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JANUARY 22, 2025

Volume 11 • Issue 2

Local Raffle Supports St. Jude Children's Hospital

For the third year a raffle is taking place to raise funds locally for the St. Jude Children's Hospital.



(continued on page 3)

Claremont Mayor's Position

The city of Claremont will be taking applications for the position of mayor until January 27th. Applicants submitted as of 3pm Monday January 27th will be reviewed at a special meeting at 7pm on the 27th.

(continued on page 21)

2025 Triton 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 box of chocolates from the Mantorville Chocolate Shoppe to six lucky winners in our Valentine's Day giveaway.

(continued on page 7)

Announcements

• The United Methodist Church of Dodge Center at 20 First Street NE offers a dine in and carry out meal from 5:00-6:00pm the third Wednesday of each month.

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

A Ride for Wyatt

By Tyler Weeks

Losing a loved one is one of the most grueling challenges anyone can ever face. No matter the circumstance, a change as grievous as this one can flip a person's life around, making it challenging to do anything without feeling lost and without a light in your life. Matthew Coy was one of the unfortunate people who had to go through this



A snowmobiler enjoying his time at 2022's Ride for Wyatt

change after losing his 18-year-old son, Wyatt Coy, to suicide. As the website dedicated to him states, Wyatt was a loving, com-

passionate, and funny kid. He lit up a room with his smile and always had the best belly laugh.

(continued on page 6)

Smokin' Silverback Relocates to Kasson

One of the Messenger's advertisers has moved from their location in Owatonna to Kasson this month. The Smokin' Silverback is now located in the building originally occupied by Daniel's Restaurant for many years. The new venue is more than twice the size of their old building in Owatonna. Owner Ben Meyer is a Kenyon native and brings his expertise to serve the best selection of smoked meats in the area.



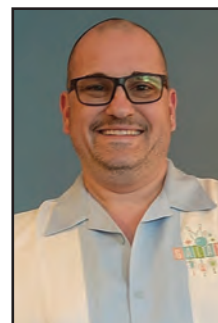
If you like delicious cuts of barbequed, flavorful meat, you will love the Smokin' Silverback. Just the aroma alone as you walk through the door is enough to make you hungry.

(continued on page 10)

Unsung Heroes

By Tyler Weeks

Safety is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of a well-structured community, which is why having a fire and police force is so vital for its success. To have one means having protected and well-cared-for residents, the backbone of any resilient neighborhood.



Adam La Plount

(continued on page 8)

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Triton FFA

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4:00-6:00 PM Drive Up Available
4:00-8:00 PM In-Person Dining to the Public and Donors
- Take Out Meals Available -

Snow date announcement would be made on KTC and on Triton website. Same time and location.

\$15.00 Steak Dinner
Kids Hot Dog Meal \$7.00

A More Perfect Union

By
Pastor Elliott R.C. Malm

Presuming it happens as planned, by the time this is read, Donald J. Trump will have taken the oath of office and begun his second term as President of the United States of America. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, the chairwoman of the Joint Congregational Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC), has vowed there will be a peaceful transfer of power. Fellow JCCIC member, Senator Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, has similarly pledged that this will occur, asserting “a peaceful transfer of power is the hallmark of a healthy democracy.” It should reassure Americans to have members of the U.S. Congress make public statements like these, especially at critical times such as Inauguration Day.

For nearly two and a half centuries—after it was proposed in 1776 by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson—Americans have been entreated to reflect on the Latin motto E Pluribus Unum (“Out of Many, One”). Having government officials exhibit a will for peace and unity in the nation, despite their differences, is what the Founding Fathers wanted for citizens of the United States. The framers of the U.S. Constitution were not tyrants. They could not be characterized as misguided brutes driven by corrupted, selfish wills; they were brilliant political theorists and articulate, determined statesmen who sought to establish a form of government which recognized the dignity of all people, affording the American people with liberties that many of us have all too often taken for granted. In 1787, when Ben-

jamin Franklin had left the Constitutional Convention, a woman reportedly asked him, “Well Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Then came his famous, prescient reply: “A republic, if you can keep it.”

In his recent book *Democracy and Solidarity: On the Cultural Roots of America’s Political Crisis*, the distinguished sociologist James Davison Hunter suggests the real problem is not so much that polarization exists in the United States but that there is a lack of ability or “cultural resources” to work through what divides us as people. He asks, “Can America’s political crisis be fixed?” What cultural resources will support liberal democracy in the future? Both are important questions which deserve serious reflection. Referencing the work of Os Guinness, Hunter acknowledges Christianity offers cultural resources for civilizing and revitalizing our public life. While it may be disputed by skeptics and scoffers, it should not surprise us. As it is written, “The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom; and his tongue speaks justice (Psalm 37:30, ESV)”

Consider the fact that George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, two of the nation’s greatest presidents and most gifted statesmen, men who capably led the nation through war and civil unrest, were not dismissive of what the Bible taught, but generally accepted its basic precepts. Lincoln drew heavily on the Scriptures, powerfully communicating their message as President during one of the most difficult, trying periods of our nation’s history—the Civil War. Erupting at the beginning of his presidency, this conflict claimed more American lives that

World War I and II combined and it literally almost tore apart the union. Lincoln understood it was his duty to keep the nation united. Like other presidents, he had taken the oath of office, saying, “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.” His writings and speeches have an unusual quality to them, showing the depth of a man who had wrestled with spiritual questions and had his mind shaped by the Scriptures. (See Stephen Mansfield’s book *Lincoln’s Battle with God: A President’s Struggle with Faith and What It Meant for America*).

Even though it may never be personally recognized or publicly acknowledged, the Scriptures describe human life in terms of an enduring, cosmic spiritual battle. “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but...against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).” So, it is then, that every Christian should heed the apostle Paul’s instruction: that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim 2:1-2, ESV).” In doing so, those whom the Holy Spirit has given faith, hope, and love may find themselves acting to form a more perfect union.



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DODGE CENTER

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Traditional Worship 9a.m.; Fellowship 10a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
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Rev. Elliott Malm • 507-633-2253
https://gracedc.church
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Roger Langworthy • 507-374-6400
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Sunday Morning Worship at 8:15a.m., Fellowship Time Following

St. John Baptist De La Salle
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Living Water Assembly Church
104 1st St. NW, Dodge Center
Roy Andrews • 507-374-6561
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Dodge Center SDA Church
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Dodge Center • 507-374-6895
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www.congregationalchurchdc.com
Keith Mosier, Pastor

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.

CLAREMONT

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Pastor Doug Walters
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4532 SE 84th Avenue, Claremont • 528-2404
Pastor Alan Broadwell
Sunday Service at 10:30a.m.

WEST CONCORD

Faith Community Church
305 State Street N, West Concord • 507-527-2244
Pastor David Brederland
Sunday 9:30a.m. Worship; 10:45a.m. Sunday School
www.fcwc.org
Facebook: WC Faith Community Church

Hegre Lutheran, ELCA
51939 Highway 56 Blvd., Kenyon • 507-527-2353
Sunday: 9:15a.m. Sunday School; 10:30a.m. Worship

Trinity Lutheran, ELCA
301 Highland St., West Concord • 507-527-2778
Pastor Chad Christensen • trinitychurchwc.net
Sunday worship video is posted on Facebook:
Trinitylutheranchurchwestconcordmn
Sundays 9:45a.m. Worship in building and live streamed on Facebook.
Sunday School 10:30a.m.
Tuesday Men’s Bible Study, 7:00a.m.
at church and via Zoom
Call church for more information on ministries and events.

Church of Christ
55087 200th Ave., West Concord • 507-527-2723
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concordchurchmn.com

Zwingli United Church of Christ
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OBITUARY

Marvin Gene Vanderhyde

Marvin Gene Vanderhyde, born on December 23, 1939, in Mantorville, MN, passed away on January 6, 2025 in La Palma, CA.



Marvin was a beloved father to his son, Troy, and daughter, Nikki. He also cherished his role as a grandfather to Kyle.

Marvin was preceded in death by his father Ernie, mother Doris and sister Faye.

Marvin was known for his strong work ethic and commitment to quality in elevator construction for 35 years. He retired in 2000.

Marvin's friendly demeanor, sense of humor, and playful spirit made him a joy to be around. He was always ready with a joke or a funny story or a one-liner to share. His motto, "I'm perfect & wonderful." reflected the good-natured, infectious energy he brought to those around him.



His generosity and kindness left a lasting impact on his friends and family, as he consistently brought smiles and laughter to everyone he encountered. He was also fiercely loyal & dedicated to those he cared about.

Marvin will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Dad

*A light went out on Earth for me the day we said goodbye.
And on that day a star was born, the brightest in the sky.
Reaching through the darkness with its rays of purest white.
Lighting up the heavens as it once lit up my life.
With beams of love to heal the broken heart you left behind.
Where always in my memory, your lovely star will shine.*

Local Raffle Supports St. Jude Children's Hospital

(continued from page 1)

St. Jude Children's Hospital was founded in 1962 by Danny Thomas and has grown



through the years offering care for children suffering from cancer.

Today the charity receives over \$2 billion in donations and doesn't charge for the care provided for patients treated at their hospitals.

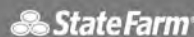
As in the two previous years there are 750 raffle tickets available at \$20 each. You may purchase them at Concord Locker, Wescon Lanes, Holly J. Burow tax accounting office, West Concord Municipal Liquor Store and from members of the West Concord Historical Society. The cash prizes include one \$1,000 payout, six \$500 prizes, six \$250 prizes and five \$100 prizes. The drawing will be held on February 6th at 7pm at the Wescon Lanes in West Concord. In the past all tickets have been sold out before the drawing date.

NOTICE

The Concord Cemetery Association will be having its annual meeting on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 6:30pm at the Concord Church of Christ 55087 200th Ave. West Concord, MN 55985



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TRITON CLASS OF 2025

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Hayley Herrick

FAMILY

Hayley Herrick is a senior at Triton High School. Her parents are Nick and Melissa Herrick. She has one sister, Cadence Spearman.

