



# KENYON • WANAMINGO Messenger

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JANUARY 15, 2025

Volume 18 • Issue 1

## Announcements

• All are welcome to breakfast, fellowship, bible study, and prayer time every Saturday morning at Hauge Lutheran Church in Kenyon. Breakfast and fellowship start at 8:00 am. Followed by a verse by verse bible study. Finishing with prayer time at 10:00 am. All are welcome (men, women, and children) each Saturday morning!! Any questions, please contact Loren Bauer: 507-450-6623.

• 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@three-riverscap.org

• Hiawathaland Transit: Service hours are 7:30am-4:30pm Monday through Friday. Call dispatch at 866-623-7505 Monday through Friday 6am-9pm and Saturday 7:00am-5:00pm. Visit three-riverscap.org for more information.

• Wanamingo Veterans Honor Guard invite you to become a member. Join us and help us make the Wanamingo Veterans Honor Guard an even bigger success. WVHG meets the third Tuesday of each month at the Wanamingo Community Center. The VFW will meet from 7-7:30p.m. The Honor Guard will meet from 7:30-8:30p.m. For more information contact Eric Dierks 507-321-1967, Gary Floan at 507-732-7740, or Larry Van De Walker at 507-421-4674.

Do you have an announcement?  
Email: [hometownmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:hometownmessenger@gmail.com)

## What's Up at Jakes?

By Cheri Roshon

Well, it's been about two and a half years since our liquor store in Wanamingo changed hands, and it looks like things are going well. I had the opportunity to pop in and check it

out recently, and I was really impressed with the inventory they carry, which is extensive, and the look of the store. The whole time I was browsing, there were people coming in and out of the store at a steady rate. Jake



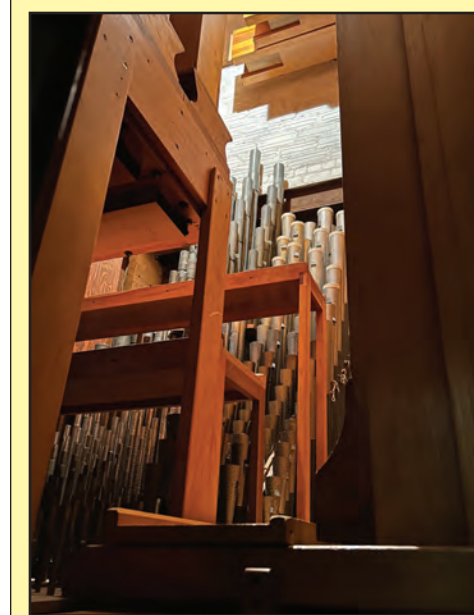
Grant purchased the building from Barney Nesselth, and the liquor store came with it, according to Jake. *(continued on page 9)*

## Fresh Food Fast!

By Cheri Roshon

When is a sandwich shop not a sandwich shop? Answer...when it also serves salads, bowls and more!

That is what you can expect to see in Kenyon starting January 15th at 701 second street. *(continued on page 6)*



A view inside the 15 sq ft by 20 ft tall pipe chamber

## Historic Moller Organ Set to Receive First Repairs

By Guest Columnists Tanya Short and Pastor D.J. Chatelaine

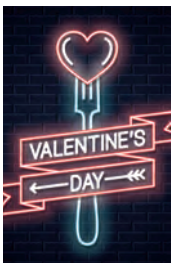
"Can you imagine soon attending First (Evangelical) Lutheran for a Sunday service, funeral, or wedding and not hearing the familiar sound of our church organ?" So began the heartfelt letter our congregation received in October outlining the need for repair to our organ. Knowing the strong history of great music within the walls of our church and not being able to comprehend the great loss of such a historical treasure, we voted to repair and restore this monumental instrument. And, with great pride, we also began researching some interesting historical facts about it.

*(continued on page 5)*

## 2025 Kenyon Wanamingo Messenger Valentine's Day Drawing

Start the year out with our Valentine's Day drawing. We are giving away a \$50.00 gift certificate to a fine local restaurant and three red roses from Mary's Rustic Rose in Kenyon to six lucky winners in our Valentine's Day giveaway.

*(continued on page 7)*



## School Board to Vote on Future of Wanamingo Site

Dear Kenyon-Wanamingo Community,

We're reaching an important point in our ongoing conversation about the future of the Wanamingo site, and your voices have played a key role in shaping this discussion.

*(continued on page 6)*



## Protect Your Investment with Essential Car Care

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### Roberts Retail & Repair

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## There's Hope



**BY Jon Dudek, co-founder of Isaiah Ministries, bringing Biblical teaching to help overcome life's everyday challenges.**  
[www.isaiahministries.cc](http://www.isaiahministries.cc)

Can you believe it is a new year? I am declaring a year of breakthrough, blessings, and abundance for both you and me. However, perhaps you think that maybe this year will just be another year of struggle. Another year of disappointment, conflict, and pain. If you feel this way, you are not alone.

These last few weeks and months I have wondered, what am I doing with my life? Why do I feel discouraged? Perhaps you're like me and your emotions can be all over the place, and sometimes you may feel lonely in the journey.

I know we may feel alone and even wonder what life is all about, but as a follower of Christ, we are not alone and there is a plan and purpose for our lives. It is so important for us to renew our minds with truth, and a great way to do this is to start the day by reading a few verses or chapters in the Word of God, the Bible. It will radically transform you and help turn that hopelessness to hopefulness.

I want to encourage you with a few verses

that have spoken to me, and I hope they will minister to you. When we feel like we are all alone, a great verse that can bring comfort is, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b). You and I are not alone in the adventures of life. You and I are not alone in the ups and downs. God is right there with us—even if we don't sense Him, the Word of God says He is. We don't trust in what we feel, we trust in what the Bible declares.

Another verse of encouragement is

Zechariah 4:6b, which states, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord." When we feel we need to fight with all of our might, we need to stop. Whatever is in front of us, we will not need to walk it out alone. Jesus will be with us every step of the way.

You and I are blessed to walk our lives with Christ. He will help us, direct us, listen to us, and hear us. As I was doing my daily devotional the other day, in the book of Proverbs

I read, "Don't get sidetracked" (4:27).

Sometimes we get caught up in worldly things or watch what everyone else is doing in their lives. Stay the course. With God's strength, push forward in whatever challenges come your way. The enemy wants to discourage you and cause you to be fearful and anxious in life. Don't listen to him. The Lord Jesus sends us love, compassion, and what has been highlighted to me recently, supernatural peace. *(continued on page 3)*

### 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.*

**DENNISON/VANG LUTHERAN PARISH**  
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 You can join us for Worship online at  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/167136242800>

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 301 2nd Avenue, Wanamingo  
 824-2155

January 19: 9:00a.m. Sacred Service; 9:00a.m. Sunday School; 10:00a.m. Worship with Holy Communion at WLC; Community Meal  
 January 22: Confirmation Class  
 5:00-6:30p.m. at TLC  
 January 26: 9:00a.m. Sacred Space; 9:00a.m. Sunday School; 10:00a.m. Worship at WLC  
 January 29: Confirmation Class  
 5-6:30p.m. at TLC

**WANAMINGO LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**  
 130 West 3rd St., Wanamingo  
 824-2457

[www.TrinityWanamingo.org](http://www.TrinityWanamingo.org)  
 January 19: 9:00a.m. Sacred Service; 9:00a.m. Sunday School; 10:00a.m. Worship with Holy Communion at WLC; Community Meal  
 January 22: Confirmation Class  
 5:00-6:30p.m. at TLC  
 January 26: 9:00a.m. Sacred Space; 9:00a.m. Sunday School; 10:00a.m. Worship at WLC  
 January 29: Confirmation Class  
 5-6:30p.m. at TLC

**ASPELUND EMMANUEL LUTHERAN**  
 Rob Edwards, Pastor  
 429 County 1 Blvd, Kenyon  
 507-824-2307  
[www.emmanuelaflc.org](http://www.emmanuelaflc.org)  
 9:00a.m. Sunday School;  
 10:00a.m. Coffee Time  
 10:30a.m. Worship Service

**FIRST EV. LUTHERAN**  
 D.J. Chatelaine, Pastor  
 309 Forest Street, Kenyon • 507-789-5261  
[website: flckenyon.org](http://website: flckenyon.org)  
 Sunday Worship 9 a.m.;  
 Noon-1:00p.m. Open Prayer Time,  
 1st Tuesday each month

**GOL LUTHERAN**  
 Joe Jorgensen, Pastor  
 507-838-2100  
 Sunday Worship 8:30a.m. Sept.-Dec.

  
 Email your church announcements, schedule, etc. to the Kenyon-Wanamingo Messenger at: [hometownmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:hometownmessenger@gmail.com)

**GOSPEL OF LIFE FAMILY CHURCH**  
 Pastor Steven G. Roberts  
[www.gospeloflifechurch.org](http://www.gospeloflifechurch.org)  
 2010 Jefferson Rd, Northfield - Sunday 10:30a.m.  
 507-259-2644  
 Wanamingo - Wednesday 7:00p.m.

**ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 (Wheeling Twp) 19086 Jacob Avenue, Faribault  
 Gary Liker, Pastor • 507-330-0025  
[www.stjohnsunitedchurchofchrist.info](http://www.stjohnsunitedchurchofchrist.info)  
 Sunday School 9:30a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m.

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, NERSTRAND**  
 Mike Ahrens S.A.M.  
 Service 9am. Coffee hour follows @ 10 am  
 Sunday School 10:15 am

**HAUGE LUTHERAN**  
 Larry Grove, Pastor • 507-271-9761  
 302 Bullis Street, Kenyon  
 Sunday Worship 10:00a.m.  
 with lunch following

**LANDS LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**  
 David Krinke, Pastor  
 16640 Hwy. 60 Blvd.  
[www.landslutheran.com](http://www.landslutheran.com)  
 Wednesday 6:15 p.m.  
 Sunday 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. at Everson Park

**STORDAHL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**  
 Pastor Kathleen Lowery  
 15049 Cty. 12 Blvd., Zumbrota • 732-5711  
 Sundays 10:30 a.m. Worship

**HOLDEN/DALE**  
 Pastor Dustin Haider • 507-789-6677  
 Email: [holdendalesecretary@gmail.com](mailto:holdendalesecretary@gmail.com)  
 Worship schedule found at:  
[www.holdenlutheranchurch.org](http://www.holdenlutheranchurch.org)  
 Holden/Dale Facebook

**MOLAND CHURCH**  
 507-456-4242  
 Sunday Worship 10:00a.m.

**NERSTRAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 Gary Liker, Pastor  
 12 Maple Street • 507-330-0025  
 Worship 9:00 a.m.

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 Reverend Daren Flinck  
 429 4th Street, Kenyon • 507-951-1271  
 Worship 9:30 a.m.

**ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
 Father Cory Rohlfing  
 Deacon Newell McGee  
 108 Bullis St., Kenyon  
 Sunday Mass 8:00a.m.  
 Wednesday Mass 5:00p.m.

**NEW LIFE CHURCH**  
 525 Beverly St., Wanamingo  
 507-824-3019  
 10am Worship Service  
[office@nlcwanamingo.org](mailto:office@nlcwanamingo.org)  
 Website with online services which are live at 10:00a.m. or can be viewed at anytime:  
<https://nlcwanamingo.org/>



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## Elroy Norman Beulke

Elroy Norman Beulke, was born on December 15, 1927, in West St. Paul, MN to Henry and Lydia (nee Kirchner) Beulke. He grew up in West St. Paul. On September 8, 1948, he married Bernice Sell at Trinity Lone Oak. They farmed in Eagan for 19 years before moving to Wanamingo in 1967. They farmed south of town before moving into Wanamingo in 1994. Elroy was active selling at the St. Paul Farmers Market for seven decades. Besides vegetables and flowers, Elroy raised beef cattle, corn and soybeans. Farming was his hobby. Elroy was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Elroy is survived by his children, Norm (Helen) Beulke of Castle Pines, CO, Mel (Diane) Beulke of Bloomington, Linda (Bird-reen) Thoreson of Wanamingo, Ken (Vickie) Beulke of Woodbury, and Jim (Susie) Beulke of Wanamingo; grandchildren, Niki (Dan) Testa, Catherine (Dan) Gallagher, Matt (Tami) Thoreson, Andy (Nicole) Thoreson, Tim (Michelle) Thoreson, Stacy (George) Joyer, Craig (Amanda) Theis, Dan Theis, Ellyn (Caleb) Beulke, and Jack Beulke; 15 great-grandchildren; sisters-in-law Virginia (Harold) Rohne of Lyle and Janet Sell of Inver Grove Heights; many nieces and nephews.

