesota Health Care Program (que incluye Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare y South Country Health Alliance). Se alienta a los adultos que no tienen seguro a pagar una tarifa reducida que tiene un descuento por los servicios. Sin embargo, esto no es obligatorio. Los servicios incluirán limpieza para niños/as y adultos, selladores y tratamientos con flúor.

Las citas para el centro de Wabasha County son limitadas, por lo que se pide a los pacientes interesados llamar al 651-388-1022 para programar una cita. Se solicita a los pacientes que lleguen 30 minutos antes para completar la documentación requerida.

Para más información, póngase en contacto con

Contact: CARE Clinic Phone: 651-388-1022 Email: info@careclinicrw.com Website: www.careclinicrw.com

Wabasha County Public Health ofrecerá la vacuna contra la influenza (gripe) a los residentes de Wabasha County en Wabasha County Public Health building (411 Hiawatha Dr. E, Wabasha, MN).

Las citas son limitadas, por lo que se pide a los pacientes interesados llamar al 651-565-5200 para programar una cita. Se solicita a los pacientes que lleguen 30 minutos antes para completar la documentación requerida.

Para más información, póngase en contacto con Public Health (Salud Pública) al 651-565-5200.

Los trabajadores agrícolas y los propietarios de granjas, especialmente los que trabajan en granjas avícolas y lecheras, pueden estar expuestos a la influenza H5N1 (también llamada gripe aviar o influenza aviar altamente patógena (HPAI)). Los proveedores habituales de servicios para las granjas como los veterinarios, las personas que conducen camiones y los recortadores de pezuñas, así como los familiares que viven en la granja, también pueden estar expuestos al virus H5N1.

Contact: Wabasha County Public Health Phone: 651-565-5200 Website: https://www.co.wabasha.mn.us/index.php



CARE CLINIC IS COMING TO WABASHA COUNTY

DATE: JANUARY 31, 2025



CARE Clinic will be on-site at the Wabasha County Public Health building providing dental care to qualified uninsured or publicly insured residents of Wabasha County! Minnesota Health Care Program enrollees (Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, incl. South Country Health Alliance) are accepted. Uninsured adult patients are encouraged, but not required, to pay a discounted nominal fee for services, if possible.

We also provide dental services to at our main clinic location in Red Wing. We encourage families to use our clinic as a dental home for regular care. Regular visits every six months allow your dentist to detect early signs of dental disease and decay.

Appointments will be limited, so please get your spot scheduled today by calling CARE Clinic at 651-388-1022. Paperwork will be required, so please plan on arriving 30 minutes prior to your appointment.

On-Site Services provided:

- 
CHILDREN & ADULT CLEANINGS
 CHILDREN - NO FEE/ADULT - \$30
- 
SEALANTS
 CHILDREN - NO FEE/ADULT - \$10/TOOTH
- 
FLUORIDE TREATMENTS
 \$15

651-388-1022  www.careclinicrw.com 
 906 College Ave Door #1, Red Wing, MN 55066.



CARE CLINIC LLEGA AL CONDADO DE WABASHA

FECHA: 31 DE ENERO DE 2025



La Clínica CARE estará en el edificio de Salud Pública del Condado de Wabasha y brindará atención dental a los residentes calificados del Condado de Wabasha que no tengan seguro médico o que tengan seguro médico público. Se aceptan los afiliados al Programa de Atención Médica de Minnesota (Medical Assistance y MinnesotaCare, incluida South Country Health Alliance). Se recomienda, aunque no se exige, que los pacientes adultos sin seguro paguen una tarifa nominal con descuento por los servicios, si es posible.

También brindamos servicios dentales en nuestra clínica principal en Red Wing. Alentamos a las familias a utilizar nuestra clínica como un centro dental para recibir atención regular. Las visitas regulares cada seis meses permiten que su dentista detecte signos tempranos de enfermedades y caries dentales.

Las citas serán limitadas, por lo que le recomendamos que reserve su lugar hoy mismo llamando a CARE Clinic al 651-388-1022. Se requerirá documentación, por lo que debe llegar 30 minutos antes de su cita.

Servicios en sitio prestados:

- 
LIMPIEZA PARA NIÑOS Y ADULTOS
 NIÑOS: SIN CARGO/ADULTOS: \$30
- 
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- 
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651-388-1022  www.careclinicrw.com 
 906 College Ave Door #1, Red Wing, MN 55066.

Wabasha County Opioid Epidemic Response Request for Proposal

On August 20, 2021, the Minnesota Attorney General's Office joined the historic \$26 billion multi-state settlement agreements with pharmaceutical distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen, and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. In December 2022, the Attorney General's Office joined five additional multistate settlements worth \$20.4 billion with major opioid manufacturers Teva Pharmaceuticals and Allergan, and three of the nation's largest retail pharmacy chains: Walmart, CVS, and Walgreens. Wabasha County's expected portion of the settlement is approximately \$1,180,000 over an 18-year period.