HOBBIES

Outside of school she enjoys ice fishing, snowmobiling, camping and going to the races. Her hobbies are hanging out with friends and family, shopping and going to the movies. She enjoys country and rap music. Her favorite movies are Bad Boys: Ride or Die and Moana 2. Her favorite actors are Ryan Reynolds, Chris Hemsworth and Jennifer Lawrence.

FUTURE PLANS

After graduation she plans on working a year before attending RCTC to get her generals done.

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That's the Latest Corn(y)



By Emery Kleven

Emery is now a retired farm broadcaster after starting at KDHL in Faribault in 1987. He's a 1971 graduate of West Concord High School. You can view past columns at his website RoadFarming.com. You can email him at emery@roadfarming.com.

My wife and I were looking up the hibernation facts about squirrels on Google the other day. Google will then give you suggested other questions. One suggestion was squirrel hospitals near me. First off, I didn't know squirrels had their own hospitals and secondly, I was not looking for one near me. I'll feed them but I'm not making doctor ap-

pointments for them.

The meme going around on Facebook is that some people have their ducks in a row. But I have squirrels and their all over the place. I don't think my squirrels hibernate. From dusk to dawn, I don't see them, but once the sun is up, there out there looking for food and knocking on the door, waiting for more acorns that I collected all fall. Either that or they need me to drive them to the hospital.

The 300 year old red oak in my back yard had a bumper crop this year. I had about 90 pounds of acorns in our chest freezer until I was told to remove them. The weather had turned cool enough they could be stored elsewhere. So needless to say, I have enough for my squirrels and the several down at the nearby park.

Speaking of memes, here's a couple of my favorite ones I've seen recently. 'Studies show cows produce more milk when the farmer talks to them. It's a case of in one ear and out the udder.' The other recent one that made me say; 'Ain't that the truth?' 'When you're an adult, spilling your coffee is like losing your balloon when you were a kid.'

Eight years ago when I was broadcasting ag news and ag markets for the Iowa Agri-Business Network, we would also put some of the information on social media. I found this market update that I had posted on Twitter. First here's what the info looked like:

Crude oil +76¢ to \$53.01. USDA 2016 corn 174.66bpa = 15.1B bu. Soybeans 2016 52.1bpa = 4.31B bu. Iowa corn 203bpa. Iowa beans 60.5bpa

That's clear enough right? Well if you follow ag markets and crop reports it does. To others it may look Greek. Twitter on the other hand, put underneath this tweet, click to translate from Indonesian. Evidently I was multi-lingual and didn't even know it. I can go to Indonesia and get along just fine.

I've mentioned before that I still follow the Ag news, I just don't have to follow-up with interviewing someone and writing the story. Here's a story that recently made news. The state of Illinois now has an official state bean. The Illinois Legislature passed HB 4439 which designates the soybean as Illinois' official state bean. Not many pressing issues going on in Illinois I guess. Illinois is the number 1 soybean-producing state as it grows 16% of the nation's soybeans so it's been the unofficial state bean for some time.

Another item that is always of interest is the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) corn yield contest. The highest yield in 2024 was 490.6276 bushels per acre (bpa) grown by David Hula of Charles City, Virginia. This is the 13th time he has won the contest. Now that 490 sounds high and it is, but just the year before, Mr. Hula won with a yield of 623.8439 bpa in the strip-till irrigated division. So indeed, the growing season was not as good in 2024.

The state winner in Minnesota this past year was Dale Fabian of St Charles with a yield of 340.0355 bpa in the conventional non-irri-

gated division.

To wrap this up, getting away from agriculture, I found this list entitled Kids Say the Darndest Things. Not an original title as Art Linkletter was saying this way back when. Here are some samples from the list; Never trust a dog to watch your food, Patrick, age 10. When you want something expensive, ask your grandparents, Matthew, age 12. Never try to hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk, Rosemary, age 7. When your dad is mad and asks you 'Do I look stupid?' don't answer him, Heather age 16. Never try to baptize a cat, Laura, age 13. And finally; Listen to your brain, it has lots of information, Chelsey, age 7.

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BINGO

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TRITON CLASS OF 2025



Madeline Price

FAMILY

Madeline Price is a senior at Triton High School. Her parents are Andy and Natalie Price. She has three brothers; Francis, Samuel and Drew and one sister Magnolia.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

HOBBIES

Out side of school she enjoys spending time with family, attending Pilates classes and working out. Her favorite pastimes are reading, baking and shopping. Her favorite shows are Gilmore Girls, Vampire Diaries, Hunger Games and the Neighborhood. Her favorite artists are the Weekend, Kanye West and Lana Del Ray.

FUTURE PLANS

After graduation she plans work for her Associate's Degree and then pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Business.

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Museum Musings

Stick to your Job!

By Colleen Sathrum Hayne

“The most interesting thing about a postage stamp is the persistence with which it sticks to its job,” proclaimed Napoleon Hill, a twentieth century American self-help author.

A group of West Concord Elementary School students found ourselves fascinated by postage stamps in the late 1950’s for reasons beyond stamps’ stickiness. Our obsession may have begun with Mrs. Wright’s fourth grade assignment, requiring each of us to present a short talk to the class about a hobby. I can’t remember what I shared with our class, but I definitely remember that a classmate showed us her collection of stamps. It must have been an impressive talk and display because all of a sudden there were several avid fourth grade stamp collectors. I went home and desperately wanted a stamp album – which I eventually received. I begged my parents and grandparents for stamps off old, cherished letters and started to order stamps via stamp company forms I found in the back of magazines at home. I was thrilled when my grandmother let me have stamps from the envelopes sent to my great-grandmother by her brothers in Norway. I learned so much about history and geography and loved it all.

I was reminded of this era in my life recently when the Museum received Dr. David Olson’s stamp album, sent all the way from his home in Yakima, WA where he has been a physician for many years, following in his dad’s (our W.C. Doc Olson’s) footsteps. It only took a glance at his stamp album to realize that he was a much more advanced stamp collector than I ever was – and knew a whole lot more about proper collecting procedures than I ever did. David told me that his mother’s brother in Canada was a devoted stamp collector and helped David “learn the ropes”.

The 1940’s through the 1970’s were the heydays of stamp collecting in the United States. One of the “collectors in chief” was President Franklin Roosevelt whose hobby inspired many Americans to become collectors themselves. In the mid-twentieth century, one out of 7 households had a stamp collection of some kind in the home.

Paging through David Olson’s stamp album is definitely like taking a walk through time, remembering the stamps with which we grew up and being reminded of the days of postage due and parcel post stamps. One page particularly caught my eye because it connects with something unique that we have at the Museum. The album has a page of airmail stamps from 1938 - 1944, the 1938 stamp featuring President Roosevelt’s design of the flying eagle and the 1940’s stamps displaying twin-engine transport planes.

Thursday, May 19, 1938 was a big day in American postal history. It was the twentieth anniversary of the first government airmail flight and President Roosevelt wanted it to be celebrated in style. Most post offices across the country planned something special to be a part of the observance as they had been directed to remind their patrons of “the wonderful network of airlines operating day and night throughout the country, and the speed and economy with which letters and parcels may be dispatched over immense distances...”. Many local post offices created their own design to be stamped on envelopes sent on May 19th. We have such an envelope that John T. Jones of West Concord sent to Mrs. Joseph Nelson in Oakland, California. Stamped on it and covering almost 1/3 of the envelope’s surface is a square design that says this:

National Air Mail Week, May 15-21, '38

**BENEATH THE SKYWAYS – LIES THIS COMMUNITY OF OPPORTUNITY
FAMED FOR FINE . . . DAIRY CATTLE, DAIRY PRODUCTS, TURKEYS
WEST CONCORD, MINNESOTA**

The words were complemented by a drawing of a dairy cow and a grain truck and elevator.

In addition to the design, the envelope had a dark “shoe print killer cancel” mark that looked like a football being held vertically. This kind of cancel mark was first introduced in 1875 and was intended to make postage unable to be reused. Forever, it seems, ways to fight corruption have been needed.

Domestic airmail postage was discontinued in the mid-1970’s because first class mail was then routinely flown by plane. International airmail stamps lingered until 1995.

Delivering mail by plane had come a long, long way since these New York Telegraph Newspaper comments of 1910 when Congress was first seriously considering sending mail by air. There was more than a touch of sarcasm in their words of warning against such an outrageous method of mail delivery:

“Love letters will be carried in a rose-pink aeroplane, steered by Cupid’s wings and operated by perfumed gasoline. ... [and] postmen will wear wired coat tails and on their feet will be wings.”

That’s how fanciful the newspaper considered airmail to be.

Instead, the National Air Mail Week of May 15, 1938 pointed to real success. As the posters for the week trumpeted: “USE AIR MAIL. Receive Tomorrow’s Mail Today. Air Mail – first to arrive, to be delivered, to be read, to be answered.” Today we are still happily reaping the rewards of mail sent by plane.



West Concord’s Post Office in 1938—east of the present location



A page from David Olson’s Stamp Album

(additional picture at www.westconcordmn.net, www.claremontmn.net, www.dodgecentermn.com)

A Ride for Wyatt

(continued from page 1)

In never hesitating to be vulnerable with others and helping whenever possible, Wyatt became the sunshine in many people's lives.

Unfortunately, he was not often able to find his own light. As Matthew related, the months following this significant turn in his life came with plenty of struggle.

"In the darkest days after his death, I asked a trusted friend, 'What am I supposed to do now?' After a thoughtful pause, he responded, 'It seems the only thing to do is... make something out of it.'

Knowing that Wyatt liked to snowmobile, another of his acquaintances proposed the idea of a memorial ride. At first, Matthew expressed his sentiments of doing something similar but lacked the "emotional horsepower" to pull it off. "In truth, I was scared that people wouldn't care, and that wasn't something I could handle." After enough discussion and persuasion from his friend, the two had established solid ideas for a route, food, music, and activities, demanding the need to create a planning committee. As this process continued and things started to take shape, the idea for a silent auction came into discussion. Understandably, the possibility came with plenty of hesitation and a valid question: where would these potential funds go? The subsequent idea of a scholarship piqued many committee members' interest, but they soon realized nobody knew the first thing about starting one.