Elroy was preceded in death by his wife Bernice; brothers Elmer and Alfred, and sister Leona (Sachs).

Visitation was held on Sunday, December 22, 2024 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Mahn

Family Funeral Home - Larson Chapel in Zumbrota, MN.

The funeral was held at 11:00am on Monday, December 23, 2024 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo, MN. With an hour of visitation prior. The burial followed the service at Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery in Wanamingo, MN.

## Maurine Alma Olson

Maurine Alma Olson, 88, of Kenyon, who died Sunday, December 29, 2024, at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis after a brief illness. Funeral services were held on Monday, January 6, 2025, at 11 AM at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenyon with a visitation starting one hour prior to the service. Interment was in the Kenyon Cemetery in Kenyon.

She was born December 8, 1936, in Bertha in Todd County, to Maurice Julian Eiken and Alma (Haase) Eiken. Maurine was baptized and confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eagle Bend, MN and was a member of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Clarissa. She attended various rural Todd County schools before graduating from Clarissa High School in 1953, and then attending and graduating college from Concordia College in Moorehead, in 1957.

Maurine married Roger Allan Olson on June 8, 1957, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Bertha. Her passion for teaching lead her to work as an English teacher and a speech coach at North Branch Public Schools, But-



terfield-Odin School, and was a teacher and vocal music director at Gary Public Schools. She then taught at West Concord and Triton schools for over 25 years. Following her retirement Maurine substitute taught at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Faribault and area schools. As a teacher she was instrumental in establishing quarter classes and reading programs and help start an AFS program. Maurine was and advisor and state award winner to Students Active in Education, and honorary member of West Concord FFA. She was active for over 35 years serving as a speech and theater judge at all levels of the competition from districts to the state level. She was active in Speech Association of Minnesota, and a committee member and honoree of MSHSL.

Faith was a big part of Maurine's life. She held many positions over the years as an organist, Sunday School Teacher, officer of various church committees, First Lutheran Church Women President, Church Council President, and with the youth in many different capacities. She was also involved in local and state 4-H, intern at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the Pentagon in Washington D.C., served on the Kenyon Library Board for 9 years, Class Agent for the 1957 Concordia College Alumni for 20 years, officer of the Round Table Woman's Club, Book Group, Literary Guild, Kenyon Senior Living Auxiliary, and the Sons of Norway.

Maurine enjoyed reading, traveling, the family cabin on Big Elbow Lake but mostly, spending time with family and friends.

She is survived by her four sons, David (Amy) Olson, Mark Olson, Paul (Patty Orton) Olson, and John Olson; grandchildren, Ryan (Karlee), Michaela (Jason) Spoden, Lucas (Ava Pinske), Elijah, Evan, Cameron (Jesse), Collier, Gyhre, Kyle, and Orion Olson (Samuel Roosen); great-grandchildren, Henry, Jack, Charlie, Nicholas, Aubrey, Reagan, Jackson, Ryker, Vincent, Isabella, Albert, Bella, Jasmine, and Adrian; brother, John Eiken; nephews, Todd (Julie) Eiken, Shawn (Dina) Eiken, Daron (Dani) Olson; nieces, Tracy Eiken, Kathy (Mike) Goldberg; honorary son, Claus Iverson (AFS student 1980-81 from Denmark); special pen pal since 1951, Ellen Haugen, (from Norway).

She was preceded in death by her husband, Roger Olson (2013); parents, Maurice and Alma Eiken; infant brother, Jerome Maurice Eiken (1935); daughter-in-law, Stacy Olson (2007); sisters-in-law, Marion Wilder (2004),

Arla Olson (2009), Nanette Eiken (2017); brother-in-law, Earl Olson (2015).

Memorials are preferred to the Kenyon Library.

## Lester W. Sommers

Lester W. Sommers, age 88, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 3, 2025.

Funeral services were held at Boldt Funeral Home, Faribault on Friday, January 10, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.

Reverend Verne Daniels officiated. Interment was at Maple Lawn Cemetery, Faribault with military rites provided by Rice County Central Veterans.

Visitation was at Boldt Funeral Home, Faribault on Thursday, January 9, 2025 from 4 to 7 p.m. and also one hour prior to the service on Friday.

Lester Warren Sommers, son of Glenn Frederick and Alice Anna Nora (Vail) Sommers was born December 29th, 1936. He was one of nine children who grew up on their family farm East of Faribault. He graduated from Faribault High School in 1955. After high school, Lester was in the active reserves for 5 and 1/2 years with the Army Combat Engineers and worked at McQuay's as a punch press operator. He then attended barber school at the University of Minnesota.

Lester was proud to say he was a barber for 54 years! He barbered in Minneapolis, Northfield, Rochester, the University of Minnesota, and had his own shop in Bloomington for 32 years. He was well suited for his trade as he loved to meet people and was curious about their lives. You would always hear him telling jokes and making people laugh! In his free time he enjoyed spending time with family, and seeing country musicians such as Willie Nelson and the Oak Ridge Boys. He loved to travel. Some of his destinations included Branson, California, South Carolina, Arizona, Montana and Guatemala.

He is survived by his partner, Marilyn Graff, his former wife, Charlotte Petersen, two children, Daniel (and Sophia) Sommers, Stephanie (and Craig) Hatfield, four grandchildren, Emma, Clara, and Theodore Hatfield, and Tabitha Sommers, and many nieces and nephews.

Lester was preceded in death by his parents, and siblings, Raymond (Betty Lou) Sommers, Everett (Emma) Sommers, Dorothy (Gordon) Fischer, Della (Lester) Gunderson, Delores (Eugene) Strasser, Roger (Delores) Sommers, Donald (Sharon) Sommers, Betty Lou (Larry) Hoppe, and nephews, Steven Sommers and John Gunderson.

(obituaries continued on page 4)

## There's Hope

(continued from page 2)

Can you believe in Philippians 4:6-7 it literally tells us how to handle anxiety and how we can have peace that is beyond our understanding? "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (emphasis mine).

During times of feeling fear and anxiety with all areas of life, God wants to overwhelm us with His peace. A peace that manifests during a storm. A peace that will calm our minds and hearts to make rational decisions during tough and challenging times in life. Have you ever experienced this?


I know in my life recently I have felt this peace. I don't quite know how to explain it, but it feels as if a calmness comes over you when the world around you is crumbling. When nothing seems to be going right, this peace settles your inner being to help you respond in a Godly fashion and not a fear-based reaction.

If you haven't experienced this, pray and ask the Lord to pour out His presence and peace that surpasses all understanding. May the Lord bless each one of you, and may His peace calm you in every way. There is hope. If you have read this and are not a Christian but want to accept Jesus Christ in your heart, read, believe, and confess the following words.

"Jesus, I ask that you come into my life and my heart. I know I am a sinner, and I ask that you forgive me. I believe that you died on the cross for my sins and that God raised you from the dead. Jesus, I believe that you are Lord and Savior. Help me grow in my relationship with you. Thank You. Amen" (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:9-10, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8, Acts 3:26).

If you believe and confessed the above prayer, I believe that you are saved. You have made the best decision in your life and your new journey has begun. My recommendation is to find a church that teaches from the Word of God, get into the Bible, and find a Christian to mentor you. If you have any questions specifically about this prayer, you are more than welcome to reach out to me.

Blessings, Jon Dudek  
Isaiahministries.cc



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**Do You  
Have an  
Announcement?**

Email:  
hometownmessenger@gmail.com

## Carol Julia Gayle Lozon

Carol Julia Gayle Lozon was born in Minneapolis St. Barnabus Hospital on May 25, 1946 to parents Edmund Arthur Lozon, Sr. and Gladys Ione Lozon.

After her dad died from a heart attack in 1953, Carol, Eddie, and Gladys moved to Kenyon. She graduated from Kenyon High School in 1964. Her love of music began with piano and voice lessons from her mom when she was eight. Carol was involved in choir, theater, and all things musical for the rest of her life.

She graduated from St. Olaf in 1968 with degrees in social studies and physical education/health and earned a coaching certification. At St. Olaf, she took voice lessons for four years and sang in three choirs.

During high school and college, Carol worked as a lifeguard and manager at the Kenyon Swimming Pool, as a waitress, baker, cook, and other jobs. Her first teaching position was in Plainview teaching social studies, phy ed, and health for eight years.

She got her MA in Secondary Counseling in 1976 and worked as a counselor in Owatonna and Hastings for the next nine years. While in Owatonna, she was named Counselor of the Year.

In 1986 she spent a year at Anoka High School as an administrative intern for principalship. Until she joined the staff in Kenyon, Carol served as assistant high school principal at North St Paul, Austin, and Northfield. She also spent one year as curriculum director at Ricori. In Austin, she was elected Assistant Principal of the Year.

When Gladys 's health was failing, Carol wanted to be close to her. She accepted a job as principal at Kenyon/Wanamingo Schools, where she worked until she retired in 2002.

For most of her career, Carol coached girls' volleyball, basketball, and fast-pitch softball as well as participating in bowling, slow-pitch softball, and other sports herself.

For her whole life Carol lived her love of music. For the last ten years, she was choir director at First Lutheran in Kenyon and also a soloist. She was a very active President of the Kenyon Sons of Norway for many years only to give it up due to her failing health.

Carol was an avid traveler. She enjoyed ten cruises to Alaska, The Caribbean, Egypt, and other exotic destinations. She especially treasured her trips to the homeland of her ancestors from Norway, Ireland, and France.

Carol's life philosophy was simply this: Do the best you can at whatever you do and do it with love.

Carol is survived by her brother, Eddie (Jan) Lozon of Faribault; niece, Tracy (Mark) Canant; great niece, Josie Canant; great nephews, Phillip Canant and Karl Hafemeyer; nephew-in-law, Scott (Anne) Hafemeyer; and a host of many special and close friends too many to name.



Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by a niece and Godchild, Kelly Hafemeyer.

Family received friends Thursday, January 9, 2025 from 4 pm to 7 pm at Michaelson Funeral Home, Kenyon. Funeral Service were Friday, January 10th, 2025, at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenyon at 11 am with visitation one hour prior to the service at the church. Burial followed in Kenyon Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in Carol's honor to the Frist Evangelical Lutheran Church Organ Fund.

## Sally Ann Ray

Sally Ann Ray of Kenyon, MN, passed away on January 1, 2025 at the age of 89. She was born at her country home near Webster, SD, to Milo and Laurie Sikkink.

She graduated from Swedish Hospital School of Nursing, Minneapolis, in 1957, and was married that summer to Donald Gard of Red Wing, who passed in 2024. Together they had three children, Deanna, Paul, and Tom. They later divorced.

Her career was working as an RN, primarily in labor & delivery, and NICU. She was actively involved in bridge clubs, book club, and the churches she attended.

She is preceded in death by her parents, siblings, and beloved son, Tom Gard.

She is survived by her sister, Mary Folger, and brother in law, Raymond; son and daughter-in-law, Paul and Deborah Gard; daughter, Deanna Gard. Grandsons, Brent Mills (Jamie), Greg Mills (Angela), Zachary Gard (Vanessa), Alexander Gard (Kelsie). Great grandchildren, Joseph and Isaac Mills, Landon and Ethan Mills, Autumn, Xander, Jaxon and Leonidas Gard, and Bryce and Charlotte Gard.

The family would like to thank MN Hospice and Northfield Retirement Community for the care and compassion they showed our loved one in their final days.

Family and friends are invited to attend Sally's funeral at Hauge Free Lutheran Church in Kenyon, MN, on Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 11:00am.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in their honor to a hospice organization of your choice.

## Gladys Darlene Hernke

Gladys Darlene Hernke, age 93, of Cannon Falls, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, at Our Lady of Peace Hospice Care, on January 8, 2025.

Gladys was born to Martin and Anna



(Stueland) Swelland on Feb. 8, 1931, in Kenyon, MN. She graduated from Kenyon High School, where she sang in the school choir. She attended the Lutheran Bible Institute of Golden Valley. After being there two years, she met Owen Hernke. His dad, Alvin Hernke, was building the Edgewood Restaurant in Cannon Falls, so she began waitressing there. She and Owen (the love of her life) were married on June 6, 1953 at Hauge Lutheran Church in Kenyon. Together they raised seven children. Gladys worked at Windy Acres, and the Edgewood. She loved sports and going to events featuring her grandchildren and great-grandchildren Her joy was her family. She also had a love for the outdoors. She enjoyed gardening, and growing beautiful flowers, as well as mowing the lawn. Gladys had a passion for making beautiful quilts for everyone. She loved playing the piano and the family would sing along with her. She loved gospel music. Also, she and Owen enjoyed traveling, both abroad and domestically. Gladys was an active member of Urland Lutheran Church She participated in many church activities such as WELCA, sewing circle, and also enjoyed being a piano accompanist there.