Purpose of the RFP

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify qualified organizations to respond to the opioid crisis through opioid epidemic response strategies, including prevention, treatment and recovery, criminal justice interventions, and harm reduction. The goal of this approach is to fund projects in Wabasha County that will have high impact, particularly for Wabasha County communities most disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis.

Multiple applicants may be selected for funding contracts. Through this process, up to \$180,000.00 could be awarded with individual projects receiving funding. Each applicant must address one category. The categories are prevention, treatment and recovery, criminal justice interventions, and harm reduction. Applicants may apply for multiple sub-categories and abatement strategies within a category.

Applications can be found on The Wabasha County Public Health Webpage or by request @ 651-565-5200.



Request for Proposal

2025 Wabasha County Opioid Settlement Funding

This RFP aims to offer grant funds to projects in Wabasha County that will have a high impact, particularly for the Wabasha County communities most disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis.

To apply: Complete application and upload requested documents to Tammy Fiedler, Public Health Director, at tfiedler@co.wabasha.mn.us.

Key Dates for Applicants

Applications Open Now

Applications Due: Friday, January 10, 2025 at 4:30pm

Grant term begins: January 1, 2025

<p>Project Funding Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no minimum or maximum grant limits per grant request. • Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. • No matching funds are required. • Reimbursement paid quarterly, by invoice, based on budgeted and actual expenses incurred. • Multiple applicants may be selected for funding contracts. • Successful organizations/projects may be invited back to apply for future funding. • Upon signed contact, Wabasha County will reimburse grantees for prior-authorized, rendered services only. 	<p>Grantee Funding Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new services/resources or expand existing ones (opioid settlement funds cannot be used to replace funding for existing services/resources). • Spend settlement funds on effective, evidence-based interventions (funds can be allocated to evaluate effectiveness). • Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Wabasha County. • Submit brief quarterly reports to Wabasha County Opioid Settlement Advisory Council. • Present to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Council annually and/or prior to funding. • Complete an annual Project Summary Report with a description of outcomes.
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Questions? Contact Tammy Fiedler, Public Health Director at tfiedler@co.wabasha.mn.us or call 651-565-5200

Wabasha County Public Health Spotlight Birth Defects Awareness Month

By Jennifer Schurhammer, BSN, RN, PHN



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Birth defects are structural changes that can affect almost any part of the body, such as the heart, brain, or foot, and can cause lifelong health challenges. Birth defects are common, affecting 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States each year. Not all birth defects can be prevented, and they can occur in any family, regardless of race, ethnicity, health history, or economic status.



National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) encourages all pregnant people and prospective parents to make healthy choices and adopt healthier habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect.

5 Healthy Pregnancy Tips:

Tip 1: Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day at least one month prior to conception.

Tip 2: Plan a visit with your health care provider to support a healthy pregnancy.

Tip 3: Reduce your risk of infections.

Tip 4: Care for your body and mind before and during pregnancy to set you and your baby up for success.

Tip 5: Avoid harmful substance use during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Wabasha County



It's not too late! Get your flu shot!

Public Health is offering a Flu Vaccine Clinic 1/31/25 at our office in Wabasha. We hope to reach individuals in our county who are uninsured or are underinsured. All are welcome.

Salud Pública ofrecerá una clínica de vacunación contra la influenza el 31 de enero en nuestra oficina en Wabasha. Está abierto al público. Especialmente esperamos llegar a las personas en nuestro condado que no tienen seguro o tienen un seguro insuficiente.

Contact Us:

411 Hiawatha Drive E.
Wabasha, MN

651-565-5200



You provide for your family. You can protect them too. Get your flu shot.



Usted provee para su familia. Usted también puede protegerlos. Póngase la vacuna contra la gripe.

Red Wing Care Clinic will also be onsite 1/31/25 to offer Dental Care. Watch for more info.

South Troy Church Christmas Caroling



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THURSDAY \$3.50 All Taps, Domestic Bottles, Rail Drinks!
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FINALLY FRIDAY All You Can Eat Fish Dinner

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SUNDAY Enjoy Our Sunday Breakfast Beginning at 9a.m.
and Sunday Supper Features, including 1/2 Price Bottles of Wine
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Mark Your Calendars for Flake Out Fest February 1st!

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MDA Now Accepting Applications for 2025 Beginning Farmer Tax Credit

Eligible parties are encouraged to apply early for funding

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Rural Finance Authority (RFA) is now accepting applications for the 2025 Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, an annual program available to landlords and sellers (asset owners) who rent or sell farmland, equipment, livestock, and other agricultural assets to beginning farmers.

Total funding available for the 2025 Beginning Farmer Tax Credit program is \$4 million. The credits are funded in a first-come, first-served manner, so applicants are highly encouraged to apply early in the year before the stated deadlines. Both the asset owners and beginning farmers must submit applications with lease and/or sale documents to be eligible for funding and to hold their place in line. They may apply before sales close, if

needed.