Matthew: "We reached out to several folks in the community who host and sponsor scholarship programs, and the common theme of their responses was to administer it under a local foundation. Doing so would allow us to focus on our duties while they handled all the legal, financial, and reporting details."

Once the Rochester Area Foundation was on board with their idea, the group created the Wyatt Coy Memorial Scholarship, an endowed fund whose proceeds would finance

scholarships given to those pursuing a career in mental health issues. Any undergraduate or graduate student living or attending high school in the Zumbro Education District would be eligible, helping to create awareness and reduce the mental health stigma. Their concerns about raising enough proceeds to establish it became disproven when the first year of the "Ride for Wyatt" fundraiser doubled the minimum investment required. Now, over six years later, Matthew and his committee's efforts continue what they set out to do with each annual ride: make something out of it. With the help of the scholarship and fundraiser, they have raised considerable awareness for suicide prevention, giving students the funding they need to "close the gap between the demand for mental health services and the grossly inadequate supply of professionals."

This year's family-friendly Ride for Wyatt will be a 30-mile loop starting and ending at Riverside Park in Mantorville. While this shorter route is the event's official one, snowmobilers looking to make the most of their time will be pleased to know of optional, longer loops. During the snowmobiling portion of the event, non-riders can partake in activities, such as a silent auction, games, and bingo at the Mantorville Saloon. Activities won't stop there, though, as the popular Bloody Mary Bar, chili supper, and live music will commence once riders return from their joyride. While a lack of snow somewhat hindered last year's ride, it did not limit the event's wide-ranging success and impact, a lesson they hope to carry on to future rides. Although Matthew is hopeful the weather fares better when February 8th rolls around, there are still plenty of things to do, people to see, and friendships to foster with or without snow.

"Our format is mostly the same as previous years, though we have the added possibility of a special guest. Professional SnoCross racer Cody Lucas from Flint, Michigan, is planning to attend, and our current plans are to display some of his professional race machines there. We're super excited about this and honored that Mr. Lucas has reached out to come. His national visibility will help raise

awareness for suicide prevention and support our efforts to remind us that it's OK to not be OK!"

When asked how the Ride for Wyatt fundraiser impacted Matthew's life, he responded with the following words:

"It's difficult to describe how much our lives have changed since then. On a personal level, I will say that Wyatt's death was the single most impactful event in our lives. Its effect is evident every day in one form or another. This journey of life can feel lonely and dark at times, and it's easy to get stuck in those ruts. But with the help of this event and the related support from the community, I would say that we have received the comforting reminder that people haven't forgotten my boy—that they care, and that they want to help. The

Ride for Wyatt helps to honor, in death, how Wyatt lived his life: by helping others. Creating a space where he can continue to do so allows his legacy to live on."

As Matthew's contributions to mental health awareness help demonstrate, the simple phrase "It's OK to not be OK" can go to incredible lengths in our darkest moments when everything seems to be dim. Sometimes, we need a reminder that the greatest means of support we can provide isn't a donation or other contribution. It's our words.

If you'd like to support or come to this year's Ride for Wyatt at 1:00 p.m., February 8th, 2025, please visit ride-for-wyatt.square.site for more information regarding the event, scholarship, and purchasable merchandise and swag.

Thank You!

The WC American Legion Auxiliary would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following sponsors who contributed to the WC Caring & Sharing Tree.

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TRITON
CLASS OF
2025
SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Courtney Chiccos

FAMILY
Courtney Chiccos is a senior at Triton High School. Her parents are Diane Chiccos and Jon Chiccos. She has one brother, Devon and a sister Emma.

ACTIVITIES
She is active in Link Crew, AFS and soccer.

HOBBIES
Outside of school she teaches Kindergartners at church. Her hobbies are shopping, hanging out with friends and family, cooking, watching movies and swimming. Her favorite artist is Chris Stapleton.

FUTURE PLANS
After graduation she plans on attending school for Architecture.

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2025 Triton Messenger Valentine's Day Drawing

(continued from page 1)

Participating restaurants include Plaza Morena Compestre Grill and Center Family Restaurant in Dodge Center, Tammy's Place, Sakers Sports Bar & Grill and Smokin' Silverback in Kasson and Torey's Restaurant & Bar 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 Triton 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 chocolates and a great meal.

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and a BOX OF CHOCOLATES!

Enter online by e-mailing your name and phone number to:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com

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

Serving the Triton Area

The Messenger

Claremont, Dodge Center, West Concord



Unsung Heroes

(continued from page 1)

As a result, the city of West Concord made no delay in its search for a new Ambulance Director, whose responsibilities ensure that the city and surrounding townships receive the proper emergency response. Though West Concord typically staffs trained volunteers for fire, rescue, medical, and natural disasters, having a full-time paid position for this role was imperative for its longevity. In previous months, the Dodge Center Ambulance had to cover daytime shifts to help make up for the loss of longtime volunteers. Any calls they took as the primary ambulance set West Concord back \$34 an hour alongside their base wages, leading them to start the search for a new director.

Once hired, the city could keep funds within the community and not rely on Dodge Center for everyday coverage. As a result, a council meeting was held in August to discuss this job's responsibilities alongside the fire and police budget. With this new position came a slight structure change in West Concord's ambulance service. The new Ambulance Director had to be willing to take more calls, be present in the community, and contribute more than in the past. Finding the right match within such criteria was more challenging than expected, and plans to hire someone by late November were quickly discarded. Locating the right fit potentially meant looking nationally and relocating this potential candi-

date. Ultimately, however, after many months of searching and a new year on the calendar, West Concord found its match: Adam La Plount of Owatonna. To understand more about Adam's responsibilities and expectations as the city's new Ambulance Director, read the following interview:

Please tell us about yourself and the backstory leading to this new position.

Adam: I am 50 years old and live in Owatonna with my fiancé. Public safety is the area of expertise I've worked in for most of my career, allowing me to gain the proper experience necessary for a role like this. After earning degrees in law enforcement and emergency management, I've been a paramedic since 2001. Having worked in all levels of EMS, from volunteer to pay-per-call and full-time, I've held leadership roles at most of the services I worked for.

What new responsibilities does this role entail? What will you be doing?

As the full-time Ambulance Director, I am responsible for operating the ambulance service side of the department. These duties include maintaining staffing, ordering supplies, conducting community outreach, finding outside funding sources like grants, representing the department at local, regional, and state meetings, and, most importantly, responding to 911 calls for service.

What part of this new position do you believe you will enjoy the most?

I am very excited to get to know the community. Serving other people is the most rewarding part of the EMS profession, especially in rural areas like this.

Since January 6th, Adam has been working in person at the West Concord Fire Department Office, ready to continue this next chapter of his career and support the local community. With the help of Adam and many other volunteer or paid positions, the residents of West Concord and so many other southern Minnesotan communities are pro-

tected and cared for. It's often easy to overlook these crucial workers for what they do and strive to prevent. However, just as a theater technician is essential for a great play performance, the paramedics, dispatchers, and workers of these departments are the unsung heroes of a great community. Though it's easy to undermine their importance when you're not in need, they do something that many corporations and services fail to do. They're there when you need it most.

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Valentine's Dinner Event

FEBRUARY 14 | Ages 21+

\$40 PER PERSON INCLUDES:
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Dinner Choice: Burgundy Beef Tips, Dijon Crusted Pork Chop or Lemon Chicken Pasta...all dinners include salad, potato, vegetable, dessert, and champagne plus CASH BAR

EVENT TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT CITY HALL
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 Updates available on the Mayor's Facebook Page

RAFFLE:
 \$5 each, need not be present to win. Available to purchase at City Hall or Cardinal Club Members.
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BELL TOWER CENTER | 401 MAIN STREET | DOORS OPEN 6:30 PM
 *Childcare needs to be pre-registered by February 5, when purchasing tickets.
 Ticket price increases to \$45 on February 6th. Limited number of tickets available.

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Snow Emergencies

It's that time of year again! Although our fall has felt a little more like summer, winter is right around the corner. As a reminder, the City of West Concord has a snow ordinance for all city streets. Every effort is made to keep streets clear of snow and ice during and after a snowstorm. The city can't do it all alone and we rely on you, to help us, by following the snow rules set in place by council.

Snow Emergencies: No vehicle or trailer shall be parked on any city street or alley during a declared snow emergency. A snow emergency is defined as any time the quantity of snow warrants the deployment of snowplows. During snow emergencies, no parking shall be allowed on the road or alley for 48 hours after the start of a snowfall. Warnings and/or citations will be issued to vehicle owners parked in the path of snowplow on the first pass. Any vehicle violating this article may be towed without notice to the property owner, at the owner's expense.

Piling of Snow: Persons shall not push or deposit snow or ice into a street or alley from private property or public boulevards. Do not pile snow at street corners or at the ends of public drives so it interferes with the view of the traveling public. Property owners will be charged removal costs if such piles must be removed by City staff or other agent of City.


As a reminder, the city code states:

800.01 Repair and maintenance of sidewalks. The owner of property within the city abutting a public sidewalk must keep the sidewalk in repair and safe for pedestrians. The owner and occupant of the property must use diligence to remove snow, ice, dirt or rubbish from the sidewalk. Snow and ice must be removed within 24 hours after a snow or sleet storm. Sidewalks must be kept free of debris, including the trimming of tree limbs.

1310.11 Subd. 1 'A "snow removal period" as used in the subsection means a period of time commencing at the beginning of each snowfall and lasting for 48 hours after a snowfall even if the snow has been removed from city streets.'

1310.11 Subd. 2 'Parking prohibition. During a snow removal period, it is unlawful to park or leave standing a vehicle on any street for 48 hours after a snowfall.'

Thank you for your help in keeping our streets and sidewalks free from snow and ice this winter.



NEW HOURS

West Concord Muni

Open 7 days a week

MONDAY: 4 PM - 9 PM
TUESDAY - THURSDAY: 11 AM - 9 PM
FRIDAY - SATURDAY: 11 AM - 12 AM
SUNDAY: 11 AM - 5 PM

Stop in for a delicious pizza during lunch! Enjoy Happy Hour Specials Daily!