Survivors include her children Gwen (Rick) Knowlton of Cannon Falls, Sheryl (Jim) Soule of Lakeville, Brenda (John) Quilling of Cannon Falls, Sue (Jerry Mattson) Pallin of Roseville, Dale Hernke of Kenyon, David (Lisa Oelkers) Hernke of Cannons Falls, and Marc (Julie) Hernke of Cannon Falls; grandchildren Stacey (Aaron) Deutsch, Jason Knowlton, Jeffrey (Shannon) Soule, Jodi (Eric) Stuart, Nathan (Melanie) Hernke, Nicole (Brian) Hines, Heather Hernke, Ashlee (Jake) Koebler, Amanda (Jeff) Ziel, Stephanie (Logan Walsh) Hernke, Matthew (Emily) Hernke, and Brandon (Hannah) Hernke; great-grandchildren Alex and Ethan Deutsch, Casey Jeppeson, Caden Knowlton, Zachary, Ella, and Benjamin Soule, Lillian, Gavin, and Mackenzie Stuart, Blake, Luke, Ava, and Kyle Hernke, Harper, Lauren, and Iyla Hines, Lyla Koebler, Owen, Mack, and Charlie Hernke, Heath Hernke, and William, Vincent, and Persephone Walsh. She is further survived by her sister Jean Ann (Byron) Lindamen, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Gladys was preceded in death by her hus-

band Owen, her son Mike, her parents Martin and Anna Swelland, her brothers Lincoln and Marvin, and her sisters Marie Gruse, Lillian Oelschlager, Norma Goldberg, Donna Mae Swelland, Vivian Peterson, and Delores Hammer.

Funeral services were held at 11:00 am, Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at Urland Lutheran Church, 6940 Co. 9 Blvd, Cannon Falls, MN 55009. There was a visitation one hour prior to the service at the Church. Interment will be in the Urland Lutheran Church Cemetery.

## Richard Allen Lee

Richard Allen Lee-84 of Wanamingo, Mn. died Jan 2, 2025, in Weslaco Texas.

Son of Albert Edwin Lee & LaVonne Bergstedt Lee of Cannon Falls, Mn. He attended Cannon Falls School, married Nancy J. Mundle of Red Wing Mn. In 1961. Married 63 years. Worked at Minnesota Malting of Cannon Falls, served in the U.S. Army from 1962 - 1965. Upon his return he worked for Luhman Construction & Excavating, Lawrence Trucking as a diesel mechanic, also worked for TransAmerica Inc. as a trailer mechanic. On the weekends hauled hay with brother Andrew Carl Lee (Lee Bros. Hay Hauling) for farmers and road mulch. After retiring worked 20 years for the Northfield Golf Course. Done cart maintenance, irrigation installation maintenance, inventor of machinery, built five cart path bridges, ponds and pumphouse and many more things. He enjoyed every day, using his skills, but came a time when Nancy said it was time to come home at 80 yrs. old. He kept an immaculate yard at home. Golf course work enabled us to travel in the winter, spending many years in Texas.

Survived by wife Nancy, 2-Sons, Brian / Angie Lee, and Anthony (Tony) / Andrea Lee of Northfield. Grandchildren Rachel / Brent Faber, Aaron Lee, Alexander Lee, and Courtney / Aaron Fauver. Great-Grandchild, Brielle Faber.

His accomplishments: 8 homes bought & renovated, 4 rentals between homes, built 6 new homes - Moved 18 times! Plus - 19 acts of kindness (Bldg.) for others on his time off.

Graveside service in the spring at Cannon Falls Cemetery.



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## Historic Moller Organ Set to Receive First Repairs

(continued from page 1)

Church historian Helen Aase wrote in our 125th anniversary book that our church first celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1951 with a special \$23,500 offering toward a new organ that was installed under the leadership of pastor V.T. Foss. The 650 members of First Lutheran, at that time, joined together to pool their resources for the sake of providing music to their church as well as the wider community. And, they did their research to be sure they were making a lasting investment.

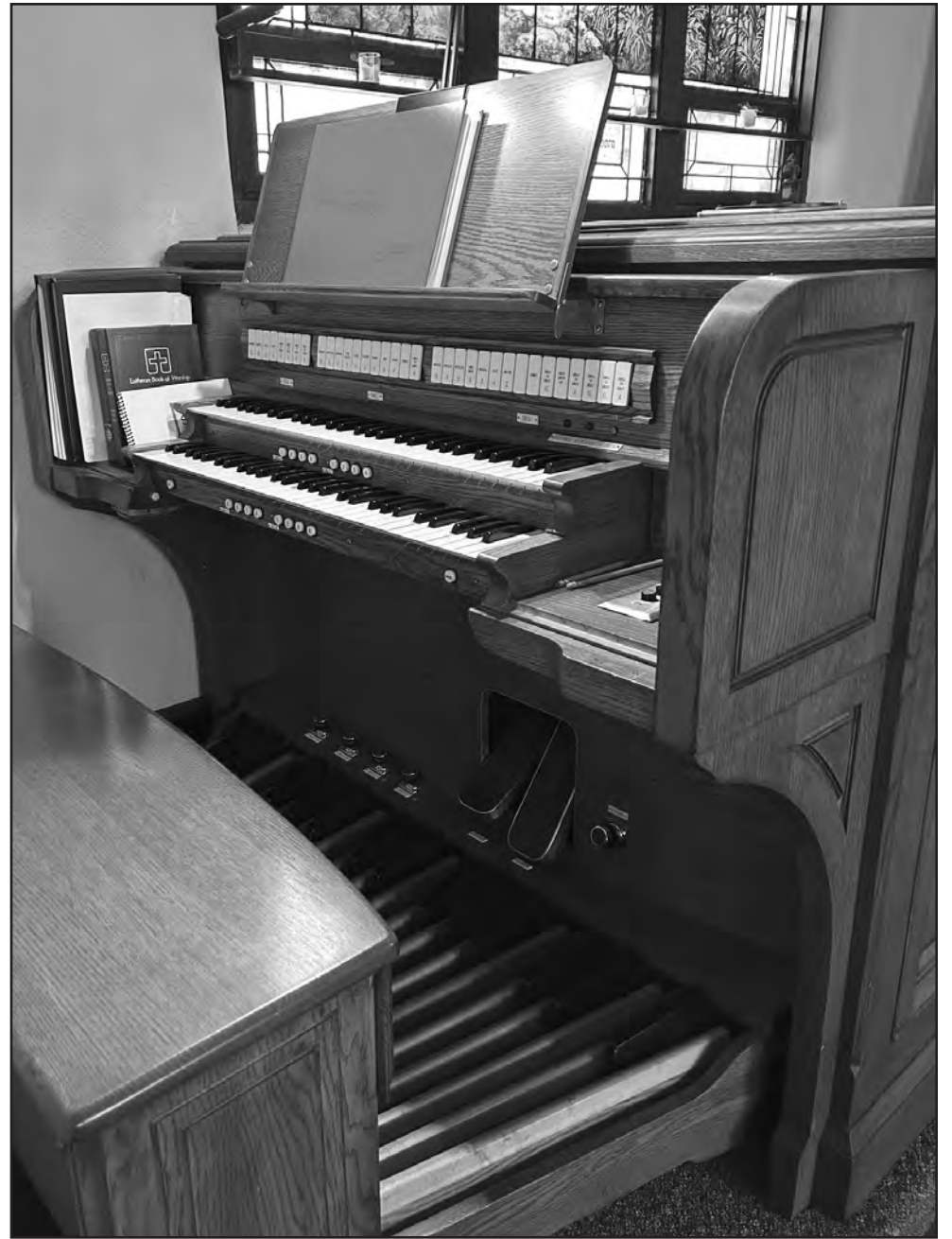
The organ was built and installed by the M.P. Möller company, based in Hagerstown, Maryland. An original contract for the organ's construction discovered in the church office was dated 1953. Möller's newest development for the age in organ building was an electro-pneumatic valve for its organs that would deliver a faster response than the older tubular-pneumatic action. No doubt, this was the biggest draw and selling point for our members. Within 6 months after purchase, a Möller Opus 8545 with 2 manuals and 32 registers was installed.

The company eventually became best known for building the immense and unique

organs at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy. Each organ lends itself to the unique design of these chapel spaces, just as ours has done here at First Lutheran for the past 71 years. The company would grow to become the largest organ building company in the world. With its motto of "An organ a day," eventually, they built more pipe organs than any other organ company in history.

The process to restore the organ involves many steps. After receiving estimates, our congregation signed a contract for restoration to begin early in Summer 2025. Organ repair companies were amazed that no major repair work had been done since the organ's original installation. To modernize and restore the organ to its full capacity, all organ pipes will be cleaned and replaced, new electric-mechanical pipe valves and new pipe wiring will be installed, and the organ's main console will be rebuilt. Additional repair needs involve reframing and insulating the outside walls of the pipe chamber to best protect the instrument from temperature fluctuations for years to come. The total estimated cost for repair and restoration is around \$85,000, which is much more reasonable perhaps to some, than purchasing a brand new organ of the exact same size and quality that would have cost easily 5 times the amount.

Throughout all this time, First Lutheran Church has served as a gathering place that has been central for many people in our Kenyon and Wanamingo communities. Beyond Sunday worship, our sanctuary has hosted weddings, funerals, concerts, and significant community events over the years.



Console of the organ

Look for a future article as we share memories from organists and other members who have blessed Kenyon with their musical talents.

While the restoration work is planned and begun, it is the work of diligent committee members to begin the task of helping fund this important project. We invite the community to join us for our Hymn Sing and Supper on Sunday, January 19 at 4 pm. Join us for favorite hymns such as How Great Thou Art, Amazing Grace, and a few numbers from local musicians, with time for some of your hymn requests. Freewill offering will go toward restoration of this historical gem.

If you are moved by this article or have been impacted by the years of music that have come from the First Lutheran Church organ, please stop in to share a memory of that time. We also would welcome your financial support to help make this long term investment a reality. We look forward to our organ continuing to bless the Kenyon community for years to come upon completion of this project. To make a donation, write a check to First Ev. Lutheran Church with "Organ Fund" in the memo and drop it off or mail it to 309 Forest Street, Kenyon, MN 55946.



The facade of the pipe chamber

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## Fresh Food Fast

(continued from page 1)

Formerly a Subway restaurant, it will now have added appeal with a fresh new menu, and new owners. The duo in charge? None other than Barney Neseth and Angie Anderson, owners of Angie's Restaurant, just down Main Street. So, you already know there will be healthy and delicious food choices coming to town. In a hurry to grab and go? Well, you can be assured that this won't be a franchised "fast food joint". We could instead call it a "good food fast" restaurant. Filling the need to pop in and pick up a meal or a snack in a hurry, that option is now available! At Angie's, you can also get your meals to go, or

sit and enjoy the home town atmosphere, and Angie's down home cooking. At Fresh Bites, you can eat in, or take out, and you know it's going to be good!

When Subway in Kenyon closed its doors, an opportunity arose for entrepreneurs Barney and Angie to open another locally owned and operated business. While franchised businesses offer jobs, and services like shared advertising budgets, they have to remain true to the menu, set prices charged, and other rules, and offer little room for creativity. In a small town, a business run by local people has the advantage of serving people in their community what they know their clientele wants, and can add whatever they want to make it work for everyone.

Think about it this way...if Subway and Chipotle got married, Fresh Bites would be their baby! With a combination of cilantro lime rice for the bowls, and 8" subs with all the fresh veggie fixings of your choice, it's a perfect marriage! Other selections include

wild rice, guacamole, jalapenos, red onion, spinach, tomatoes, beans, salads, a variety of cheeses, and the rumor is soft tacos to grab and go, or eat in if you prefer.

Manager Sara Gehrke says she is proud to be able to provide jobs for 10 local people, and the opportunity is still open to apply, if you so desire.

I asked Angie if she thought there would be competition between the 2 restaurants. "Not really", she replied. "I feel that we have totally separate menus, salads, and sides, and Fresh Bites will be more of a grab and go, which we don't currently have in Kenyon. I feel this will fill the niche needed in town. Also, the customers can stop in for a healthy lunch and top it off with dessert at Angie's!

We are striving to give the locals a great selection of choices without having to leave town."

Other offerings will be fresh baked cookies, and down the road fresh soups to go with your sandwiches. There are 4 different kinds of salads to pair with your sub, and making it's Kenyon debut, Great Lakes kettle style skin on potato chips in 9 flavors!

Another service they would like to offer is lunch deliveries for groups of people at schools and local businesses.