Asset owners can claim credits in one of the following categories in a given tax year for each beginning farmer they lease/sell to:

Qualifying asset owners can include individuals, trusts, or qualified pass-through entities renting or selling land, livestock, facilities, buildings, or machinery used for farming in Minnesota to a beginning farmer. Through changes made to the program during the 2023 legislative session, parents, grandparents, and siblings are now eligible for the tax credit if they sell farmland to a direct family member. However, this does not apply to leases or non-land sales (e.g., livestock, equipment).

A beginning farmer is defined as a Minnesota resident with the desire to start farming or who began farming within the past 10 years. They must provide positive projected earnings statements, have a net worth less than \$1,013,000, and enroll in or have completed an approved Farm Business Management (FBM) program.

Beginning farmers are also eligible for a nonrefundable Minnesota tax credit equal to the amount paid for FBM tuition, up to a maximum of \$1,500. This tax credit is available for up to three years.

Full eligibility requirements and application materials can be found on the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit webpage. Questions may be directed to Jenny Heck at Jenny.Heck@state.mn.us or 651-201-6316.

	Tax Credit Amount	Maximum Tax Credit	Application Due Date
Cash Rentals	10% of annual rental income	\$7,000	July 17, 2025
Share Crop Rentals	15% of annual rental income	\$10,000	July 17, 2025
Sales	8% of sale price (12% if the buyer is an emerging farmer)	\$50,000	Nov. 1, 2025
Beginning Farmer Farm Business Management Tuition Reimbursement	Equal to tuition paid out of pocket	\$1,500 for 3 years	Nov. 1, 2025

Klobuchar named ranking member of Senate Ag Committee

ST. PAUL – Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., has been named the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.



The announcement came the day after Rep. Angie Craig, D-2nd District, was elected as the ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee.

Klobuchar has served on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry since her first term in Congress and she's worked to pass three Farm Bills.

"From her tour of all 87 counties each year to her work on the last three Farm Bills, Sen. Klobuchar is known for showing up, listening and delivering results," said Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) President Gary Wertish. "Our members know her and her office well and are grateful for her service."

"Minnesota's history of strong, bipartisan leadership is well served by Sen. Klobuchar and Rep. Craig," he added. "We're grateful for their leadership."

About Minnesota Farmers Union

Minnesota Farmers Union works to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life of family farmers and ranchers and rural communities. MFU is a nonprofit membership-based organization. Membership is open to everyone. Learn more and join at www.mfu.org and follow MFU on Facebook, X, Bluesky and Instagram.

Funding Available to Help Farmers Finance New Cooperatives

Applications for the Cooperative Development Grant are due February 20

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for funding to support the development of agricultural cooperatives in the state.

The Cooperative Development Grant Program is designed to help new cooperatives looking to finance business development strategies that will aid in the successful production, processing, or marketing of agricultural commodities, products, or services produced in Minnesota.

"Farmer-owned cooperatives have been the backbone of Minnesota agriculture for more than a century," said Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. "With this grant program, we can help further strengthen the agricultural cooperative network across our state and expand opportunities for locally produced commodities, products, or services."

The MDA will award approximately \$160,000 in this round of Cooperative Development Grants. Projects must be completed by June 30, 2026.

Applicants may request between \$2,500 and \$50,000 per project and must commit to matching at least 50% of the total project cost.

Grant applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, February 20, 2025. Review the request for proposals (RFP) posted on the Cooperative Development Grant Program webpage for full application details.

FREELANCE WRITERS WANTED

Duties include covering feature and human interest stories and upcoming events in the Messenger coverage area.

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



I wanted to share a message about distracted driving. Here is some information we recently shared on our Department of Public

Safety blog.

“It was supposed to be a routine trip for 20-year-old Megan Severson. On Oct. 17, 2019, Severson was driving from Preston in south-eastern Minnesota to visit her boyfriend in North Dakota. But when she reached Highway 52 in St. Paul, everything changed in an instant.

The crash - Severson glanced over at her GPS to see which exit she needed to take. “I looked down and I was speeding, so it felt a lot shorter than it actually was,” said Severson. “When I came to realize that the cars in front of me were stopped, I hit my brakes as fast as I thought I could.”

She couldn’t stop in time. Severson Walked away from the crash with her life. An innocent passenger did not. Severson rear-ended the stopped car in front of her, causing a chain-reaction crash involving multiple vehicles. A passenger in the car she hit, Anthony Kawino, 33, of Burnsville was killed. “I just

looked around at the scene that was in front of me,” Severson recalled. “It was horrific. I saw them pulling the blanket over the deceased, and at that point it clicked into my brain that this is bad. Very, very bad.”