Join us for Book Group at the West Concord Library Saturday, February 8 from 9-10am *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

A gripping historical mystery inspired by the life and diary of Martha Ballard, a renowned 18th-century midwife who defied the legal system and wrote herself into American history.

Maine, 1789: When the Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice, Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As a midwife and healer, she is privy to much of what goes on behind closed doors in Hallowell. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolds in the close-knit community. Months earlier, Martha documented the details of an alleged rape committed by two of the town's most respected gentlemen—one of whom has now been found dead in the ice. But when a local physician undermines her conclusion, declaring the death to be an accident, Martha is forced to investigate the shocking murder on her own.

Over the course of one winter, as the trial nears, and whispers and prejudices mount, Martha doggedly pursues the truth. Her diary soon lands at the center of the scandal, implicating those she loves, and compelling Martha to decide where her own loyalties lie.

Clever, layered, and subversive, Ariel Lawhon's newest offering introduces an unsung heroine who refused to accept anything less than justice at a time when women were considered best seen and not heard. *The Frozen River* is a thrilling, tense, and tender story about a remarkable woman who left an unparalleled legacy yet remains nearly forgotten to this day.

432 pages Hardcover, First Published December 5, 2023



Water and Sewer Update

With the cost of postage going up again, The City encourages residents to sign up for email billing.

Do you bank locally at Heritage Bank?

Never miss another water and sewer payment with ACH. Each month, around the 20th, we will automatically take your payment. You will still receive your bill (via mail or email), but we will subtract from your savings or checking.

Contact City Hall (507-527-2668) for more information or to set-up email billing and/or ACH.

The ice rink is open! The ice rink is open everyday as long as the temperature is below 32 degrees. When temps are above 32 degrees the rink will be closed and signs will be posted - please stay off the ice when signs are up! Please be respectful, do not wreck the ice and pick up after yourself when you leave - if you see vandalism occurring or people on the ice when the rink is closed; contact law enforcement immediately.

The warming house will be open M-F 5p-8p and Sa-Su 12p-5p.

Ice skates are available for checkout at the library.

Enjoy!!!



ERIN BROSE CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND BROSE FAMILY BENEFIT

Sunday, March 2, 2025 at Owatonna VFW
12:00-4:00 PM Celebration of Life 1:00-1:45 PM

Pulled Pork sandwich/meal,
silent auction & bake sale

Erin's Bible Verse:

Erin Brose (wife of Andy Brose and daughter of Nannette & Brian Wandrey) passed away January 12, 2025 due to injuries sustained in an accident on December 30, 2024 that happened while she was trying to help others. With medical and funeral expenses, Andy and the kids have an uphill battle in front of them.

Romans 12:13 Share with the Lord's people, who are in need. Practice Hospitality



If you are interested in volunteering and/or donating to this event, please contact Tara at tjv622@gmail.com or Holly at anewhol23@yahoo.com

Monetary donations in form of a check are to be made out to: Erin Brose Benefit.

Smokin' Silverback Relocates to Kasson

(continued from page 1)

There is smoked brisket, corned beef, pulled pork, pulled chicken, rib tips, smoked sausage and prime rib.

Daily Lunches are served from 11am to 4pm. Tuesday is 3 tacos, chips and salsa. Wednesday is wings at \$8.00 a pound all day. Thursday is Venezuelan Chicken Arapas from 5pm to close. Friday is a rib dinner from 5pm to close. Saturday lunch is the Hangover Burger from 11am to 4pm and later in February there will be smoked prime rib from 5pm to close.

The menu includes sandwiches, burgers, ribs, wings, meat platters, nachos, loaded baked potatoes and loaded mac-n-cheese. The sides are beans, cole slaw, potato salad, corn bread, corn and fries. A wide variety of bar-beque sauces is available in every heat setting you desire. There is a kid's menu for \$5.95 for the little ones.

A Valentine's Day special meal menu is scheduled for Friday February 14th and will be by reservation. Check the Facebook page for more information and the details in the next week or two. The bar is planned to open in February as well and that venue has a capacity of 70 seats. They also are planning a breakfast menu with a 7am opening later in the winter.



The new location at 504 South Mantorville Avenue in Kasson seats 200 so you can always get a table. You will not leave hungry. They are open Monday thru Thursday 11am to 8pm, Friday and Saturday 11am to 9pm and will be opening on Sundays with a buffet style breakfast brunch planned later in the winter. Check out their menu online at www.smokinsilverback.com or on Facebook. Their phone number is 507-634-7427(RIBS).





FLAKE OUT

Festival & WINTER PARADE

* DENNISON, MN *

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

9:00 AM Euchre at Fireside on the Patio, 100% Payout
Bring partner if possible, not required. \$20 team entry. Questions contact Jen at 507-649-0602.

HOT DISH COOKOFF
\$5.00/entry. Tasters will pay \$5.00 to taste all entries/vote.
12:00 PM Bring Entry to City Hall • 12:30 PM-1:30 PM Tasting/Voting
2:00 PM Hot Dish Winner Announced (1st & 2nd Place Payout)

2:00 PM Kickball Tournament Sign up at 625 Bar & Grill

4:00 PM Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall
\$30/packet, 10 games, designer purses and \$150 gift card packages

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!
Hosted by the Dennison Lions. Call or text Diane at 612-532-0268

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

Buy a Raffle Ticket from any Lions Member, Fireside Lounge, Dennison Depot Gas Station, 625 Bar & Grill or Heritage Bank in Dennison for \$5.00 for your chance to win!

Grand Prize \$500.00 Cash!

2nd Prize \$250 Cash • 3rd Prize \$100 Cash

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

SATURDAY Hand Battered Jumbo Shrimp or
Slow Roasted Prime Rib

SUNDAY Enjoy Our Sunday Breakfast Beginning at 9a.m.
and Sunday Supper Features, including 1/2 Price Bottles of Wine
(after 4p.m.)

Mark Your Calendars for Flake Out Fest February 1st!

Open Wednesday-Thursday 11:00am-8:30pm
Friday-Saturday 11:00am-9:30pm
Sunday 9:00am-8:00pm (Bar Open Later)
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to you and yours.*



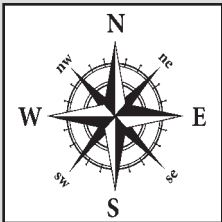
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

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.

Keeping your name in front of your potential customers is an essential part of marketing your business in today's competitive market.

Place your ad in the next issue of The Messenger.

Call Terry at 507-951-7417 or email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

FAMILY
Kileyah McChesney is a senior at Triton High School. Her father is Bryan Collins. She has two brothers, Isaiah and Micah.

Kileyah McChesney

HOBBIES
After school Keleyah enjoys exploring different activities and hanging out with friends and family. Her pastimes are reading, crossword puzzles and shopping. Her favorite music is rap and country. Her favorite movies are Bad Boys Ride or Die, Me Before You and Creed. Her favorite actors are Michael B. Jordan, Channing Tatum and Kevin Hart.

ACTIVITIES
She is active in Triton volleyball and as wrestling manager.

FUTURE PLANS
After graduation she plans to attend college for a business and Associates Degree while working a part-time job.

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A Minnesotan: Sledding



By RosaLin Alcoser

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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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% im-

provement compared to not taking statin medication. Changes to what you eat and when you eat make a greater difference to your cholesterol measures.

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

Dairy – overconsumption can lead to constipation

Red Beets – overconsumption can result in red colored stool

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

Vitamin C – overconsumption can result in loose stools

Magnesium – overconsumption can have a laxative effect

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

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

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

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 or by contacting Laura Sutherland at 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.

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Planks for Spinal Health



By Shauna Burshem, 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 every-

day 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.*

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2025 Winter Preparedness and Keeping Yourself, Family and Dogs Safe



I can hardly believe winter is upon us! Where did the warm summer sunshine go? Cold weather is here, and I must be honest: My dog loves winter and I do not. This means we must meet in the middle. Meeting in the middle will look different for many dogs and owners.

For me, it means I put on extra layers of clothes in the house, but I get to save on the heating bill! In the winter, my Alaskan Malamute, "Lake Monster," might move off the cool tile floor and onto one of the seldom used dog beds around the house. If it snows in Oklahoma, he will surely be begging to do zoomies around the yard, and I will be digging out his snow booties and sled in preparation for snow play!

Winter Wear: For my dog owning friends with Chihuahuas, Italian Greyhounds, Chinese Cresteds, Xolo's and other thin- or non-coated breeds, they surely will be cranking up the heat and putting polar fleece dog "jammies" on the whole crew.

Stay Active: Keeping active during the winter months can be a challenge. Let's all join AKC Fit Dog today to make sure we don't add too many unwanted winter pounds.

Make sure you and your dog(s) are visible on your walks with good reflective winter gear. I have an Ororo heated vest and love it

because it makes those cold winter dog walks much warmer — word has it they are working on a heated dog vest.

Keep Training: Use your nose to sniff out what all the excitement is about when it comes to AKC Scent Work! Scent training can make those cold or chilly walks more interesting for both you and your dog(s). Fun fact, the moisture in snow just might make it a bit easier for your dog(s) to make a "find."

Winter is also a great season to use the extra time inside to work on some fun AKC activities, like Trick Dog and Rally training! Use this winter to start a new activity with your four-legged friend.

Fire Prevention: All types of heat sources have a fire danger or burn risk for homes, kennels and/or dogs. These devices are even riskier for homes or kennels with multiple dogs. As a dog owning home, I believe the safety of my dog(s) and home depends on a pre-winter deep clean. Dust, dirt, dander and dog hair can all build up to be scary in out of sight places. I make sure to dust and/or vacuum all my corners, behind the furniture and under appliances.