So, pop on in to the new restaurant location on January 15th, and see what they have done to rebrand the conception of "Good Food Fast"!

## School Board to Vote on Future of Wanamingo Site

(continued from page 1)

Over the past several months, we've listened closely to your thoughts through public meetings, phone calls, and emails. We are grateful for the insights and feedback you've shared with us, as it helps guide us in making a well-informed decision that reflects the best interests of our community.

**Upcoming Key Date:**

**January 27, 2025 – Wanamingo:**

7:00 PM – School Board Public Hearing and Vote: The board will vote on the future of the

Wanamingo site.

Your continued involvement in this process is crucial, and we look forward to future discussions in the upcoming meetings. Thank you again for your commitment and partnership as we move forward together.

**Beth Giese MA, Ed.S**

**Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools**

**District Superintendent**

**K-4 Elementary Principal**

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## KENYON-WANAMINGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS of the WEEK



### NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE WEEK FOR DECEMBER 20, 2024

Front Row: Ruby Eggert, KG, Mrs. Tanya Short; Carter Anfinson, KG, Mrs. Katie Valek; Jeaslynn Fontes Arvayo, Gr. 1, Mrs. Katie Benbrooks; Marshall Jensen, Gr. 1, Mr. Tony Donkers; Scarlett Bauer, Gr. 2, Mrs. Deb Hinrichs. Back Row: Conner Foss, Gr. 2, Mrs. Megan Jordan; William Amundson, Gr. 3, Ms. Val Ashland; Eli Otteson, Gr. 3, Mrs. Sandy Bohaty; Charlee Berg, Gr. 4, Ms. Rhonda Thesing



### NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE WEEK FOR JANUARY 10, 2025

Front Row: Brooklyn Woloszyk, KG, Mrs. Tanya Short; Jasper Harmon, KG, Mrs. Katie Valek; Layla Amundson, Gr. 1, Mrs. Katie Benbrooks; Waylon Benson, Gr. 1, Mr. Tony Donkers; Toby Edwards, Gr. 2, Mrs. Deb Hinrichs; Mae Bakken, Gr. 2, Mrs. Megan Jordan. Back Row: Sam KelleR, Gr. 3, Ms. Val Ashland; Jaxson Cline, Gr. 3, Mrs. Sandy Bohaty; Bree Helgeson, Gr. 4, Mrs. Chloe Gohman; Charlee Berg, Gr. 4, Ms. Rhonda Thesing

## 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 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



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.

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!

## 2025 Messenger Valentine's Day Drawing

(continued from page 1)

Participating restaurants include Angie's Restaurant and CaHill's Bistro & Bar in Kenyon, Smokin' Silverback in Kasson, Torey's Restaurant & Bar and Plaza Morena Compestre Grill in Owatonna. You may enter online by e-mailing your name and phone number to our on-line drawing at hometownmessenger@gmail.com. Be sure to mention it is for the Kenyon/Wanamingo Valentine's Day drawing. Winners will be selected on February 4th and you may pick up your prize on February 12th, just in time to treat someone special to flowers and a great meal.

# VALENTINE'S DAY DRAWING

**E-mail for your chance to win a \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATE TO A LOCAL RESTAURANT and 3 RED ROSES FROM MARY'S RUSTIC ROSE!**

Enter online by e-mailing your name and phone number to:  
**[hometownmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:hometownmessenger@gmail.com)**

Six winners will be selected on February 4, 2025 and you may pick up your prize on February 12th.



## 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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# What's Up at Jakes?

(continued from page 1)

Jake has a trucking company right next to the liquor store that is 3 generations strong. His dad Norm started the business in 1996 to haul refrigerated and frozen products from one location to another. For instance, Jake will drive a truckload of frozen products like ice cream to Florida, and bring back a truck load

of produce for local companies. In 1998, Jake joined his father in the business, and bought his own truck. Unfortunately, Norm was killed in a car accident in 2004. His son Emmett joined the company about 2 years ago, and was running the liquor store until Jake hired Amy McDonald to manage the store, and Emmett went to work with Jake.

Amy showed me some of the new inventory at the liquor store, and talked about future plans for the store. One is to have a market of some kind in the parking lot when the weather gets nice. Maybe a Farmer's Market, or a place to sell homemade crafts and goodies. She is open to suggestions as to what would be the best fit for Wanamingo. Give her a call for more information or with ideas you may have. Jake also has something brewing, but you will have to wait until this

spring to hear that news!

Another service they offer is custom orders for inventory they don't normally carry. If you have a favorite liqueur or special bottle of wine you'd like to have for special occasions, let her know, and she will do her best to find it for you. Since Valentine's Day is coming soon, now would be the time to order the bottle you poured when you proposed to your sweetheart, or the champagne you popped when you bought your first home together. Just sayin'..... always good to be prepared!

Another product they began carrying in December is the medicinal CBD and THC drinks that are becoming so popular for pain relief and for help sleeping. They have been carrying the medicinal "gummies" for awhile now, and Amy said people are getting

great results without the side effects of sleeping pills and pain medication. I asked a lot of questions, and am happy to say that Amy knows her products quite well. They also have Jesse Hill, a representative from Midwest Extraction Services, coming in to give samples of the new drinks by Hiza periodically. The company is located in Waseca. Jesse was able to tell me about the process used to extract the medicinal properties from the plants. The plants are grown near the facility they are manufactured in, and are proud to say they are made in the U.S.A.

A couple of other things they have on site are a refrigerated 6 by 10 foot trailer you can rent to keep your kegs and cases of beer cold when you are having an event. They have recently acquired a food truck to sell cheese curds and other yummy foods at events. And as a public service, they have a drop off box for your gently used clothing to be redistributed to those in need. And did I mention, there is more to come?

Jake wants to thank the community for all the support he has received in his new venture, and tell you that he has the best crew around working for him. Also, he hinted at some very special plans for the 4th of July in Wanamingo, but that's not the surprise I've been hinting at, either!

So, if you have any special products you would like to see in the store, or have questions about the lines they currently carry, come on down and talk to the crew! They are here to serve all your needs, and offer suggestions as to what you may like to try at your next get together.....like the Super Bowl!!! Go Vikings!

\*\*\*\*\*

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## Gratitude for Growth



**Tim Penny**  
So. MN Initiative Foundation

I like to pause and reflect on the work of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) across our 20-county region. In no particular order, I would like to recognize some of the activities I am most proud of in 2024:

Young children received additional support: A year ago, extra funds allowed SMIF to approve additional Early Care and Education Grant awards. From supporting the emotional development of children in Byron to providing mobile trainings to child care providers in New Ulm, this grant was able to enhance the care that children receive in the region.

FEAST! was the biggest yet: The 11th annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace was brimming with businesses and attendees. More food and beverage businesses participated than ever before with 35% of the 215 vendors being new to the festival. The event attracted 25% more attendees than the previous year for a new record!

The Paint the Town Grant expanded: SMIF awarded 256 gallons of paint to brighten 10 communities across our 20-county region through murals, welcome signs and historic structures. This year, the grant expanded to accept applications for public art and creative placemaking (an effort to use art, culture and community development to enhance public areas or revitalize vacant spaces). One of the grants provided a fresh coat of paint for a 1930s building at Farmamerica in Waseca that will house the 2024 presidentially pardoned turkeys.

More books were distributed: In continuation of our mission to support early literacy, SMIF awarded 19,040 children's books to 53 organizations through our Early Literacy Grant Program. The books helped organizations support young readers through summer reading programs, library classes, literacy tutoring services and more.

Small towns received more support: SMIF's Small Town Grant, an effort to improve the quality of life in small towns with populations under 10,000, surpassed a milestone: more than \$1 million has been invested in the small towns of our region since the program began. On top of that, small towns received additional support from the Taylor Rural Improvements Grant and the

Taylor Rural Child Care Grant, a pilot program started with a generous donation by Glen A. Taylor through the Taylor Family Farms Foundation. These grants helped start a mobile resource bus program in the Gibbon-Winthrop-Fairfax School District, replace an unsafe merry-go-round in Rushford Village, create an interactive, historical museum in Lake Crystal and more.

Loan clients reached new heights: New loan clients—Cento, Woodfire Pizza in Albert Lea, The Rolling Cones in Blue Earth, Nick's Car Care in North Mankato and more—joined the SMIF family, and some went national. SMIF loan client, Busy Baby LLC, in Oronoco added their innovative silicone baby products to Walmart and Target shelves across the country.

SMIF's Community Foundations continued to make an impact: Between SMIF's 32 Community Foundations and 67 Designated Funds, a collective \$12 million has been invested to benefit southern Minnesota. To name a few projects, the Spring Valley Area Community Foundation helped fund an annual summer reading program and a new walking path at a school, while the Mapleton Area Foundation provided Community Capacity grants to fund city-wide projects including new signs and youth programs.

More Early Childhood professionals attended trainings: Early Childhood training attendance increased by more than 26% from the previous year. Our trainings, which range from understanding common child behaviors to encouraging imagination, strive to strengthen our region's Early Childhood professionals and equip them with the tools they

need to support the next generation.

REV communities received a boost: Our new Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV) communities have already seen great outcomes in their efforts to advance their small-town economies. This year, the REV communities received a special grant which provided REV communities with funds to reach out to entrepreneurs, connect entrepreneurs with critical business services, pay for training, develop a sustainable funding strategy and more.

Partnerships grew: We would not be able to accomplish all we do without the contributions of our partners. Some of our partners reach far into our history, such as our FEAST! Local Foods Network partner, Renewing the Countryside, and lending program partners like local banks and economic development agencies. We were able to get more books into the hands of young children thanks to our longstanding partnership with Capstone and ABDO Publishing. We are also grateful for our partnerships that are just beginning, such as the Taylor Family Farm Foundation, which will breathe new life into our small town efforts.

Last, but certainly not least, I am grateful to our donors and staff for their effort in strengthening our impact in southern Minnesota. The work we do today is creating the future we want to see for southern Minnesota.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at [timp@smifoundation.org](mailto:timp@smifoundation.org) or 507-455-3215.

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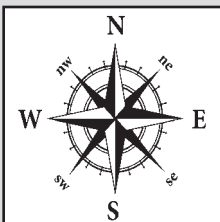
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## Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

# 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 oth-

erwise.

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.

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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 no 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.



*We'd like to share our thanks and best wishes with everyone who has been a part of our year.*

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## The Savvy Senior Does Medicare Cover Talk Therapy Services?



By Jim Miller

*What types of mental health services does Medicare cover? I struggle with anxiety and depression, and my primary care provider recommended I see a therapist or psychiatrist.*

--Anxious Annie

Dear Annie,

Medicare actually covers both outpatient and inpatient mental health care services and pro-

grams to help beneficiaries with anxiety, depression and many other mental health needs. Here what you should know.

### Outpatient Coverage

If you're enrolled in original Medicare, your Part B coverage will pay 80 percent (after you've met your annual \$257 Part B deductible) for a variety of counseling and mental health care services that are provided outside a hospital, such as in a doctor or therapist's office, hospital outpatient department or community health center. These services can also be received via telehealth.

You, or your Medicare supplemental (Medi-gap) policy, is responsible for the remaining 20 percent coinsurance.

Medicare also gives you the expanded option of getting treatment through a variety of health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical nurse specialists, clinical social workers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, marriage and family therapists and mental health counselors.

To get this coverage, you'll need to choose a participating provider that accepts Medicare assignment, which means they accept Medicare's approved amount as full payment for a service.

If you choose a nonparticipating provider who accepts Medicare but does not agree to Medicare's payment rate, you may have to pay more. And if you choose an opt-out provider that does not accept Medicare payments at all, you will be responsible for the entire cost.

To locate a mental health care professional in your area that accepts Medicare, go to [Medicare.gov/care-compare](http://Medicare.gov/care-compare), click on "doctors & clinicians" and type in your location,

followed by "clinical psychologist" or "psychiatry" in the Name & Keyword box. You can also get this information by calling Medicare at 800-633-4227.

### Inpatient Coverage

If you happen to need mental health services in either a general or psychiatric hospital, original Medicare Part A covers this too, after you've met your \$1,676 Part A deductible. Your doctor should determine which hospital setting you need. If you receive care in a psychiatric hospital, Medicare covers up to 190 days of inpatient care for your lifetime. And if you use your lifetime days but need additional care, Medicare may cover additional inpatient care at a general hospital.

### Additional Coverage

In addition to the outpatient and inpatient mental health services, Medicare also covers yearly depression screenings that must be done in a primary care doctor's office or clinic. Annual depression screenings are covered 100 percent.

And if you have a Medicare prescription drug plan, most medications used to treat mental health conditions are covered too.