Minnesota State Patrol Sgt. Daniel Dixon was the reconstructionist who documented how and why this crash happened. The answers were obvious, he said. Severson was speeding at 70 mph in a 55 mph zone just before she hit the car Kawino was in. “At that speed, if you’re looking at your GPS for five seconds to try to figure out where you would need to go next, you just traveled almost two football fields of distance,” Dixon said.

Somber anniversary - Severson was charged with criminal vehicular homicide because she was speeding and distracted at the time of the crash. She still remembers her lawyer explaining what this felony charge could mean for her future. “When he first said people normally get prison time, I went off the rails in my mind,” Severson added. “I didn’t know what to think. I was in a big state of panic. I mean, nobody wants to go to prison.”

Severson pleaded guilty to the charge. She was sentenced to around three months in jail and five years of probation. The judge also granted a request from Kawino’s family; having Severson report to jail on Oct. 17 each year – the anniversary of the deadly crash.

“It’s probably the worst day of the year for me,” Severson said. “Everything just cycles back as if it happened yesterday. All of it. The crash, Anthony, his family. What would he be doing? Would he have a family of his own? Married? Kids?”

Lessons learned - Severson hopes sharing her story will encourage other drivers to put distractions away when they are behind the wheel. “Don’t do it, because there are heavy consequences and it’s more than prison, jail or probation. It’s your whole life. It’s the



guilt, the pain,” Severson said. “We have to realize it’s not just us on the road. It takes just one wrong, slight move to end your life or another person’s life – and it happens fast.”

Across Minnesota, distracted driving was a factor in one in 11 crashes from 2019 to 2023. Distracted driving contributed to an average of 29 deaths and 146 life-changing injuries a year over that same time period. So far in 2024, distractions have been a factor in 27 (comes on Tuesday current as of 12/17) traffic deaths.

It’s frustrating for Dixon knowing something preventable is causing deaths on Minnesota roads. “It seems like as the cars get better, safer and smarter that drivers get more relaxed and less attentive to what’s going on out there,” he said. “It’s evident that the message is not getting across because people are still playing on their phones while driving all the time, as much as you try to explain that this is dangerous.”

As Severson works to move on from that tragic crash five years ago, she says she is taking this second chance at life seriously – knowing Kawino wasn’t as fortunate. “I’m not living for just myself. I’m living for two. The life that I took. It makes me want to push to be the best I can be.”

For more information and blogs please visit: <https://dps.mn.gov/news/blog>

Question: I see the sign boards along the highway with different messages posted. Do they use these for Amber Alerts? I know I get the alert on my phone and was just curious.

Answer: Message and lane-use signs on some freeways warn drivers of traffic crashes, stalled vehicles, or other traffic conditions ahead.

Message signs may also be activated when the state issues an AMBER Alert in response to a child abduction. The signs will provide information such as a vehicle description. Drivers who see a vehicle fitting the description, or who have other information about the missing child, will be asked to notify law enforcement. The best number to call is “911.”

Question: Do you have any advice on what a person should do if they are driving along in the dark and their headlights go out?

Answer: If your headlights suddenly go out, try using your parking lights, hazard warning lights or turn signals—one of them may work and give you enough light to guide you off the road. If your headlights fail on a busy or lighted road, you will probably have enough light to guide you onto the shoulder. If all your lights fail on a dark, deserted road, slow down and keep your vehicle on the pavement until you can move safely onto the shoulder.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson – Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

Avoid Distractions

By Wabasha County Public Health

Avoiding distractions behind the wheel is always crucial, and the winter months can present additional challenges with unpredictable, dangerous road conditions. Snow and ice on the road mean vehicles take longer to stop, so quick reaction times are even more important. By staying focused and avoiding distractions, drivers can better adapt to sudden changes, like an icy patch or a car skidding ahead. A momentary distraction, such as glancing at a phone or adjusting the radio, can lead to losing control on icy roads or not seeing hazards like black ice, slower vehicles, or pedestrians.

Following these tips can help drivers avoid becoming distracted behind the wheel:

Put the phone away: Silence your phone and store it out of reach before driving. Use “Do Not Disturb” mode to block notifications.

Plan ahead: Set your GPS, queue up your playlist, or take care of texts and calls before you start driving.

Pull over safely: If something urgent comes up, find a safe spot to pull over before handling it.

Create a driving routine: Make driving a focused activity by committing to zero distractions during your trip.

Enlist passengers: Let passengers handle navigation, music or calls, so you can keep your attention on the road.

Secure loose items: Store items securely to avoid the need to reach for anything while driving.

Lead by example: Show others – especially young drivers – how to drive without distractions. Be the role model for safe driving.

Snow, ice and reduced visibility require a driver's full attention to navigate safely. Staying focused behind the wheel is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to prevent crashes and save lives. Together, we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.