I want to make sure I have gotten all the fine particles and stray hairs that may have been missed by vacuuming, sweeping or during dusting. Don't laugh, but have you tried a leaf blower to get to some of those hard to reach and out of the way places? Secure your breakables, wear a dust mask, and open a door. You will be surprised what you have missed. Don't forget to clean or change air filters, blowers and vents. Spiderwebs and "dog fur dust bunnies" are a major contributor to home and kennel fires during the winter. Heaters, motors and appliances can overheat or short out when "dog fur dust bunnies" get sucked into the wrong places.

Don't forget to put a secure barrier between your dog and your heat source. Keep your pets safe with a sturdy prefab fence around stoves and other heaters.

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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 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 Fed-

eration will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign. Recipients will be announced in April.

Applications are available at www.fbm.org. For more information, contact Pam Debele at pam.debele@fbm.org or 651-768-2111.

Century Farm program applications are also open. Information is available online at 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.

BRAD FINSTAD

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Finstad Reintroduces Legislation Making Federal Infrastructure Funding More Accessible for Rural Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Brad Finstad (MN-01) and Congressman Jared Golden (ME-02) introduced the Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act, legislation that would make funding under the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program -- also known as the Rural Grant Program -- more accessible for rural communities by removing barriers that currently put rural America at a disadvantage.

"Roads, highways, and bridges are vital for the survival of rural communities and the efficient transportation of goods," said Rep. Finstad. "It is unacceptable that small communities across Minnesota and around the country are forced to compete with big cities for the critical resources they need to maintain their infrastructure. It is time for the Department of Transportation to stop overlooking rural America. This legislation will empower rural communities to remain resilient, keeping their roads safe and bolstering their economies. I appreciate Congressman Golden for helping me lead this effort to ensure the Rural Grant Program serves those who need it most."

"Cities ten times the size of Bangor have no business competing with Maine's smallest towns for rural infrastructure grants," Rep. Golden said. "It's clear that changes are needed to make sure this program is actually helping remote communities and this bipartisan bill will make it right."

Original cosponsors include: Representatives Tracey Mann (KS-01), Derrick Van Orden (WI-03), Michelle Fischbach (MN-07), John Moolenaar (MI-02), and Pete Stauber (MN-08).

The Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act is endorsed by the National Association of Counties.

"America's counties own and operate more roads and bridges than any other level of government, and the vast majority of our nation's public road miles are located in rural counties," said National Association of Counties CEO and Executive Director Matthew Chase. "The Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act will build on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by expanding access for counties to the Rural Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. We thank Representative Finstad for his leadership and look forward to working with our bipartisan congressional partners to ensure passage of this important legislation."

The Protecting Infrastructure Investments for Rural America Act would remove barriers that force rural communities to compete with larger towns for federal infrastructure funding. Specifically, the legislation would:

Lower the definition of "rural area" from 200,000 in population to 30,000 to be in line with definitions used by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development;

Clarify that the goal of the Rural Grant Program is to promote economic development in rural areas, as well as improve the quality of life for citizens who live in them;

Allow the grant to be used for common road, bridge, highway, or tunnel projects, expanding the eligibility for more projects in rural areas;

Strike the minimum project amount of \$25M, considering that most projects in rural areas are under this amount;

Lower the cost-share burden for communities with populations less than 5,000, increasing the likelihood projects in these communities can be completed in a timely manner; and

Establish a set-aside of at least 5% of funding under the program to go to communities of less than 5,000 in population, ensuring these communities receive federal assistance for their infrastructure needs.

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 association 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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MFU Outlines Policy Priorities for 2025 Session

Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) is preparing to advocate for a strong agriculture budget, affordable healthcare, support for beginning farmers and other priorities defined by our members.

“As a grassroots organization, we’ll be focused on priorities established by members at our state convention in November,” said MFU President Gary Wertish. “At a basic level, lawmakers are going to have to come together to pass a new two-year budget for our state. And we want to help make sure that it works well for farm families and others in rural Minnesota—continuing strong investments in agriculture programs, ensuring farm families have access to care and helping young people build lives in agriculture.”

Building on the Special Orders of Business that delegates to MFU’s 83rd Annual State Convention approved in November, top legislative priorities for the 2025 session include:

Stable funding for agriculture programs, including full, dedicated funding for Minnesota’s Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation program; expanding Minnesota

Grown, farm to school and other opportunities to build new markets, and investing in programs that help farmers become more resilient to the effects of climate change. Despite driving nearly a fifth of the state’s economy, the agriculture department budget is less than .5 percent of the state’s budget.

Ensuring affordable and accessible care in rural Minnesota, including childcare, healthcare, elder care and emergency services. This calls on lawmakers to expand healthcare programs, support independent pharmacies, invest in Emergency Medical Services (EMS), address childcare shortages and prevent nursing home closures.

Promoting land ownership and access by increasing funding for the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, ensuring the Ag Homestead Tax Credit serves all farmers, promoting land ownership programs and defending Minnesota’s longstanding ban on corporate ownership of farmland.

Supporting cooperatives, investing in cooperative development and leveraging the 2025 International Year of Cooperatives to educate Minnesotans on the current and future value of co-ops.

Ensuring fair markets by ensuring funding for antitrust enforcement, modernizing antitrust laws and passing Right to Repair for farm equipment.

For more of MFU’s legislative priorities, visit mfu.org/legislation/.

“We’re also looking forward to getting to know new legislators and building on existing relationships,” said MFU Vice President Anne Schwagerl. “One of the most important things we do as an organization is high-

light the voices of our members through their interaction with lawmakers and participation in committee hearings.”

MFU will hold its annual Lobby Day for members on Feb. 4 to continue building those relationships and sharing stories of how what happens in St. Paul matters to family farmers and rural communities.

The 2025 legislative session must conclude no later than May 19 and the fiscal year ends on June 30, 2025.

About Minnesota Farmers Union

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

Updated Minnesota Groundwater Protection Rule Map Now Available

Restrictions begin September 1 of each year

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has published an updated map that will help farmers across the state comply with the Groundwater Protection Rule. The rule restricts fall application of nitrogen fertilizer in areas vulnerable to groundwater contamination, and it outlines steps to reduce the severity of contamination in areas where nitrate is already elevated in public water supply wells.

The MDA has made changes to the Fall Nitrogen Fertilizer Application Restrictions Map which is available on the MDA website. The Ellsworth municipal Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) was removed from the map due to a change in water source for the community. Additional information on the fall application restrictions and exceptions to the restrictions can be found on the MDA’s website.

While no new municipal DWSMAs were found to have elevated nitrate, two non-municipal wells were found to have elevated nitrate based on new information from the Minnesota Department of Health. The Brookhaven Development and the Mobile Manor DWSMAs, both located in Scott County, will be added to the list of Mitigation Level 2 DWSMAs under the Groundwater Protection Rule, meaning the MDA will form a local advisory group to recommend farming practices that can reduce nitrate levels in groundwater. Additional information can be found on the MDA’s Mitigation Level Determination page.

The restriction of fall application of nitrogen fertilizer on these acres will begin September 1, 2025. Farmers are encouraged to check the new map prior to fall 2025 to determine if their fields are subject to these restrictions.

For more information on the Groundwater Protection Rule visit www.mda.state.mn.us/nfr.

TRITON TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Jack Hager
Long Term Special Education Sub



Jack Hager is the long term special education sub.

Jack graduated from the University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse with a degree in Social Studies Education.

He is looking forward to a new experience getting the chance to work with students in a new field.

Jack loves to travel and will take any chance he gets to take a road trip.

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DNR Releases Dodge County Groundwater Atlas



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has published the Groundwater Atlas of Dodge County. It covers groundwater flow, groundwater chemistry and the pollution sensitivity of aquifers, expanding on the geologic atlas previously produced by the Minnesota Geological Survey.

Eastern portions of Dodge County feature a distinctive type of terrain called karst, which allows for rapid water movement between the surface and underlying aquifers and increases the risk of groundwater contamination from any surface pollutants. Elsewhere in the

county, thick layers of glacial deposits and bedrock help protect the underlying aquifers.

Groundwater atlas content can help people assess pollution sensitivity, identify viable water sources, evaluate supply, understand recharge sources and flow, manage groundwater sustainability, guide well and septic system construction decisions and provide wellhead protection for public water supplies.

The atlas is available:

Online: The report (PDF) is provided in PDF format. Oversized PDFs of the water chemistry and hydrogeologic cross section maps are also offered. Geographic information system (GIS) files, including the associated metadata and an ArcMap file, can be downloaded for use.

In print: Copies can be purchased online opens in a new browser tab from Ocean-Grafix (877-562-4278).

More information, including a status map of published and planned atlases, is available on the County Groundwater Atlas Program web page.

Partial funding for the groundwater atlas project was provided by the Minnesota En-

vironment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Clean Water Fund.

DNR urges snowmobile riders to prioritize safety

Even small amounts of snow can hide dangers

Snowmobile enthusiasts still await a large, widespread snowfall, but are finding places to ride in some parts of Minnesota. Frozen lakes are seeing plenty of attention, as are road ditches and trails where there's adequate snow. With a long holiday weekend on tap, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds riders to ensure their desire to get out doesn't get in the way of making safety their top priority.

Small amounts of snow can hide dangerous obstructions on both ice and land; and even though temperatures generally have been low, swampy areas might have poor, if any, ice.

"People are understandably excited to get out and enjoy the snow where it's available," said Capt. Jon Paurus, DNR Enforcement education program coordinator. "Given it's been a couple years since we've had really

good riding opportunities all across Minnesota, we ask everyone to brush up on the basics of snowmobile safety before they start their sleds."

Paurus offers the following tips to ensure a safe ride:

Know where to ride. Riders who stay on marked trails are less likely to strike an obstacle or trespass onto private property. Riders can check trail conditions before heading out.

Leave the booze at home. Drinking and riding is one of two main factors in crashes and plays a role in about 60% of those that are fatal.

Watch the speed and stay to the right. Going too fast is the other main factor in crashes. Many serious and fatal crashes occur when a speeding snowmobiler loses control or strikes an object.

Be careful on the ice. Obstacles such as pressure ridges have been common this year. There must be at least 5 to 7 inches of new, clear ice to support the weight of a snowmobile and rider.