### Medicare Advantage Coverage

If you get your Medicare benefits through a private Medicare Advantage plan, they too provide the same coverage as original Medicare does, but may impose different rules and will likely require you to see an in-network provider. You'll need to contact your plan directly for details.

For more information, call Medicare at 800-633-4227 and request a copy of publication #10184 "Medicare & Your Mental Health Benefits," or you can read it online at [Medicare.gov](http://Medicare.gov).

### Are You at Risk of Developing Glaucoma?

*What can you tell me about the eye disease glaucoma? My older brother was recently diagnosed with it and lost some of his vision,*

*but never had a clue anything was wrong. Could I be at risk too? --Stressed Sibling*

Dear Stressed,

Yes! Having an immediate family member with glaucoma significantly increases your risks of developing it, but there are other risk factors you need to be aware of too. Here's what you should know.

### What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss and blindness if it's not treated. This typically happens because the fluids in the eye don't drain properly, causing increased pressure in the eyeball.

But the scary thing about glaucoma is that with no early warning signs or pain, most people that have it don't realize it until their vision begins to deteriorate.

While there are two main types of glaucoma, the most common form that typically affects older adults is called open-angle glaucoma. This disease develops very slowly when the eye's drainage canals become clogged over time, leading to blind spots in the peripheral or side vision. By the time you notice it, the permanent damage is already done.

### Are You at Risk?

It's estimated that more than 3 million Americans have glaucoma today, but that number is expected to surge to more than 6.3 million by 2050. If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you're at increased risk of developing it.

Are you African American, Hispanic/Latino American or Asian American?

Are you over age 60?

Do you have an immediate family member with glaucoma?

Do you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, migraines or have extreme nearsightedness or farsightedness?

Have you had a past eye injury?

Have you used corticosteroids (for example, eye drops, pills, inhalers, and creams) for long periods of time?

### What to Do

Early detection is the key to guarding against glaucoma. So, if you're age 40 or older and have any of the previously mentioned risk factors, especially if you're African American, you need to get a comprehensive eye examination every 18 to 24 months. Or, if you notice some loss of peripheral vision, get to the eye doctor right away.

If you're a Medicare beneficiary, annual eye examinations are covered for those at high risk for glaucoma. Or if you don't have vision coverage, contact EyeCare America, a national public service program that provides free glaucoma eye exams through a pool of more than 4,600 volunteer ophthalmologists. Visit [AAO.org/eyecare-america](http://AAO.org/eyecare-america) or call 877-887-6327 to learn more.

While there's currently no cure for glaucoma, most cases can be treated with prescription eye drops, which reduce eye pressure and can prevent further vision loss. It cannot, however, restore vision already lost from glaucoma. If eye drops don't work, your doctor may recommend oral medication, laser treatments, incisional surgery or a combination of these methods.

For more information on glaucoma, visit the National Eye Institute at [NEI.nih.gov](http://NEI.nih.gov), and the Glaucoma Research Foundation at [Glaucoma.org](http://Glaucoma.org).

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**4:00 PM Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall**  
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**6:00 PM LIVE MUSIC from Melissa Schultz at 625 Bar & Grill**

**6:30 PM 11th Annual Denni Dazzle Parade \$150.00 Prize for Best Float!**  
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**8:00 PM LIVE MUSIC AT THE FIRESIDE "The Devney Brothers"**

**9:00 PM Raffle Winners Announced at Fireside**

**Flake Out Festival Raffle Saturday, February 1**  
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## Study Finds New Blood Test Predicts Prognosis for Advanced Prostate Cancer Patients

By University of Minnesota Medical School

Published in Nature Communications, a new study led by the University of Minnesota Medical School and Duke University found that a DNA sequencing test for advanced prostate cancer patients can distinguish between patients with poor and favorable prognoses.

The new blood-based test — called AR-ctDETECT — is designed to detect and analyze small fragments of tumor-derived DNA in the blood of certain patients with advanced, metastatic prostate cancer.

In this new study, the AR-ctDETECT test was used to analyze DNA from more than 770 blood samples from a phase 3 clinical trial of advanced prostate cancer patients. The test identified circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) in 59% of patients with metastatic prostate cancer. Patients with detectable circulating tumor DNA had significantly worse overall survival compared to those without. These results demonstrate the potential of the AR-ctDETECT test to provide key genetic information to tailor treatments based on similar characteristics among patients.

“Our AR-ctDETECT test, designed for prostate cancer, shows how valuable these blood tests could be in helping doctors better understand a patient's cancer and predict how the disease will progress, leading to more personalized treatment plans,” said Scott Dehm, PhD, a professor at the U of M Medical School and member of the Masonic Cancer Center.

The study concluded that detecting ctDNA using AR-ctDETECT provides critical prognostic insights for patients with metastatic prostate cancer.

“The AR-ctDETECT assay is a comprehensive panel focused on genes relevant to prostate cancer and hormone resistance, particularly the androgen receptor and critical structural alterations not currently detected by other commercial tests,” said Andrew Armstrong, MD, a professor at Duke University School of Medicine, an oncologist with Duke Cancer Institute and co-senior author on the study. “Incorporating genomic profiling into clinical decision-making may enhance personalized treatment strategies and inform the design of future clinical trials.”

“Our team demonstrated the ability of AR-ctDETECT to effectively identify distinct groups of patients based on their genomic profiles,” said Susan Halabi, PhD, a James B. Duke Distinguished Professor of Biostatistics at Duke University School of Medicine. “Notably, our study is the first to demonstrate, within a phase 3 cohort, that metastatic prostate cancer patients with positive ctDNA treated with standard therapies had worse overall survival compared to ctDNA-negative patients.”

Further research will focus on integrating genetic data from the AR-ctDETECT test with patient clinical data to improve patient prognostication. The research team also plans to evaluate whether the AR-ctDETECT test could be used to predict patient outcomes in the context of specific treatments, which could be used in the future to guide optimal therapy.

This research was funded by the National Cancer Institute, Prostate Cancer Foundation and John Black Charitable Foundation.

*About the University of Minnesota Medical School*

The University of Minnesota Medical School is at the forefront of learning and discovery, transforming medical care and educating the next generation of physicians. Our graduates and faculty produce high-impact biomedical research and advance the prac-

tice of medicine. We acknowledge that the U of M Medical School is located on traditional, ancestral and contemporary lands of the Dakota and the Ojibwe, and scores of other Indigenous people, and we affirm our commitment to tribal communities and their sovereignty as we seek to improve and strengthen our relations with tribal nations. For more information about the U of M Medical School, please visit [med.umn.edu](http://med.umn.edu).

## Southeast MN Adult Mental Health Initiative to Offer Grant Funding to Increase Mental Health Services Region Wide

The Southeast Adult Mental Health Initiative (SE AMHI) will be accepting applications for grant funding from mental health and related service providers starting January 10, 2025, from the following counties: Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, and Winona Counties. This new Community Grant Fund is supported by an increase in funding for this region from the MN Department of Human Services for the coming years. The SE AMHI and the Community Grant Fund support adults with serious and persistent mental illness and is charged with providing an expanded array of services from which clients can choose services appropriate to their needs.

Applications of \$1,000 to \$100,000 will be considered with a total amount \$200,000 in awards planned for this grant round. The deadline for applications is close of business February 10, 2025 and grant recipients will be announced March 17, 2025 with contracts being completed for award recipients by March 31, 2025. Applications are available via the SE AMHI website at [www.seamhi.org](http://www.seamhi.org) or by contacting Laura Sutherland at [laura.sutherland@olmstedcounty.gov](mailto:laura.sutherland@olmstedcounty.gov) or call at 507-328-6495.

The SE AMHI invites grant applications that address the growing needs of the region's residents in terms of mental health resources and community supports. Grants will be considered from any nonprofit organization or public agency whose project addresses one on the following priorities:

- Mental Health Services Supported by Individuals with Lived Experience as evidenced by local advisory councils, organizations staffed by individuals with lived experience, peer support specialists, board members with lived experience or other similar experience.
- Mental Health Services that Address Disparities in Mental Health and Target Underserved Populations
- Rural Mental Health Access
- Mental Health Services that Address Those Most In Need As Determined by Social Determinants of Health
- Housing with Supports

*About the Southeast MN Adult Mental Health Initiative*

The Southeast Adult Mental Health Initiative is a collaborative of 10 counties, community members, organizations such as NAMI SE and Wellness in the Woods and multiple providers all striving to ensure that a range of accessible adult mental health services are available to community members. The region provides a wide range of services including: drop-in centers, permanent and supportive housing providers, intensive residential treatment services programs, a regional crisis center, support groups, trained mental health first aid instructors, and local advisory councils in addition to many providers offering a range of services. For more information, visit [www.seamhi.org](http://www.seamhi.org).



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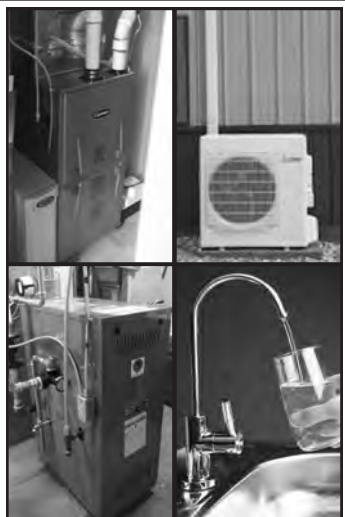


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## Planks for Spinal Health



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 vaccines 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 produced 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](mailto:nutritionproportion@gmail.com), or check out my website at [www.nutritionproportion.net](http://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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## Applications Now Open for Century and Sesquicentennial Farm Recognition in Minnesota

Applications are now open for the Minnesota Farm Bureau Sesquicentennial Farm program, honoring Minnesota families that have owned their farms for at least 150 years. The deadline to apply is March 3, 2025.

To qualify, the farm must:

Be at least 150 years old this year (2025) according to the abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. Please do not send originals or copies of records.

Demonstrate ownership by the applying family for 150 years or more. "Family" is de-

defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son-in-law).

Have continuous ownership. Continuous residence on farm is not required.

Consist of 50 or more acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.

A commemorative certificate signed by the governor of Minnesota, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the president of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign. Recipients will be announced in April.

Applications are available at [www.fbm.org](http://www.fbm.org). For more information, contact Pam Debele at [pam.debele@fbmn.org](mailto:pam.debele@fbmn.org) or 651-768-2111.

Century Farm program applications are also open. Information is available online at [mn-statefair.org](http://mn-statefair.org) or by calling 651-288-4417. Applications are due by March 3, 2025. Recipients will be announced in the spring. Previously recognized families should not reapply.



## New Grant Available for Minnesota Farmers' Markets

*Funding available to support market nutrition assistance programs*

A new Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) grant opportunity is available for farmers' market associations to help support nutrition assistance programs at the markets.

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Assistance Grant will provide funding to farmers' markets in the state so they can increase participation in food assistance programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), Market Bucks, and Power of Produce (POP) Club. These programs help individuals and families who are experiencing food insecurity purchase foods directly from farmers at farmers' markets.

The MDA expects to award approximately \$150,000 using a competitive review process. Applicants may request between \$1,500 to \$10,000 per farmers' market association. There is no match requirement for this grant. If the project proposal is approved, the farmers' market association may request an advance of up to 50% of the project funding. Advance funds must be requested as a part of the application process.

To be eligible to apply, a farmers' market as-

sociation must be located in Minnesota and intends to participate in at least one nutrition assistance program in 2025 that provides food directly to program participants at the farmers' market.

Applications will be accepted until February 20, 2025.

For full details on eligibility and how to apply, visit the MDA website.

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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](mailto: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](http://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.

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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 southeastern 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](mailto:Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us))

## Avoid Distractions

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

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.



## KENYON CITY COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER 10, 2024

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a City Council Meeting was duly held in the City Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. on the 10th day of December 2024. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Henke.

The following members were present: Mayor Doug Henke, Council Members Mary Bailey, Lee Sjolander, Molly Ryan, and Kim Helgeson

Also present: Interim Administrator Frank Boyles, Administrative Assistant Holli Gudknecht, Finance Director Whitney Kylo, Engineer Derek Olinger, Attorney Joe Sathe, Public Works Supervisor Wayne Ehrich, Officer Brian Homeier, Don Kirchmann, Elana Brunner

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### CITIZEN COMMENT ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Ryan seconded by Bailey to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Ryan to approve the Consent Agenda, which includes the 2025 Fire Contract, Disposal of Telephones, and payment of check numbers 76664 through 76738; 5220E through 5257E. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### PRESENTATIONS/ PUBLIC HEARINGS/ RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS ENGINEERING

#### Pearl Creek & Gates Avenue Utility Improvements

Engineer Olinger stated that most of the work is now complete. There have been delays with minor grading, stabilization, and establishing turf on the Barrett property. The results of any final restoration will not be known until the spring thaw, so it was recommended that a completion date be set in early spring for the remaining repair work. Liquidated damages would be suspended over the winter. Payment #11 includes work completed between November 2 and December 3.