Headlights on When Snowing

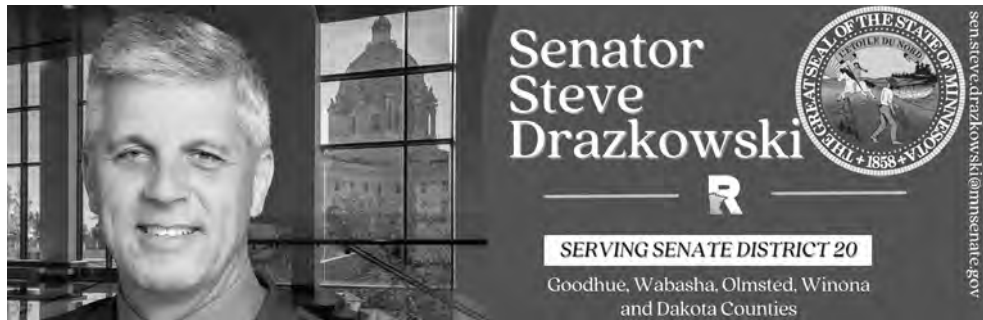
By Wabasha County Public Health

Winter weather often means reduced visibility, especially during snowstorms. Your headlights play a critical role in keeping you safe and visible to other drivers. Blowing snow can quickly create dangerous whiteout conditions, so it’s important to remember a simple rule: if there’s any kind of precipitation, whether it’s snow, rain or even a light drizzle, turn on your lights. It is the law.

While many vehicles have sensors that activate lights automatically when it’s getting dark, they don’t always turn on your lights during precipitation, especially in daylight. Check your owner’s manual to learn how to manually activate your lights if needed.

Seeing and being seen can help reduce your chances of getting in a crash. Before hitting the road, take a moment to ensure all your lights are on and working properly. It’s a simple step that helps everyone stay safe this winter.





Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope your holidays were restful and enjoyable. Now the New Year is upon us and the next legislative session is right around the corner so I thought I would update you on a few things, new laws going into effect on January 1 and a preview of what's to come.

New Laws Effective January 1

A slate of new Minnesota laws went into effect on Jan. 1. Here are some of the most talked about ones.

The "Taylor Swift bill"

Large ticket sellers for major events and concerts will have to disclose fees up front.

Buyers also will be entitled to proof of purchase and refund policy details within 24 hours. Deceptive and speculative ticket pricing are banned and online ticket marketplaces are required to disclose if they are resellers.

Bulk resellers must register with Minnesota's Department of Commerce and disclose how they obtained tickets.

The pretext for this bill was public outrage at problems encountered by buyers of Tickets to see Taylor Swift at US Bank Stadium in the Summer of 2023.

"Junk fee" ban

Businesses cannot list a price for a good or service and include additional fees at the time of payment that are added to the price of every good or service sold. For example, the "health and wellness fees" some businesses added after COVID.

Taxes are excluded from the requirement. And if the fee is "reasonably avoidable," such as late fees or credit card surcharges, it is not part of the disclosure requirement. Other exemptions include certain fees charged by a dealer related to the purchase of a motor vehicle, utility bills, and real estate fees.

Binary trigger ban

Triggers that allow semiautomatic firearms to fire twice when released will no longer be legal in Minnesota in 2025. The ban on what are known as binary triggers was passed as part of a 2024 public safety bill.

"PFAs" ban

At the beginning of 2025, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, collectively known as PFAS, will be banned from products including carpets or rugs, cleaning products, cookware, cosmetics, dental floss, fabric treatments, juvenile products, menstruation products, textile furnishings, ski wax and upholstered furniture. While many manufacturers are moving away from using these chemicals already, there are some industries where there are no good substitutes.

Salary ranges in job postings

Job listings will need to include starting salary ranges or fixed pay rates and a general description of all benefits or compensation. The requirement applies to any person or organization that employs 30 or more people. Salary ranges can not be open-ended.

Abortion insurance coverage

Health insurance plans will have to cover abortions and related services in Minnesota. Eligible organizations are permitted to "not cover some or all benefits for abortions and abortion-related services due to religious objections due to US Supreme Court rulings.

Transgender surgery insurance coverage

Health insurance plans will have to cover "medically necessary gender-affirming care" as part of regular physical and mental health care coverage. Religious organizations are exempt.

Wigs covered by insurance

Health insurance providers will be required to cover wigs for people who lose their hair while undergoing treatment for cancer or other conditions.

Automatic expungement

Minnesota will begin automatically removing some nonviolent criminal offenses from criminals' records after a sentence has been served and if they have not committed any other crimes. Individuals will no longer have to file a petition for expungement. DWI convictions are not eligible, and only misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor level crimes are eligible, not felonies.

Election changes

Starting in 2025, a candidate must present a driver's license, state identification or other proof of residence when filing to run with the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office. Most state and local offices have a residency requirement, or require a candidate to "maintain a residence" this new law is a reaction to stories of candidates who registered and later were found not to live in their district.