Take a snowmobile safety course. It's required of anyone born after 1976 and recommended for everyone. People with snowmobile safety certification are less likely to be involved in serious or fatal crashes.

Additional safety tips can be found on the DNR website.

Claremont Mayor's Position *(continued from page 1)*

The person the city council decides to appoint as mayor will be announced at the regular city council meeting Tuesday February 4th. Ryan Hedberg has been serving as the interim mayor. Neither Hedberg nor any other city council members have indicated interest in the position of the mayor for the next term.

Hot Dish Cook Off and Live Music part of the Dennison Lions Flake Out Festival Saturday, February 1st



The Dennison Lions Club is planning the 2025 Flake Out Festival & Winter Parade for Saturday, February 1st.

The club is holding a raffle in conjunction with the days events to raise funds to support Lions Clubs activities, support other area non-profit entities and those in need, which the club donates to and supports throughout the year.

A \$500 1st Prize, plus other cash and prizes will be given away. Winner will be announced around 9 PM Saturday night at Fireside Lounge. (Need Not Be Present To Win).

Raffle tickets are available now, and can be purchased at 625 Bar & Grill, Dennison Depot, Fireside Lounge, Heritage Bank, or any Lions Club Member. They Make a Great Christmas Gift too!

The Annual Lighted Parade will take place at 6:30 PM, and anyone can participate. A Cash Prize will be given to the best float.

Other returning favorites include Euchre at Fireside Saturday morning, with 100% Prize Payout. Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall in the afternoon.

New this year, Cook up your best HOT DISH recipe and bring it down to city hall for judging, with a cash prize for 1st and 2nd place. Live music will also be a part of



The Devney Brothers

the evening festivities, with The Devney Brothers returning to Dennison for the festivities!

If you have any questions, contact Lion President Diane at 612-532-0268.

(see ad on page 10)

Prune oaks now to avoid risk of oak wilt infection

Winter is the ideal time to prune or remove oaks

Now is a great time to prune or cut oaks without the risk of oak wilt infection, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Winter is also the safest time to remove infected oaks.

Oak wilt is an invasive fungal disease spread by sap-feeding beetles that can kill all oak species. The disease is common in east-central and southeast Minnesota and is expanding north and west. In 2024, oak wilt was confirmed for the first time in Carlton and Kandiyohi counties, bringing the number of Minnesota counties with known infections to 33.

Fortunately, the public can help stop its expansion.

"Oak wilt is very expensive to treat, but prevention is often effective and much less costly," said Brian Schwingle, Forest Health Program coordinator. "One of the best ways to help protect oaks is to do any necessary pruning or cutting in winter when the risk of infection is virtually nonexistent."

More details about oak wilt, including identification, prevention strategies and how best to deal with infected trees and wood, can be found on the DNR's oak wilt management webpage.

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 pro-



fessionals 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, Re-

newing 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 or 507-455-3215.

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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

FAMILY

Tessa Tushaus is a senior at Triton High School. Her parents are Chris and Sheena Tushaus. She has one sister, Kendra.

ACTIVITIES

She is active in FCA and golf.

HOBBIES

Outside of school she is involved in Youth Group at Rochester Assembly every Wednesday. She enjoys country music and worship music. Her favorite songs are House of Fear by Hudson Westbrook and Fear is not My Future by Brandon Lake.

FUTURE PLANS

After graduation she plans to attend RCTC for a two-year program to become a Radiologist tech.

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Beware of Black Ice



Winter weather brings snow, wind and freezing temps – along with the hidden hazard of black ice. Black ice is a thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that forms on roads when moisture freezes, often creating deceptively slick conditions. It can appear as a wet road surface but offers little to no traction, creating dangerous driving conditions. Black ice commonly forms overnight and early in the morning. It can occur in shaded areas, at intersections from vehicle exhaust, on bridges and overpasses, and near bodies of water.

These tips can help you drive safely in areas where there may be black ice.

- Stay calm – Sudden movements can cause skidding.
 - Slow down – Reduce speed, especially in areas prone to black ice.
 - Avoid aggressive braking – If you must slow down, ease off the accelerator instead of slamming on the brakes.
 - Steer gently – If your vehicle begins to slide, turn the steering wheel in the direction that you want the front of the vehicle to go and avoid overcorrecting.
 - Increase following distance – Leave extra space between you and the car ahead.
 - Turn off cruise control – This allows for better control in slippery conditions.
- Winter roads can be unpredictable, so keep both hands on the wheel, eyes on the road and your full attention on driving. Together, we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.*



Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



tions, even if they are observing the intersection from a distance.

The blue lights make it easier for officers to see and enforce red light violations, improving traffic safety. The blue lights allow officers to observe intersections from a safe distance and pull over violators without putting themselves or other drivers at risk. The increased enforcement provided by blue lights aims to deter drivers from running red lights, leading to fewer crashes and improved traffic flow.

Question: I'm wondering about a light that seems to only be on at night on the traffic lights. It's a small purple or blueish light that's near the traffic lights. I've tried to figure out what its use is or if it's a camera. I've asked other people what it means and I've never met anyone who knows what it is. Thank you!

Answer: What you are talking about is a blue light and they are visible during the day. How they work and what are they used for:

1. Signal Activation: The blue lights are wired into the traffic signal system and turn on when the traffic light changes to red.
2. Officer Visibility: From a distance, officers can see the blue light, indicating that a vehicle has entered the intersection while the signal was red.
3. Enforcement: This allows officers to effectively and safely enforce red light viola-

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) Twitter: MSPPIO_SOUTH

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United Way of Olmsted County to Host Centennial Gala

United Way of Olmsted County will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2025 with a Centennial Gala on March 15, 2025 at J. Powers at the Hilton in Downtown Rochester.

This special one-night event will commemorate a century of United Way's local impact. Over the past 100 years, United Way has invested more than \$150,000,000 to strengthen the community. From serving as a critical funding source for local nonprofits to offering free resources for those in need, United Way has been a cornerstone of support and services in Olmsted County and the greater region.

The evening will feature a cocktail hour, seated dinner, auctions, a historical display showcasing United Way's legacy, live music, and more. In celebration of United Way's founding in 1925, the event will embrace a Roaring Twenties theme. Guests are encouraged to dress to impress in their best 1920s glamour for a night of vintage elegance. Of course, flapper dresses are optional, and guests can also choose to dress in formal or cocktail attire.

Proceeds from the Centennial Gala will support United Way's mission to improve lives in the community as well as their expansion into



United Way of Olmsted County

Dodge, Fillmore, and Winona Counties. This event marks the beginning of the next chapter in United Way's commitment to the region.

The Centennial Gala's Presenting Sponsor is Mayo Clinic, a long-time United Way partner and collaborator. "We are committed to supporting community efforts that address identified community health needs, contribute to community vibrancy, and advance our shared values of equity and inclusion, collaboration, and stewardship," stated Mayo Clinic when sharing their commitment to funding United Way initiatives.

Additional sponsors include IBM, RBC Wealth Management, Alliance Event Design, KTTC, and Reagan Outdoor Advertising.

This Centennial Gala will take place at 6 p.m. on March 15 at J. Powers at the Hilton in Downtown Rochester. Tickets are available for purchase at www.uwolmsted.org/gala-tickets, or purchase a table (8 tickets) for a discounted rate.

Sponsorships are still available but going fast – if you would like to sponsor United Way's Centennial Gala, visit uwolmsted.org/sponsorships.

About United Way of Olmsted County

United Way of Olmsted County unites people and resources to improve lives and advance the health, education, and financial stability of every community member. We mobilize local organizations, businesses, and community leaders to strengthen systems and empower residents to build a thriving, equitable Olmsted County for all.

How to Talk to Elderly Parents About Assisted Living

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Maybe you've seen signs that your parent could use some help, like difficulty getting out of the car or even a fall. Or it could be that you're concerned your parent is spending too much time at home alone. For some families, the approach and conversation around assisted living may take months, while for others the need is more urgent. Either way, it's a difficult conversation to have. How do you tell your parent that you'd like to discuss the benefits of moving to an assisted living community?

Many people start by thinking of what they'll say to their parent, or they anticipate the desired outcome of the conversation. But how you have this conversation is just as important as what you say. Don't overwhelm your parent by bringing everyone in the family together for an initial conversation – instead, aim for a comfortable environment, and be prepared to listen. Approach the conversation gently. This is a drastic change to a person's life, so don't discount their feelings. Be sure to listen to their thoughts, concerns, and emotions. It might even help to put yourself in their shoes – how would you like someone to have the conversation with you?

Sometimes circumstances present no other option than seeking support from a long-term care facility, but talking about other options first can be beneficial.

Just as you're asking your parent to consider assisted living, be prepared to consider what they want, too. Keep in mind that they're the ones who would be making the change, and it's likely an overwhelming time for them.

When talking to your parent about moving to assisted living, focus on bringing respect, empathy, and patience to the conversation.

You and your siblings or other family members may have several reasons for wanting your parent to move to assisted living. It may be helpful to make a list and then decide how to bring up your concerns.

If you have multiple concerns – such as how your parent is managing their medication, maintaining their home, and keeping up with personal hygiene – choose your top two or three concerns to bring up in an initial conversation.

You may hope to make your case right away for why assisted living is a good choice for your parent, but remember to be patient. Talking about the transition several times can help ease your family member into it, rather than it seeming like it is being forced upon them.

Each family is unique, but if at all possible, bring up assisted living well before your loved one needs it. It's easier to have discussions about future care needs while your loved one is independent and in good health. You may even ask your parent how they'd like to be approached about the topic in the future if you have any concerns about their care needs or safety. Talking early allows you to think objectively about what their needs may look like if they become ill, have a fall, or even experience cognitive decline.

A successful conversation is one where everyone's thoughts, values, and opinions are actively respected. This is a life-changing event with immense impacts on one's sense of independence – and that doesn't always feel good. Another way a conversation may be considered successful is if there is a plan in place to talk again. Keeping the conversation going is critical to the transition.

Ask questions that will show your respect for the emotional nature of this transition. 'How are you feeling about this?' Using affirming statements and acknowledging their feelings is critical. 'This must be so hard, and we're here to support you.'