#### Pay Application #11 to

#### BCM Construction and Change Order

Motion by Bailey seconded by Helgeson to approve pay request No. 11 to BCM Construction in the amount of \$4,430.00 and execute a change order to move the completion date of the remaining repair work to early spring. Motion carried 5-0-0.

#### 2025 Street and Utility Improvements

Engineer Olinger stated that the design work for the 2025 street and utility improvements is about 25% complete. The Langford right-of-way width varies, and portions of the existing street are outside the ROW. Acquisition of permanent easements from adjacent property owners may be needed to address this issue.

Motion by Ryan seconded by Helgeson directing the city engineer to engage property owners for the acquisition of easements for Langford Avenue. Motion carried 5-0-0.

#### 8th Street Development

Engineer Olinger stated that a potential layout for the 8th street development site has been drafted. The layout showed an ideal layout for the buildout of the area. Some discussion and input from developers would be helpful prior to preparing costs.

## LEGAL

### Kenyon Code 400.07 Moving Permits - Amendment

Interim Administrator Boyles stated that in October, the Planning Commission reviewed a request to move a building to a lot in Kenyon. This request did not materialize, but the Commission felt the current city code for moving permits needed to be updated. Changes made included language to address the concerns about appearance and age of the building to be moved, electric line clearance verbiage from the KMU Rules and Regulations Handbook, and language change to match the MN State Statute 221.81. At the December 4, 2024 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended adoption of Ordinance No. 107 to the City Council.

Ordinance No. 107: Amending Section 400.07 of the Kenyon City Code Regarding Moving Permits

Motion by Ryan seconded by Helgeson to adopt Ordinance No.107. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Cannabis Matters

City Attorney Sathe provided an overview of the options cities have regarding adult-use cannabis. Sathe obtained preliminary input from the council on some questions needed to draft the city's ordinance related to cannabis and hemp. He will write a draft zoning ordinance to send to the planning commission for a public hearing.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### 2025 Budget and Levy

#### Resolution 2024-28: Adopting the 2025 Budget and Establishing the Tax Levy for Payable 2025

Finance Director Kylo stated that the Truth in Taxation meeting was held on December 3. The final budget shows a maximum proposed levy increase of 9.55% for 2025.

Motion by Bailey second by Ryan to adopt Resolution 2024-28 adopting the 2025 budget and establishing the tax levy of \$1,400,000 payable in 2025. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Resolution 2024-30: Adopting the 2024 Goodhue County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Public Works Supervisor Ehrich reported that the Goodhue County Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA on October 30, 2024. The city needs to adopt this plan through council resolution to be eligible for mitigation and restoration grants and programs offered through the federal government.

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Sjolander to adopt Resolution 2024-30 the 2024 Goodhue County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Motion carried 5-0-0.

#### Resolution 2024-29:

#### Resolution Committing Capital Fund Balance

Finance Director Kylo stated that the general accounting standard (GASB 54) requires all public entities to set year end Capital fund balances before the end of the current year contingent on audited final numbers. The final year-end capital fund amounts will not be known until the 2024 audit has been completed.

Motion by Ryan seconded by Bailey to adopt Resolution 2024-29 committing capital fund balances.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Bobcat Trade-in and Replacement

Public Works Supervisor Ehrich stated that the 2019 Bobcat is in the budget for 2025 to be traded in. If the new bobcat is ordered in December, the 2025, a price increase would be avoided. The new bobcat would not need to be paid for until 2025.

Motion by Ryan seconded by Henke to approve the purchase contract with Tri-State Bobcat Inc for the new bobcat. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Add/Delete Signatory at Security State Bank of Kenyon

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Ryan to add Scott Lehner and Mary Bailey as signers on the City of Kenyon checking account at Security State Bank of Kenyon and delete Douglas Henke and Mary (Molly) Ryan as signers on the same account. Motion Carried 5-0-0.

### 2025 Tobacco License Renewals

#### Kenyon Market, River Country Co-Op (Speedway), Kenyon Municipal Liquor Store

Motion by Sjolander second by Bailey to approve the 2025 tobacco license renewals. Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Holiday Office Closings

Interim Administrator Boyles requested approval for City Offices and Library to be closed Tuesday, December 24 and to close the library at 4:30 pm on Tuesday, December 31.

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Ryan to close the City Office and Library on Tuesday, December 24 and close the library at 4:30 pm on Tuesday, December 31.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Extension of Interim Administrator Contract

Interim Administrator Boyles stated that his contract was effective as of May 22, 2024. The agreement automatically terminated six months from the effective date, which was November 22, 2024. The request is to extend the contract to January 31, 2025.

Motion by Ryan seconded by Helgeson to approve Resolution 2024-31 providing for a mutually agreed upon extension for the May 22, 2024 independent contractor agreement for interim city administrator.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

### Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

KMU Meeting: Tuesday, December 17 @ 4 p.m.

EDA Meeting: Tuesday, December 17 @ 8 a.m.

Planning Commission Meeting: Tuesday, January 7 @ 6:00 p.m.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 14 @ 7 p.m.

### COUNCIL AND STAFF GENERAL COMMENTS

Council Member Sjolander thanked everyone for all the work they do.

Attorney Sathe stated that he had enjoyed working with both Molly and Doug.

Engineer Olinger wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked Molly and Doug.

Council Member Helgeson reminded everyone of Christmas in Kenyon on Saturday. She stated it had been a pleasure working with Doug and Molly and welcomed the new council members.

Council Member Ryan stated it had been a great four years serving on the council.

Mayor Henke stated that this was his last council meeting. When he first ran for council, his goal was to get the Industrial Park going and build a new fire department building which were both accomplished. He enjoyed his time on the council.

Council Member Bailey thanked the department heads for their work, thanked Kim for all her work on the Park & Rec committee, and presented Doug and Molly with appreciation gifts.

Interim Administrator Boyles thanked the council for the opportunity to work in this community.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

Holli Gudknecht, Deputy City Clerk  
Douglas Henke, Mayor

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## CITY OF WANAMINGO REGULAR EDA MEETING MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024 6:00 P.M.

### Wanamingo City Council Chambers 401 Main Street Wanamingo MN

**PRESENT:** Annette Fritz, Brian Gudknecht, Rebecca Haugen, Ryan Holmes, Jim Kittelson, Laurie Musselman, and Josh Schaefer

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Michael Boulton and Karen Masters

Brian Gudknecht called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance followed.

**ADOPT AGENDA:** Schaefer motioned, seconded by Fritz to adopt. Approved 7-0-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Haugen motioned, seconded by Kittelson to approve. Approved 7-0-0.

**PRESENTERS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Administrator Boulton provided a 2024 Economic Development for the City. 2024 saw continued high Federal interest rates, continued slowing down residential and commercial expansion. Supply chain delays are getting better, however shortage of labor, and high inflation continue to hurt the economy. Inflation, coupled with elevated Fed's rates have seen a slowing of the residential housing market. 2024 saw a slowdown throughout Wanamingo. The City has seen some commercial building work, a few new homes, and infrastructure improvements. The commercial work, new homes, and valuation increases will increase the City of Wanamingo's tax base.

There were no major commercial building expansions in 2024. However, there were several minor projects. Hillcrest Center (\$93,000) and Riverview Services (\$33,000) completed new garages. Caseys completed additional remodel work (\$14,000). The Spot Sports Pub expanded their deck (\$10,000). Mead Johnson is working on a re-roofing project (\$10,000). NTS Tire/Bakers completed work on the exterior of the building, including signage.

(continued on page 22)

## WANAMINGO EDA MEETING

(continued from page 21)

In the residential side we have seen seven (3) new home building permits issued in 2024.

The three homes have a collective building permit valuation of \$479,000. The three (3) units is considered an average year of residential growth in Wanamingo. There have also been a number of new decks, mechanical work, new windows/doors, re-roofing's, and other home improvement building permits in 2024.

The City continues to work on the 2022 Utility Improvements Project. The water-main looping project was finalized in 2024. The new well house will be completed at the end of 2024. The total cost of the project was \$2.8 million (including new water tower). The City has been working to reduce ground water inflow and infiltration. The City completed smoke testing all the manholes to check for leaks and cross connections. The City is wrapping up the sump pump inspection program to ensure that there are no illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system. Along with the sump pump program that City is identifying all of the water service connection locations and material. This is to eventually replace all lead and galvanized piping. The mapping of water service valve locations helps to find easily shut-offs in case of emergencies. The City spent roughly \$35,000 on repairing leaking water valves, asphalt patching, and concrete replacement work in 2024. The City obtained a \$3,000 grant for a new basketball hoop that will be installed at Prairie Ridge Estates park in 2025.

The City is planning on rehabbing the street shop building in 2025. The rehab work includes roofing, siding, service doors, windows, overhead doors, gutters/downspouts, ventilation system, spot concrete work, and electrical work. It is estimated to cost \$210,000. 2025 has some planned private and public work on the horizon. The City staff have been working with Jon Whitcomb of Metro East Commercial Re Inc. He purchased the 24 tax forfeited Emerald Valley II parcels from Goodhue County. Mr. Whitcomb is working with the other landowners to put together a development plan for the area. Mr. Whitcomb hired engineering to put together plans for construction. Mr. Whitcomb obtained bids from three contractors. Mr. Whitcomb is working with the City to try and make changes to bring down the per lot costs and bids for 2025. Jason Grant Trucking is still looking at a cold storage warehouse in the industrial park. Jason Grant is held up by current high construction and interest rates. Reckitt/Mead Johnson has plans for building expansion along with traffic, parking lot, building expansion, and other outside esthetic improvements. There continues to be some interest in residential single-family dwellings. City Staff anticipates slowdown of construction in 2025 leading to fewer new homes. The City has been working with Zumbrota, Pine Island, Goodhue regarding a regional wastewater treatment facility. The City received \$10 million from the State for pre-design and land acquisition for the facility. The Cities have hired Winthrop & Weinstein lobbyist firm to help obtain State dollars for the next phase of construction. Having capacity and reliability in the water and waste-

water treatment are keys to allowing for future growth and current sustainability of the community. The North Zumbro Sanitary Sewer District hinges on State funding through the bonding bill and Point Source Implementation grant in order to be financially feasible.

Haugen asked what would happen if the Wanamingo site was closed for the Kenyon-Wanamingo School District. The Kenyon-Wanamingo School District is hosting public hearing on December 9th in Kenyon and January 6th in Wanamingo. The board is set to vote on January 6th after the public hearing. Boulton stated that he hoped the school district would continue to operate the site as a school or other use rather than fully closing. Boulton stated that the Kenyon-Wanamingo School District would continue to be responsible for the site in upkeep, insurance, and utilities even if the site closed. Boulton stated that the EDA and City does not have the tax base to take on or operate the building in a repurposed format. Boulton stated that funds are limited for any assistance to repurpose the building. Boulton stated that the EDA and City finances would be limited to assisting the school district with cost sharing to hire an outside firm, such CEDA (Community Economic Development Associates), to assist with finding and applying for outside funding sources. Boulton stated that the City has other limited tools such as tax abatement or tax increment financing. Boulton stated that there are risks to the taxpayers in utilizing either of these tools. Boulton stated that a sound financial plan with a strong development agreement would be necessary. The EDA board agreed that the tax base would not support the EDA or City owning/operating the facility in a repurposed format. It was suggested that the school district obtain a quote to demolish the building. There are concerns that the facility would sit for a decade, similar to the former Kenyon school. Then it would need to be demolished, being paid for by the City and County. All options should be on the table for consideration.

Administrator Boulton went over the 2025 proposed EDA portion of the Wanamingo budget. Administrator Boulton went over Funds 251 EDA, 306 Cenex 3rd Addition, 331 Cenex 4th Addition, and 604 Medical Center.

EDA Fund 251 Levy is set to increase from \$45,000 in 2024 to \$47,000 in 2025. This will help offset small additional costs to keep the fund in a positive balance. 2023 expenses were \$38,600 while 2024 to date expenses are roughly \$38,000, to date.

Debt Service 306 Levy is set to stay the same from 2024 to 2025 at \$45,000. The two bond payments of debt service fund 306 split with the 2017-2018 audit and now includes debt service funds 306 (Cenex 3rd Addition) and 331 (Cenex 4th Addition). Debt Service fund 306 has a \$78,048 balance at the end of 2023. The bond payments are \$62,000/year through 2025. The Cenex III phase bond payments will be \$67,600 in 2024.