Colleges that provide on-campus housing for at least 100 students will be required to designate a "reasonably accessible" extra polling place for students within half a mile of campus if requested by the institution or student government organization. The secretary of state will cover the cost of the new polling place.

Tenant rights

It will now be more complicated to be a landlord in Minnesota. Renters are permitted by state law to form cooperatives aimed at improving "housing conditions, amenities, or community life" and prevent landlords from retaliating against tenants who raise issues. Community organizers who are not tenants can come into a building and organize tenants.

DHS to be split

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is being split into three new agencies, the newest of which will be established in 2025: the Department of Direct Care and Treatment. The agency is focused on state mental hospitals, substance abuse treatment, and other disability programs.

DHS will still exist as well as a new De-

partment of Children, Youth and Families.

Prescription drug price copays capped for some health insurance plans

The new law caps copays for diabetes, asthma, anti-allergic reaction medications, and some supplies for health plans regulated by the state. It limits insulin, asthma inhalers, and EpiPens to \$25 a month and medical supplies to \$50 a month.

Top priorities for next session: The looming deficit and stopping the massive state program fraud

This month, I wrote a column for the local papers you may have seen (archive copy here). In it, I discuss the outcome of the



DFL trifecta's spending increases. The November economic forecast has already prepared legislators for a deficit in the state budget in the next couple of years and unlike the federal government, the state government MUST balance its budget every biennium.

Governor Walz promised Minnesotans that he would give back surpluses when he ran for governor, but that promise fell by the wayside. Democrats prefer to spend surpluses and tell you that they are doing it all for you. If you didn't get a check, it was because it was going to the "less fortunate." But in the past few years, we've gotten ample evidence that that isn't true either! Instead, fraudsters have taken hundreds of millions from hard-working taxpayers. Criminal enterprises have made a home in Minnesota because stealing from the State of Minnesota is so easy. Even the Democrat-appointed US Attorney, Andy Lugar, stated as much.

It's a mess, and no doubt, the Governor will find that the solution to this involves more government, more bureaucracy, and more spending. Democrats still hold a one-seat majority in the Senate and a slender and maybe temporary majority in the House this session, so here's hoping we can identify areas of spending that we can cut to put our fiscal house back in order and require ac-

countability from every area of our state government.

Severe Weather Grants for Farmers

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the Preparing for Extreme Weather Grant Program, also referred to as the Prepare Grant. This grant is designed to help Minnesota livestock and specialty crop producers buy and install supplies or equipment that will help make their operations more resilient to extreme weather, such as drought, flooding, hail, and severe storms.

Examples include, but are not limited to, water tanks, rain barrels, irrigation equipment, wells (new improvements, fixes, replacement pumps), windbreaks, hail netting, and cover crops.

Grant awards can range from \$500 to \$10,000 and require a 50% match; applicants may apply for up to 50% of their project's total cost with a minimum expense of \$1,000 and a maximum expense of \$20,000. Payments are issued on a reimbursement basis and not in advance. All purchases for eligible items must be made after grant contract agreements are fully executed.

MDA expects to award approximately \$500,000 in this round using a competitive review process, and award approximately 50 to 75 grants.

Applications are due by 4 pm Central Time on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. MDA expects to notify all applicants about funding decisions no later than March 26, 2025.

More information, including the link to apply, is here: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/preparing-extreme-weather-prepare-grant>

I only send these out about once a month when the legislature is not in sessions (yes, we still have a part time legislature in Minnesota!) but please do contact me at any time to share any issues, concerns, or feedback you have to assist me in best representing you. The best way to reach me is by email at sen.steve.drazkowski@senate.mn or by phone at 651-296-5612. My legislative assistant is Margaret Martin, and her number is 651-296-4264. She will be happy to assist you, in or out of session.

Sincerely,
Steve Drazkowski





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Regular Meeting of the Mazeppa City Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

The regular meeting of the Mazeppa City Council was called to order at 6:02 PM by Mayor Chris Hagfors.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Present: Mayor Chris Hagfors. Council Persons Steve Liffriq, Michael Hammes, Dustin Wiebusch, and Erica Young.

Others Present: City Attorney Luke Lamprecht, City Engineer Matt Mohs, Wabasha County Sherrif Chief Deputy Jim Warren, Municipal Liquor Store Manager Todd Ihrke, Public Works Director Scott Ellingson, Jason Stein, and City Administrator-Clerk Karl Nahrgang.

Present via electronic meeting: Holly Galbus from the News Record.

Motion by Hammes, second by Wiebusch to approve the agenda and addendum. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Young to approve the November 13, 2024, regular Council meeting minutes and the November 14, 2024, Council quorum minutes. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Wiebusch to close the regular meeting and open the Truth-in-Taxation meeting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Regular meeting was closed at 6:04 PM and Truth-in-Taxation hearing opened at 6:04 PM.