If you're in a situation where many family members will want to weigh in on what's best for your parent, it's important to keep the focus on a civil, respectful conversation. Families have unique dynamics, and each person will have their own opinion.

Having a conversation with your siblings can also help you make sure everyone is on the same page and avoid any family disputes. Discussing assisted living with your parent will be much smoother if all the family members are in agreement.

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Claremont Chamber makes significant donation to Triton Schools

A very supportive Claremont Area Chamber of Commerce presented our school board with a check on Monday night that represented all of the donations that they have made over the past year. The total of the donations to various programs totalled \$67,780.

Pictured left to right: Dale Jensen (board member), Corey Lilledahl (student council president), Lloyd Henslin Jr. (board member), Dean Schuette (Claremont Chamber of Commerce), Brian Ginder and Jim Jensen (board members), Damon Bryngelson (Claremont Chamber of Commerce), Wendy Kenworth (board chair) Rebecca Knutson (board vice-chair) and Scott Curran (board member)



Triton Business Professionals of America Students Stand Out Among Hundreds Competing



Dodge Center, MN – On Wednesday, January 8, Triton Business Professionals of America (BPA) students faced off against students from ten other schools across Southeast Minnesota at the Region 3 Leadership Conference.

(continued on page 28)

First Row: Genevieve Starkson, Jessica Hukee, Abrielle Emanuel, AJ Kozisek, Katya Wheeler, Diego Ibarra-Castillo, Alan Ortiz, Holly Harvey, Camila Medina, Ollie Akkerman, Miley Dostal. Second Row: Dora Chable, Anna Anderson, Hector Ibarra, Angel Mata Colin, Vika Kundel, EJ Okeefe, Salma Fernandez, Alisson Velasco, Anyely Dominguez, RoseLyn Liudahl, Jade Scovill. Third Row: Rebecca Goossens, Broden Dickie, Logan Skjeveland, Alekzander Wilcox, August Johnson, Frankie Gann, Corey Lilledahl, Ashley Romero, Abby Wirkus, Bryar Quimby

Cobra Communications



Craig Schlichting
Superintendent

2025 is here, and it is hard to believe how quickly the school year is going. The end of the semester marks the halfway point for the school year. It is also getting closer to the end of my career here at Triton. I have been blessed to have had such a great place to work since the fall of 1993 when I came to town as a junior high physical education and health teacher. One of my favorite memories from early on at Triton was the success of the football program. The team only lost 2 games in my first three years. The first year we lost to ZM in the state quarter final game in the pouring rain in which ZM was allowed 5 downs and the home field advantage with some question-

able clock work that extended the quarter that allowed them to score just before the half. The following year Cobras were undefeated and won the first state title for Triton in the fall of 1994. Working with coach Henderson was incredible and I was inspired how advanced and sophisticated his approach to studying the opponent was, and his unbelievable knack for creating offensive plays designed to take advantage of weaknesses he would find watching tape of the opposing team.. It was great to be a part of that program. Those were some great times and I remember thinking how magical it was and what a supportive and amazing community I found myself becoming a part of. I was hooked on Triton and couldn't believe how lucky I was to be a part of such a great school that had just officially become a district the year before.

I came to the district at a time when three communities were in the process of coming together and learning to work out the kinks of consolidating three districts into one. It

was definitely a transitional time for the district when a number of difficult decisions needed to be made. I know there were hurt feelings and the adjustments were not easy for everyone. For me though, it was all new and all of it was exciting and I was just happy to have a job in a district that I enjoyed. It was difficult getting released every year my first three years not knowing for sure if I was going to have a job in the fall, but thankfully I did and it all worked out. I was able to work with some great people over the years at Triton, and now I find myself as one of less than a handful of people that were here when I started. The gravel drive outside of the district office is now paved and so many things have changed with our facilities. It is hard to believe how many things have changed, but the thing that hasn't changed is the great people in our communities.

There have been numerous changes to our educational system over the years. I will not miss trying to do more with less. Every year it seems like the legislators come up with

ideas on how they are going to make education better passing mandates, many of those underfunded, or not funded at all. Educators continue to ask for money that allows them to do what works best for their district, but they keep passing rules that apply to everyone and treat us all the same. Schools continue to rely on their communities for support. I don't think there is a problem in education, I think the problems continue to come from the capital that make it difficult to do our job. I once said we just need to do what is best for kids and was surprised and corrected by a wise colleague that said, NO...we will just do the best we can afford, because if we were doing what was best, we would be properly funding schools. I realize this may sound like a broken record from the school's standpoint, but I am proud of the way we have continually done our best with what we have and created an amazing opportunity for our students.

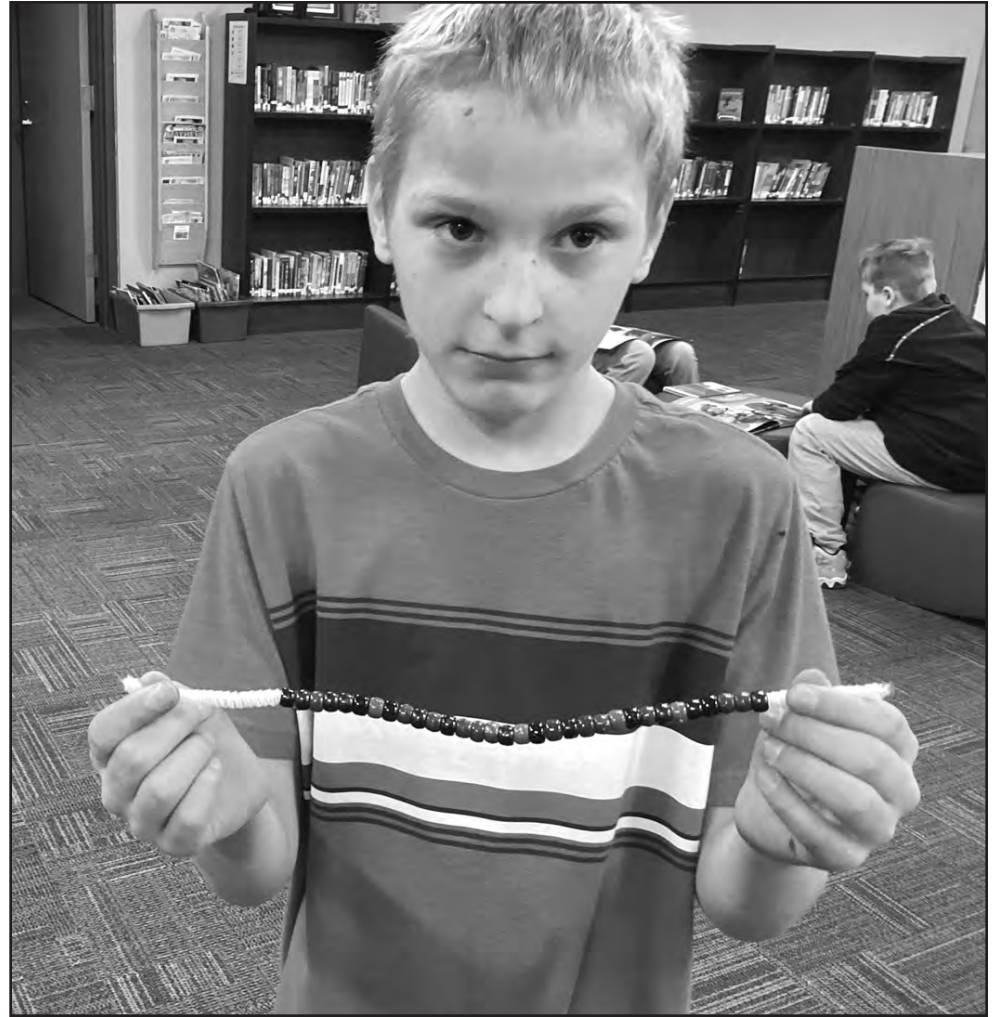
(continued on page 27)

Coding with 4th Graders



During STEM in the elementary library, students explored and learned about computer programmers, code and binary code. They looked for patterns in codes and created a bracelet using two different colored beads to represent the 0's and 1's.

Students were required to complete the code for one letter, but some students went above and beyond and built the code for their entire name. Since each letter needed 8 beads, their bracelets were quite full.





TRITON

EDUCATION MINNESOTA

MEMBER *Spotlight*



COLE ROLLINS

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING?

3 Years

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT TRITON?

2 Years

WHAT AREA/GRADES DO YOU TEACH?

5th Grade

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

When I was in high school, I got the opportunity to work in Mr. Van Beek's class. This really got me hooked on working with students. I also really enjoy the atmosphere in a school and want to provide that same experience for all of my students.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING AT TRITON?

My favorite part about teaching at Triton is that it is where I went to school. I have a ton of school pride and love being a Triton Cobra. Triton has great students!

WHAT IS A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

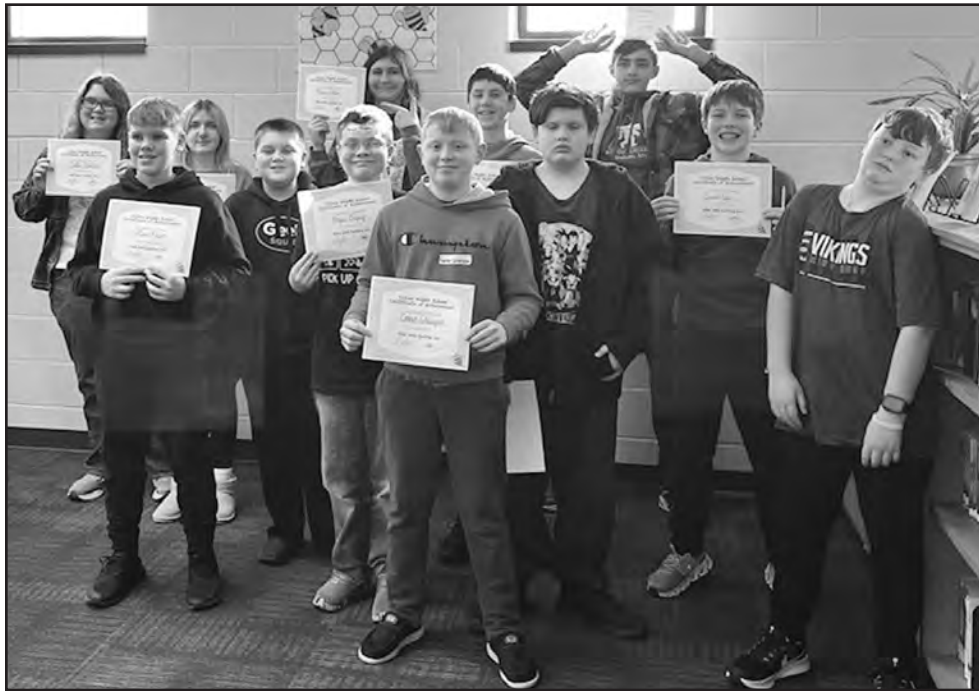
My first year of teaching was at Kingsland Elementary.