Debt Service 331 – Levy is set to drop to \$0 for 2025. The Cenex 4th Addition phase was separated from account 306 in 2018. The proceeds from the sale of property in 2018 to Comcast will support the bond payments for the next seven years. The yearly

bond payments will be roughly \$45,000 (payment is \$40,425 in 2025) running through 2031. The fund had a \$275,828 balance at the end of 2023.

Medical Center Account 604 – There have been concerns with fund falling behind due to past vacant suites and utility reimbursements. The Medical Center suites are all full as of October 2022. The facility is projected to cash flow and have a \$5,000-\$8,000 cash surplus at the end of each year (depending on building capital needs). The Medical Center Fund owes the General Fund \$34,441 at the end of 2023. The Council should consider a future levy of \$10,000/year for 2-3 years or a transfer from other fund(s) of \$25,000 to make the fund solvent (This would include \$5,000-\$8,000 yearly cash generated from current rent). Schaefer stated that he was happy that the facility is full and has positive cashflow before capital needs. This is the best-case scenario for the facility.

There being no further business Schaefer made a motion seconded by Fritz to adjourn the EDA meeting at 6:26 p.m. Approved 7-0-0.

Brian Gudknecht, President  
Michael Boulton, Director

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## WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024 7:00 P.M.

Wanamingo City Council Chambers –  
401 Main Street Wanamingo, MN

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Holmes.

**PRESENT:** Council: Ryan Holmes, Stuart Ohr, Jeremiah Flotterud, and Rebecca Haugen

City Administrator: Michael Boulton  
Deputy Clerk: Karen Masters

**ABSENT:** Council: Eric Dierks

**ALSO PRESENT:** Brad Kennedy, Keith Krier, Beth Haas – Zumbrota News Record, and Goodhue County Deputy Dan Englund.

**ADOPT AGENDA:** Ohr motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Haugen. Passed 4-0-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Haugen motioned, seconded by Ohr. Passed 4-0-0.

### PRESENTERS:

**Brad Kennedy reported on:**

Worked on getting sander operating with the new plow truck. There were programming issues that needed to be worked out prior to use.

Winterized various buildings and equipment. Street Sweeper has been gone through, fully serviced and should be ready for next spring. Replaced filters and along with a new dirt shoe. The machine has been fully washed and greased. The sweeper will need a curb brush and main broom replaced next spring.

Picked up and put away Main Street benches and garbage cans.

Changed out Main Street banners from City logo to holiday theme

Put up Christmas/Holiday snowflake lights on Main Street light poles

Working on creating ice for ice rink. The rink was nearly ready for skating before the warm weekend.

Sludge truck repairs made to seals on valves in back of the truck

Replaced 30 hydrant markers throughout town. The old markers had deteriorated in the sun, exposing fiberglass.

Will be removing seven dead trees in Riverside Park this winter

Well House project is at a standstill. The electronics and controls still need to be able to communicate. The Minnesota Department of Health shut-off switch change order to the project is part of the problem.

(continued on page 23)

## Rep. Steven Jacob

DISTRICT 20B

NEWS

Hello from the State Capitol,

We are only days away from the start of the 2025 session. By the sounds of it, Democrats in the Minnesota House have no intention of showing up on Opening Day, or many days after that.

Following the November election, 67 Republicans and 67 Democrats were elected to the Minnesota House. However, Democrats got caught cheating. One of the Democrat Metro Area candidates ran for office even though he didn't live in the district he was elected to represent – which is required by law. A court was asked to intervene, and a judge ordered that the candidate not be seated when session begins. The candidate has since stepped aside, creating what will be a 67 seat Republican, 66 seat Democrat House when lawmakers are sworn into office on January 14.

During a news conference on Monday, House Democrat leadership said that unless there is an equal power agreement between House Republicans and Democrats on Day 1, they will stay away from the Capitol and refuse to be sworn into office. In fact, they suggested they might not show up at all until after a special election is held to fill the now open seat. But they have said they will collect their paychecks even though they're not doing the people's business.

I cannot imagine being elected and then threatening to not show up for work. The Democrats' threat of an outright boycott is proof positive that they believe Republicans have a functioning organizational majority. If they didn't believe so, they wouldn't be playing these games.

I couldn't be more pleased to be representing you again in St. Paul and am looking forward to the Opening Day ceremonies on the Minnesota House floor this coming Tuesday. Let's hope we see the House Democrats there as well.

Steve

## WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 22)

The wiring needs to be added to the well house as it was not considered with the design of the building.

### NEW BUSINESS:

**Public Hearing - Mayor Holmes opened the 2025 Budget & Levy Public Hearing at 7:04PM.** Administrator Boulton provided a written memo of the Proposed Final 2025 Budget, budgeting and levy process. The overall levy is proposed to increase 9.35% from \$1,070,000 to \$1,170,000. The Midco Utility Building increased its taxable value by an estimated \$20,000, Zumbro Valley Landscaping New Salt Sand Shed increased taxable value by an estimated \$11,000, Beulke new greenhouse increased taxable value by an estimated \$25,000, and Casey's remodel increased taxable value by \$94,000 in 2023. This would bring in roughly \$5,740 (slightly less than half City portion) in property taxes (0.041). The improvements at the Wanamingo Medical Facility will be captured in additional TIF. New construction within the community over the last year (7 new taxable homes in 2023) should aid with the increase to the taxable market value increase. The new construction should off-set roughly 1/5 of the proposed levy increase (1.75% of the proposed 9.35% increase). In 2026, potential commercial (Jason Grant's proposed warehouse, Reckitt-Mead Johnson expansion, and other discussed commercial expansions) projects, and addition residential growth (3 new homes) will continue to expand the tax base. Goodhue County calculated the 2025 tax capacity numbers based on the proposed levy and new valuation figured into tax capacity and taxable market values. Wanamingo tax capacity will go from \$1,504,376 (includes TIF) to \$1,568,304 (Includes TIF) a 4.24% increase. Wanamingo Market Value will go from \$136,012,400 to \$145,168,200 or an 6.73% increase. The tax pool (what the levy gets divided out by) will go from \$1,495,661 to \$1,559,087 or an 4.24% increase. The tax rate is proposed to go from 71.959 to 75.044 or an increase of 3.0850%. The Wanamingo City Council proposed levy increase to \$1,170,000 will have a net increase on tax rates. Administrator Boulton received additional data to show potential changes to homeowners' property taxes with the proposed levy (roughly an increase of \$22.00 for \$100,000 value, an increase of \$38.71 for \$150,000 value, an increase of \$55.42 for \$200,000 value, an increase of \$72.13 for \$250,000, and an increase of \$88.84 for \$300,000 value City portion of a property tax increase per year). This is depending on home valuation changes from the past year. Most homes saw a 3%-5% increase in valuations from 2023 to 2024. This would show changes on the low end of value increases to roughly \$60 for \$100,000 home, \$80 for a \$150,000 value home, \$95 for a \$200,000 value home, \$110 increase for \$250,00, and \$125 for a \$300,000 value home. It would show increases of \$65 for \$100,000, \$85 for \$150,000 value, an increase of \$100 for \$200,000 value, an increase of \$115 for \$250,000, and an increase of \$130 for a \$300,000 value City portion of a property tax increase per year) on the high end. The new commercial and residential growth

in 2023 helps offset the levy increase from going onto existing property owners. Boulton stated that LGA is proposed to increase from \$302,161 in 2024 to \$302,415 in 2025. Boulton stated that 52% of the general fund revenue comes from the levy. The other areas of the general fund revenue either do not increase or increase/decrease slightly. This means that the levy shares a higher percent of the burden each year. Boulton stated that inflation makes 2025 budgeting harder for the general fund than 2024. Boulton stated that increases to utilities, salaries, ambulance levy, fire, future police contract, health insurance, street maintenance, and future capital needs are putting pressure on the general fund. Boulton stated that City operation costs continue to rise. Boulton stated that in addition, infrastructure and equipment needs over the next few years put the City in a tough position in attempting to keep levies increase low. Boulton stated that the City will be putting agreements together for the Street Shop rehab project for 2025. The total cost is roughly \$210,000. Boulton stated that the City needs additional growth to help offset these levy increases moving forward. Flotterud asked when and why the general fund reserve balance changed from \$500,000 to \$650,000. Boulton stated that the Council approved the updated fund balance policy in April 2024. Boulton stated that the City general fund yearly expenditures have increased from roughly \$700,000 in 2018 to \$1,000,000 in 2024 (roughly 5% increase per year). The fund balance policy is 35%-65% or \$650,000, whichever is higher. A general fund reserve balance of \$500,000 is 50% while \$650,000 is 65%. Flotterud asked if the higher general fund spending would require higher reserve balance funds. Boulton stated that adjustments to the policy would need to take place every few years to increase the reserve balance amount. Boulton stated that the fund reserve balance policy is a standard practice for cities, including Wanamingo's neighboring communities. Flotterud asked what spending had and would occur out of Fund 216 and Fund 336. Boulton stated that the City spent roughly \$190,000 in 2024 on the combined Ford F-550, Crysteel truck accessories, and Ford F-250. Boulton stated that the Fund 216 had \$56,000 while Fund 336 had \$110,000. The rest was paid out of the street capital line item in the general fund. Boulton stated that the plan in 2025 is to utilize the \$150,000 from the 336 fund and the \$45,000 from the street equipment fund to go toward the estimated \$210,000 street shop rehab project. The remaining funds will come out of the street capital line item in the general fund. Boulton stated that the Riverside Park parking lot (estimated at \$200,000) and pickleball court (estimated at \$60,000) projects were discussed for 2026/2027 out of the 336 fund. Boulton stated that a street reconstruction project could take place in 2027/2028. The 336 Fund \$150,000 would cover the yearly bond project on a \$1.5 million project. Flotterud stated that he struggles with setting aside funds for future work. Ohr stated that the City is still taking money out of multiple funds to piecemeal capital projects. Flotterud suggested dropping the final 2025 levy by \$30,000 to \$1,140,000. Flotterud stated that his neighbors' property

taxes are starting to approach \$10,000/year and that taxes were too high and may push residents out of town. Boulton stated that Wanamingo's proposed property tax increase is close to the State average for cities (8.8%). Boulton stated that Wanamingo's current and proposed tax rate is lower than Pine Island and Kenyon, and similar to Red Wing, but higher than Cannon Falls, Goodhue, and Zumbrota. Boulton stated that 42% of the City tax levy is for debt service to pay back past bonds. The City's debt is higher than most communities. Ohr stated that the Emerald Ash Borer dying trees in the boulevards need to be removed and the City has not formalized a plan or budgeted funds. Ohr stated that the City should hire one contractor to take down the roughly 100 trees at the best price. Ohr stated that the City could assess back some or all the cost to the adjacent properties. The City would need to cover the costs until the assessments are paid back and possibly a portion of the total costs. Boulton stated that if the developer of Emerald Valley II moves forward with construction the City would need to come up with \$120,000 for their share of the improvements for the park land. Boulton stated that this was not budgeted and would need to come from cash reserves. Flotterud stated that the City financial position was better than ten years ago and that the equipment is in good shape. Boulton stated that the Council discusses and approves the updated capital improvements plan each year. Boulton stated that there are a few equipment and building needs coming in the future. Kennedy stated that the older pay loader snowplow may not be able to be repaired in the future and will need to be replaced (\$50,000). Kennedy stated that equipment such as the leaf vacuum, sewer jetter, and street sweeper are in similar positions to the snowplow. Kennedy stated that staff will keep equipment running as long as possible. The Council should be ready to replace as they fail, which include budgeting/planning. Holmes stated that it is tough with needs coming up compared to the tax burden to residents. Boulton projected the 2026 levy to be around 5%, with today's snapshot projections. Mayor Holmes closed the public hearing at 7:15PM.

### RESOLUTION:

**24-073 = Adopting Final 2025 Budget:** Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Ohr. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-074 = Certifying Final Tax Levy for 2025:** Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. The 2024 levy would go from \$1,070,000 to \$1,170,000 (\$100,000 increase or 9.35%). Flotterud wished to see a \$30,000 decrease in the levy on the 336 Fund. Ohr and Haugen expressed desire to keep the final levy at the proved levy amount. Passed 3-1-0 (Flotterud No).