City Administrator went through the changes in the levy request for 2025.

No other comments were made.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to close the Truthin-Taxation Hearing and re-open the regular meeting. All in favor, none

opposed. Carried.

Truth-in-Taxation hearing was closed at 6:10 PM and regular meeting re-opened at 6:10 PM.

Wabasha County Sherriff's Chief Deputy Jim Warren gave the monthly Incident Command Report. Discussion of strategies to help the Mazeppa Public Works Department to get vehicles to be off the streets before snowplowing.

Public Works Director Scott Ellingson gave the Public Works report.

Administrator Clerk Karl Nahrgang read the Fire Department report and read the list of newly elected Fire Department and Fire Relief officers

2025 Fire Department officers are:

Fire Chief: Bryce Dohrn

Assistant Chief: Brandon Goranson

Assistant Chief: Jeff Sommerfield

Inside Captain: Paul Goetsch

Outside Captain: Christian Monsrud

Truck Captain: Justin Staub

Safety Officers: Steve Goodenough

Medical Director: Mackenzie Peck

Training Officer: Mike Peck

President: Paul Goetsch

Vice President: Andrew Piva

Secretary: Ellen Lexvold

Motion by Young, second by Liffriq to approve the Fire Department and Fire relief officers for 2025. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Municipal Liquor Store Manager Todd Ihrke gave the liquor store report.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to close the Public Hearing and re-open the regular Council meeting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Public Hearing was closed and the regular meeting re-opened at 6:50 PM.

City Engineer Matt Mohs presented the engineering report.

Jason Stein addressed the Council about the Dollar General project. He is concerned about drainage in the area affecting his property and expressed that he felt that resident questions about the project by residents of the area had gone unanswered by the Council and City Administration.

Council replied that project documents met ordinance development requirements for drainage.

Motion by Young, second by Liffriq to approve building permits: 24-920-098, 179 3rd Ave. NW – entry way for home. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Wiebusch to table approval of the Personnel Policy Handbook until the January 8, 2025, regular Council meeting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Chestnut Estates Development agreement has been signed by all parties. A copy will be sent to the City Attorney for his records.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to approve WWTP Pay Request No. 1 to Wapasha Construction. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to approve 2025 Budget and Levy Payable in 2025 of \$420,479. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Liffriq to approve Resolution 2024-40 Accepting a donation from Mazeppa Fire Relief to be transferred to the truck fund reserve. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Wiebusch to approve a sign permit for Winkels Electric to be installed at Dollar General at 269 Highway 60 E. All in favor, none opposed. Car-

ried.

Motion by Young, second by Liffriq to approve Resolution 2024-41 Accepting a donation from the Mazeppa Business Alliance of \$500 towards park and bridge Holiday lighting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Wiebusch to approve the following year end transfers from the City operating account to City Reserves. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Mazeppa Liquor Retained Earnings to City Operating Fund: \$20,000 -per 2024 budget.

Mazeppa Liquor Operating Fund to MMLS Savings/Maintenance Acct: \$5250

From Mazeppa Fire Fund to Truck Fund Reserve: \$175,000 – budgeted amount and donations.

From Mazeppa Fire Fund to Fire Relief Retirement Account: \$18,938 – Fire Fund surplus.

Streets/Parks Fund to Parks and Trails Reserves: \$2281 – donation proceeds.

More 2024 year end transfers to reserves to be presented at the January 8, 2025 meeting.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to approve Resolution 2024-42 Accepting a donation from the Mazeppa Lions Club of \$750 towards ice rink maintenance expenses. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Young to approve 2025 retainer agreement with Lamprecht Law for \$1950 per month. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffriq to pay the bills and claims. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

City Attorney Luke Lamprecht wished Council and Staff a safe and happy Christmas.

(continued on page 16)

Historical Happenings

Compiled by
Helen Reiland

THE MAZEPPA JOURNAL, Editor and Publisher: Barbara and Reider Tommeraas

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 1956

Consolidation News

As announced last week, the plat involving 13 school districts in the Mazeppa area was amended and approved. Changes involved adding district 49 of Wabasha county and district 89 of Olmsted county. The addition of these two districts would give the Mazeppa plat a valuation of \$1,100,000.

Legion Post Observes 37th National Birthday

Observance of 37th birthday of the American Legion was held at the Legion clubrooms, decorated in a St. Patrick theme, on Thursday evening March 15th.

A pot-luck supper was served with Mrs. Leona Reinholz, Mrs. Peter Perrotti and Mrs. Lullus Darcy on the food committee.

Auxiliary President Mrs. Leo Liffriq welcomed Legion members and their wives. Legion Historian Jack Siems, briefly summarized the history of the Mazeppa Post.

Community singing, led by Mrs. G.A. Gahler, followed by games concluded the program.