**24-075 = Approving Fire Department Budget & Township Budget Contract Allocation Formula for 2025:**

Haugen moved to approve, Seconded by Flotterud. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-076 = Approving Licenses (Cigarette & Liquor) for 2025:** Ohr moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-077 = Adopting 2025 1st Quarter Maintenance Work Plan:** Ohr moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-078 = Approving Smith Schafer En-**

**agement Letter for 2024 Audit:** Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Ohr. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-079 = To Not Waive the Monetary Limits on Tort Liability Established by Minnesota Statutes 466.04:**

Haugen moved to approve, seconded by Flotterud. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-080 = Approving a Land Lease Agreement with Kenyon-Wanamingo School District, No. 2172, for the Operation of an Ice Rink and Warming House:** Flotterud moved to approve, seconded by Ohr. Flotterud asked if the future pickleball court would also include an ice rink at Torkelson Park. Kennedy stated that his hope was to make it multi-use. Boulton stated that the multi-use court/rink would cost more than the original \$60,000 estimate (pickleball court only). Passed 4-0-0. **23-081 = Accepting Wanamingo Fire Relief Association Charitable Gambling Donation and Designating the Funds to the 333 Equipment Fund:** Ohr moved to approve, seconded by Flotterud. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-082 = Approving Final List of Non-Compliant Properties as Part of Sump Pump Inspection Program for Monthly Surcharge:** Ohr moved to approve, seconded by Haugen. Boulton stated that the monthly fee would start with the end of December billing. Boulton stated that the fee would be waived if the inspection was scheduled (and passed/corrected). Flotterud asked if an up-to-date report had been provided to the City on the sump pump inspection program, smoke testing, or curbs stop mapping/lead piping identification. Boulton stated that he had not received an up-to-date report on the sump pump inspection for a few weeks and has not seen reports on the smoke testing or curb stop mapping/lead piping identification. Boulton stated that he would send on the request to WHKS to provide reports for the Council. Passed 4-0-0.

**24-083 = Adopting the 2024 Goodhue County Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Flotterud moved to approve, seconded by Ohr. Boulton stated that he provided the Council a link to read through the roughly 250-page 2024 County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Passed 4-0-0.

**Ordinance #209 - 2025 Fee Schedule – 1st Reading –** Mayor Holmes went over the recommended changes from 2024 Fee Schedule for the proposed 2025 fee schedule including increasing the park shelter rent from \$35 to \$40, increasing the copy and fax (per page rate) from \$0.25 to \$0.50, increasing the sewer hook-up from \$700 to \$750, increasing water meter cost from \$360 to \$370, increasing the per 1,000 gallons water rate from \$6.00 to \$6.25, increasing the per 1,000 gallons sewer rate from \$7.00 to \$7.25, increasing the sewer debt service/base fee from \$28.00/month to \$32.00/month, increasing the monthly garbage fee from \$16.50/month to \$19.11/month, and increasing the monthly recycling fee from \$6.85/month to \$7.35/month. The increase to the water meter fee helps to cover increases to the actual costs of the water meters and readers. Boulton stated that the proposed per 1,000-gallon water rate increase of \$0.25 would bring in roughly \$7,000/year more for water in 2025.

(continued on page 24)

## WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 23)

Boulton stated that the proposed per 1,000-gallon sewer rate increase of \$0.25 would bring in roughly \$7,000/year more for water in 2025. Boulton stated that the proposed monthly sewer base rate/debt service fee increase of \$4.00/month to each hook-up would bring in roughly \$28,000 in new revenue in 2025. The garbage and recycling monthly increase reflect the yearly new contract with Highland Sanitation. Throughout the year, including the budgeting process, the Council has discussed and has recommended the above changes. The City Auditors recommend that the Council review sewer/water rates and make small adjustments regularly to capture revenue as opposed to large jumps. The wastewater treatment plant will need upgrades soon which could cost millions of dollars. Mayor Holmes asked if the Council wished to see changes made to the proposed fee schedule before the January City Council. No changes were requested.

**Ordinance #210 – Amending Chapter 116 Business Regulation – Regulating Cannabis Business – 1st Reading** – Administrator Boulton stated that a sample ordinance was recently made available by the State. Boulton stated that the sample ordinance was modified into the Wanamingo format. Boulton stated that all cities were required to have cannabis business regulation ordinances in place by January 2025. Boulton stated that the City Attorney, David Jacobsen, would be reviewing the ordinance with potential changes before the January City Council meeting.

### OLD BUSINESS:

**Administrator Boulton provided a 2024 Economic Development for the City.** 2024 saw continue high Federal interest rates, continued slowing down residential and commercial expansion. Supply chain delays are getting better, however shortage of labor, and high inflation continue to hurt the economy. Inflation, coupled with elevated Fed's rates have seen a slowing of the residential housing market. 2024 saw a slowdown throughout Wanamingo. The City has seen some commercial building work, a few new homes, and infrastructure improvements. The commercial work, new homes, and valuation increases will increase the City of Wanamingo tax base.

There were no major commercial building expansions in 2024. However, there were several minor projects. Hillcrest Center (\$93,000) and Riverview Services (\$33,000) completed new garages. Caseys completed additional remodel work (\$14,000). The Spot Sports Pub expanded their deck (\$10,000). Mead Johnson is working on a re-roofing project (\$10,000). NTS Tire/Bakers completed work on the exterior of the building, including signage.

In the residential side we have seen seven (3) new home building permits issued in 2024. The three homes have a collective building permit valuation of \$479,000. The three (3) units is considered an average year of residential growth in Wanamingo. There have also been a few new decks, mechanical work, new windows/doors, re-roofing's, and other home improvement building permits in

2024.

The City continues to work on the 2022 Utility Improvements Project. The water-main looping project was finalized in 2024. The new well house will be completed at the end of 2024. The total cost of the project was \$2.8 million (including new water tower). The City has been working to reduce ground water inflow and infiltration. The City completed smoke testing all the manholes to check for leaks and cross connections. The City is wrapping up the sump pump inspection program to ensure that there are no illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system. Along with the sump pump program that City is identifying all the water service connection locations and material. This is to eventually replace all lead and galvanized piping. The mapping of water service valve locations helps to find easily shut-offs in case of emergencies. The City spent roughly \$35,000 on repairing leaking water valves, asphalt patching, and concrete replacement work in 2024. The City obtained a \$3,000 grant for a new basketball hoop that will be installed at Prairie Ridge Estates park in 2025.

The City is planning on rehabbing the street shop building in 2025. The rehab work includes roofing, siding, service doors, windows, overhead doors, gutters/downspouts, ventilation system, spot concrete work, and electrical work. It is estimated to cost \$210,000. 2025 has some planned private and public work on the horizon. The City staff have been working with Jon Whitcomb of Metro East Commercial Re Inc. He purchased the 24 tax forfeited Emerald Valley II parcels from Goodhue County. Mr. Whitcomb is working with the other landowners to put together a development plan for the area. Mr. Whitcomb hired engineering to put together plans for construction. Mr. Whitcomb obtained bids from three contractors. Mr. Whitcomb is working with the City to try and make changes to bring down the per lot costs and bids for 2025. Jason Grant Trucking is still looking at a cold storage warehouse in the industrial park. Jason Grant is held up by current high construction and interest rates. Reckitt/Mead Johnson has plans for building expansion along with traffic, parking lot, building expansion, and other outside esthetic improvements. There continues to be some interest in residential single-family dwellings. City Staff anticipates slowdown of construction in 2025 leading to fewer new homes. The City has been working with Zumbrota, Pine Island, Goodhue regarding a regional wastewater treatment facility. The City received \$10 million from the State for predesign and land acquisition for the facility. The Cities have hired Winthrop & Weinstine lobbyist firm to help obtain State dollars for the next phase of construction. Having capacity and reliability in the water and wastewater treatment are keys to allowing for future growth and current sustainability of the community. The North Zumbro Sanitary Sewer District hinges on State funding through the bonding bill and Point Source Implementation grant to be financially feasible.

**Enforcement Process – Mead Johnson - Reckitt – 360 day written letter toward meeting goal of waste pH** – Boulton stated

that the City had not yet received a letter from Mead Johnson – Reckitt for the month. Mead Johnson – Reckitt pH of wastewater discharge was within range during most of the month of November. There were low pH readings on November 19th and 20th. Reckitt had freezing pipes and the pipe was left open. The frac tank was installed and incorporated into their process back in March. Mead Johnson – Reckitt goal is to install a new lift station with pH treatment, which will wait until 2025. The temporary, above ground tank is having a shell constructed around it for winter to keep it from freezing. Goodhue County Building Permits and Inspections did not require a permit for the work, since it is a temporary structure. Boulton stated that the Wanamingo staff are still monitoring the wastewater discharge from Reckitt-Mead Johnson. The pH levels of the wastewater discharge are being adjusted before being sent to the wastewater treatment plant. Prior to December 2023, results have regularly shown extremely low and at times high pH levels along with the presence of high levels of QAC (Quaternary Ammonium Compounds) have been sent to Reckitt-Mead Johnson. The pH levels should be within 5.0 and 9.5. City Staff have been working with Reckitt-Mead Johnson toward the achieved solution of pH levels within the limits. Reckitt has introduced failsafe measures for the tank, including having security staff check the tank on each security round check. The valve now has a lock, and the key must be signed out when opened/closed. The City appreciates the open dialogue and work, to date, from Reckitt-Mead Johnson. The City continues to keep the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency informed during this process, including Carolle Ternus the new Municipal Wastewater Compliance and Enforcement staff member. Boulton stated the Enforcement Process would remain on the monthly agenda until Summer 2025 (or later), or when the permanent structure is completed. Boulton stated Reckitt-Mead Johnson would be required to provide written monthly updates to the City Council.

\*Next City Council meeting on 1/13/2025

\*Mayor Holmes and City Administrator will be working on dates to be host the annual employee appreciation dinner at Area 57 Café. Administrator Boulton will send out invites to the Council and staff once the date and time have been finalized.

\*Fire Department/Township/City Annual Meeting is on 2/3/2025 at 6:30pm

Mayor Holmes extended sympathies to the Ronningen Family, including Councilmem-

ber Stu Ohr (granddaughter), on the loss of Kambrynn.

Adjourn: At 8:43 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Flotterud and seconded by Ohr. Passed 4-0-0.

Signed:

Ryan Holmes, Mayor

Attest:

Michael Boulton, City Administrator

\*\*\*

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ACROSS

- 1. Larger-than-life
- 5. Capone's family
- 8. Wild swine
- 12. "You're not allowed," to a baby
- 13. Deal with it
- 14. Cunningly
- 15. Shower with affection
- 16. Allege
- 17. City in Belgium
- 18. \*Snow Day exercise?
- 20. Poet Pound
- 21. Ovine sign of the zodiac
- 22. Tasseled hat
- 23. All together (2 words)
- 26. Military College of South Carolina, with The
- 30. For every
- 31. a.k.a. association football
- 34. \*All-day Snow Day garb?
- 35. Delete
- 37. Crude fuel
- 38. Read-only disc
- 39. Good's counterpart
- 40. Popular flowering shrub
- 42. Female ancestor
- 43. Two heads are better than one, e.g.
- 45. Bering Strait state
- 47. Rudolph's Clarice, e.g.
- 48. Like thick smoke
- 50. Fountain option
- 52. \*No two are alike, sing.
- 56. Surround (2 words)
- 57. Tangerine plus grapefruit
- 58. \*Like a river, with over
- 59. #51 Down, pl.
- 60. Heidi's "Magic Wooden Shoe"
- 61. Olufsen's partner
- 62. Sound of a bell
- 63. Not him
- 64. Surfer's stop

DOWN

- 1. Odds' partners
- 2. Tubby little cubby
- 3. "He's Just Not That \_\_\_\_ You"
- 4. Of the same period
- 5. \*Popular Snow Day pastime
- 6. Some tournaments
- 7. Zugspitze, e.g.
- 8. \*Severe weather
- 9. Deed hearing
- 10. Algae, sing.
- 11. Marble bread
- 13. \_\_\_\_ Jack, English pirate
- 14. \*As opposed to rain
- 19. Irregular
- 22. Type of conifer
- 23. Musketeers' swords
- 24. High-strung
- 25. Cerebellum location
- 26. Unit of life
- 27. Students' dwellings
- 28. \*Snow Day reading choice
- 29. Helping theorem
- 32. \*Like soft pj's
- 33. Intelligence org.
- 36. \*Slope fun
- 38. Shorter than California
- 40. Number of years
- 41. No, it doesn't crawl in one's ear
- 44. Horse of certain color, pl.
- 46. Spontaneous additions
- 48. Obtuse one
- 49. Tom Cruise's "The \_\_\_\_ of Money"
- 50. Highway hauler
- 51. Bad sign
- 52. Of a particular kind
- 53. Smoothie berry
- 54. Superman's last name
- 55. Part of a seat
- 56. \*Like chocolate on a Snow Day

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8	1	2	7	5	4	9	3	6

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