Members of the entertainment committee were Mrs. Donald Webster, Mrs. Stuart Stull and Mrs. G.A. Gahler.

Auxiliary News

Motions were mad to send \$5.00 to "Forgotten Children" fund and \$3.00 to the Heart fund. Acknowledgements fro State Dept. for Valentines and Legion hospital check were received. A small sum was donated to the Crusade for Freedom. A check for \$7.07 for the school for March of Dimes will be sent to Wabasha.

The Auxiliary will ser lunch at the baseball poultry sale. On the committee are Mmes. G. Schafer, F. Musty, L. Liffriq and L. Reding.

FIRE DEPT. CALLED, THURSDAY

The Mazeppa fire department was called out last Thursday afternoon to the home of Ted Sommerfield. The fire, apparently starting in the attic from an overheated stove pipe, was quickly put out with minimum damage.

Local News

L. L. Darcy received a broken leg last Friday in an accident on the job when a piece of equipment fell on him. He was hospitalized several days at Faribault and is now convalescing at his home here.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1956

DUCK INN TAVERN PURCHASED BY MR. AND MRS. JOHN KANN

Mr. and Mrs. John Kann, new owners, took possession Saturday of the Duck Inn formerly operated by Mr. and Mrs. Nick Smith.

The new owners previously lived on a farm near Bellechester.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith have operated the tavern since December of 1948. Their plans at the present are indefinite.

Light Plant Orders New \$77,297 Unit

Fairbanks Morse and Company was awarded the contract for the new engine by the Light and Power Commission at a meeting held Tues.

The bid on the new unit was for \$77,297 with a guaranteed delivery of 210 days. Fairbanks Morse submitted the only bid.

The Light and Power Commission in accepting the bid will have a new unit of 800 H.P. capable of developing .560 K.W. Space for the engine is available in the present building.

Historical Happenings are taken directly from the archives of the original papers as printed. Any discrepancies need to be taken up the Editor and Publisher of the said papers, who are deceased.

Mazeppa City Council
(continued from page 15)

Council members thanked the Lion's Club,

Mazeppa Business Alliance, and the Fi Relief Association for their financial gifts to the City.

Motion by Hammes, second by Liffrig to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Meeting recessed at 7:18 PM.

Administrator-Clerk

Mayor

Next meeting: 6:00 PM, January 8, 2025.

End of Year and the New Year tend to be a busy time. Completing one year and starting the new is quite involved. I start thinking of everyone who make all the things happen in the Community.

Thank you, Mayor and Council, for leading our community. Thanks to our staff who make sure everything keeps functioning and that our facilities are well kept. Thank you to the community service organizations and volunteer groups that provide manpower and funding for festivals, activities, and community amenities. Finally, thank you to our citizens who take pride in this City by participating in the election process to choose those who lead, in keeping their properties clean and in a state of good repair and for communicating to us when things are damaged, or out of place. That way we can make the repairs, clean up a problem, or plan for future need. I encourage everyone to start 2025 thinking about and thanking those in our lives who help us each day.

Zumbro Falls City Council Minutes November 13, 2024

The Zumbro Falls City Council met at City Hall with all council members, including Scott Kennedy, and Blake Hanson. Bruce called the meeting to order at 6PM.

Clerk read to the council the minutes from the October meeting. After correction addressed the council. Accepted them as read with a motion from Anderson, seconded Benson, all in favor, carried.

Treasurer's report followed with acceptance by a motion from Anderson, seconded Heitmann, all in Favor, carried.

Scott reported to council stating the Fire Department received the grant for \$15,000.00 for the new side by side put into service. This grant was awarded with the help of Tyler Kaupa who is applying for another grant for the Department. New Department members are Gavin Poncelet, Dominic Michel, Austen Michel, and Caleb Tesmer. This ups the volunteer number to 24.

After canvassing the general election results for the City of Zumbro Falls a motion was made to accept the results by Anderson, seconded Bankers, all in favor, carried. Congrats to Bruce Heitmann to continue the mayor position and Bob Benson to continue his council position. Blake Hanson accepted the Clerk/Treasurer position after receiving the most write in votes. One council seat is still open to be filled.

Bruce and Bob informed the council about the meeting they attended with the Lake city Ambulance Personal. In the year 2026 they are proposing to charge a fee at \$20.00 per capita to the areas they service as costs exceed income. Council tabled discussion until next year before the budget.

Resolution No. 24-04 is for the city to assess 2025 taxes for delinquent water and sewer bills for customers in Zumbro Falls. A motion to put this resolution in place was made by Bankers, seconded Heitmann, all in favor, carried.

Meeting was then to adjourn and the clerk to pay all bills presented was made by Benson, seconded

Bankers, all in favor, carried.

Submitted by,
Susan Eischens, Clerk

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2025

Happy New Year, Everyone!

There's no time like the present
to express our appreciation for all the folks
who have made 2024
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