“

COLE ROLLINS HAS BEEN AN EXCELLENT ADDITION TO TRITON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. HE CAME IN EXCITED ABOUT TEACHING FIFTH GRADE AND HAD A LOVE FOR TRITON LIKE NONE OTHER. COLE LIKES TO CREATE AN ACTIVE, EXCITING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERY STUDENT FEELS CARED FOR AND IMPORTANT. YOU WILL OFTEN SEE COLE IN THE GYM WITH HIS STUDENTS DURING PHY ED OR OUTSIDE DOING A FUN SCIENCE EXPERIMENT. COLE ALSO HAS FULFILLED ROLES IN COACHING FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL. TRITON IS VERY LUCKY TO HAVE A TEACHER LIKE COLE ROLLINS!

”

Triton Middle Schoolers Compete in Spelling Bee



Front Row (L-R): Liam Klein, Kaiven Wondra, Bryce Dupey, Connor Schleusner, Elijah Duenes, Jaxon Fate, Cheyton Dominie. Back Row (L-R): Julia Stanton, Faith Jeter, Olivia Allen, Matias Jara, Blake Freerksen



Julia Stanton finishes in First Place



Connor Schleusner

Cobra Communications

(continued from page 25)

I believe this is due to the great and dedicated staff that have, and continue to work here, and I am grateful to be associated with such amazing people.

I am looking forward to the next phase of my career, and know that I will continue to work, but look forward to helping in a different way and in a new capacity. I look forward to finding a way to help and serve others and will always be grateful for the opportunities that I have had here at Triton.

Please reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding our school district. You can email me at schlich@triton.k12.mn.us or call me at 507-418-7530 to reach me at the district office. I would be happy to set up a time to meet with you or your organization. Communication is an important part of my job responsibility, and I welcome the opportunity to gain insight from your perspective.

Go Cobras!
#WeAreTriton



Top three finishers (L-R): Olivia Allen, Julia Stanton, Connor Schleusner. All three have qualified to move on to the next round of competition in Rochester, Minnesota on February 4

PARAPROFESSIONAL CARE FUN inspire
GUIDE friend COMPASSION
assist play educate PATIENCE
ENCOURAGE HELPFUL
CHALLENGE read art RESPECT
creative funny
MOTIVATE fair amazing
trust love knowledge

THANK YOU
paraprofessionals

You inspire, challenge,
and support Triton
students every day!

Paraprofessional Recognition Week
January 20 - 24, 2025

Triton Times
Craig J. Schlichting, Superintendent

Triton Public Schools: 813 West Highway Street, Dodge Center, MN 55927
Office - 507-418-7530 • Fax - 507-374-2447
schlich@triton.k12.mn.us

Produced and published for Triton School District by Mainstreet Publishing
P.O. Box 1, West Concord, MN 55985
E-mail: hometownmessenger@gmail.com
Phone/Text: 507-649-3327 • Fax: 507-645-9878

Triton Business Professionals of America Students Stand Out Among Hundreds Competing



Holly Harvey and Alan Ortiz prepare for their Broadcast News Team presentation

(continued from page 25)

Over 350 students showcased their skills across nearly 30 competition categories, including Accounting, Interview Skills, Graphic Design, Digital Media Production, Website Design, Computer Modeling, Health Procedures, and more.

Triton continued their long-standing tradition of excellence by crowing 15 Event Champions and 28 total members win trips to the State Competition.

"I was excited that we had such a huge number of students who won State trips," said Advisor Rebecca Goossens. "Then, I realized that of all our state qualifiers, almost half won 1st place in their event! What a testament to these students and their hard work."

Founded in 1968, BPA aims to empower students by providing real-world opportunities in learning, professional growth, and service. With over 43,000 members nationwide and 2,000+ members across Minnesota, BPA helps students prepare for careers in business administration, finance & accounting, information technology, video production, human resources, computer programming, graphic design, small business & entrepreneurship, health services, and

more.

Students competed individually and in teams in a variety of categories where they demonstrated their knowledge and a variety of skills by taking a test, creating a project, giving a speech, or presenting to a judge.

"I look at how much time and dedication these students put into learning and demonstrating skills and how BPA has such an impact beyond their high school years, and I feel that it's extremely important to celebrate their efforts, no matter how they placed," said Goossens.

In addition to competing, students also participated in a service drive and gave back to the community through a donation drive to Family Promise of Greater Rochester, whose mission is to assist families at risk of or experiencing homelessness to achieve sustainable independence by providing person-centered, holistic services in collaboration with the greater community.

Students advancing from the regional competition will attend the State Leadership Conference in Minneapolis from March 6-8, 2025. Those succeeding at the State level will head to the National Leadership Conference in Orlando from May 7-11, 2025.

(additional pictures on page 33)



Corey Lilledahl, Region President, announces winners at the awards ceremony



Vika Kundel competes in fundamental accounting

STATE WINNERS
REGION 3 BPA
COMPETITION

FIRST PLACE

- ADMIN SUPPORT RESEARCH PROJECT- ABRILLE EMANUEL
- ADVANCED DESKTOP PUBLISHING- ASHLEY ROMERO
- DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION- MILEY DOSTAL
- FUNDAMENTAL ACCOUNTING- VIKA KUNDEL
- FUNDAMENTAL SPREADSHEET- VIKA KUNDEL
- GLOBAL MARKETING TEAM- COREY LILLED AHL + CAMILA MEDINA
- GRAPHIC DESIGN- BRYAR QUIMBY
- HEALTH ADMINISTRATION- GENEVIEVE STARKSON
- HR MANAGEMENT- ANNA ANDERSON
- PRESENTATION- COREY LILLED AHL
- WEBSITE DESIGN TEAM- ANYLEY DOMINGUEZ, BRYAR QUIMBY, ASHLEY ROMERO + ALISSON VELASCO

STATE WINNERS
REGION 3 BPA
COMPETITION

SECOND PLACE

- ADVANCED INTERVIEW- OLLIE AKKERMAN
- BROADCAST NEWS TEAM- HOLLY HARVEY, DIEGO IBARRA-CASTILLO + EJ OKEEFE + ALAN ORTIZ
- COMPUTER MODELING- KATYA WHEELER
- COMPUTER NETWORK TECHNOLOGY- AUGUST JOHNSON
- COMPUTER SECURITY- AUGUST JOHNSON
- FUNDAMENTAL SPREADSHEET- HECTOR IBARRA
- PAYROLL ACCOUNTING- VIKA KUNDEL
- PREPARED SPEECH- JESSICA HUKEE
- VISUAL DESIGN TEAM- FRANKIE GANN + LOGAN SKJEVELAND
- WEBSITE DESIGN TEAM- DORA CHARLE, ROSELVA LIUDAHLL + JADE SOOVIILL

STATE WINNERS
REGION 3 BPA
COMPETITION

THIRD PLACE

- FUNDAMENTAL ACCOUNTING- OLLIE AKKERMAN
- FUNDAMENTAL DESKTOP PUBLISHING- ALISSON VELASCO
- GRAPHIC DESIGN- FRANKIE GANN
- LEGAL OFFICE PROCEDURES- ANGEL MATA COLIN
- PAYROLL ACCOUNTING- AJ KOZISEK

FOURTH PLACE

- FUNDAMENTAL DESKTOP PUBLISHING- EJ OKEEFE
- FUNDAMENTAL SPREADSHEET- EJ OKEEFE

STATE WINNERS
REGION 3 BPA
COMPETITION

FIFTH PLACE

- FUNDAMENTAL DESKTOP PUBLISHING- ALISSON VELASCO
- GRAPHIC DESIGN- FRANKIE GANN
- LEGAL OFFICE PROCEDURES- ANGEL MATA COLIN
- PAYROLL ACCOUNTING- AJ KOZISEK

SEVENTH PLACE

- HEALTH ADMINISTRATION- ABBY WIRKUS

PARTICIPATION

- BRODEN DICKIE, ALEKZANDER WILCOX

Triton Business Professionals of America Students Stand Out Among Hundreds Competing



RoseLyn Liudahl, Jade Scovill, and Dora Chable are excited after presenting for Website Design Team



Hector Ibarra places second in Fundamental Spreadsheet

**TRITON COMMUNITY ED
YOUTH ENRICHMENT 507-418-7550**

COMING TO THE TRITON STAGE
MARCH 26-29,

THE WIZARD OF OZ

Auditions:
**Monday, January 27 &
Tuesday, January 28
@ 3:15 p.m.
in Room 119**


**See Mrs. Wotherspoon or
Mr. Wotherspoon for audition materials**

Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is a quick and simple check of how your child is growing and learning. The screening includes a developmental assessment, vision and hearing tests, height and weight measurement and an immunization and health history review. The state of Minnesota recommends this at age 3 and requires screening before kindergarten entrance, and before, or within 30 days, of starting preschool.

The purpose of this free screening is to identify children who may need additional time and assistance to be ready for school. The sooner we get started, the more likely your child will begin school with the necessary skills to succeed.

Our next screening is on Friday, February 7th. Visit our website to sign up. Email mknutson@triton.k12.mn.us with questions or to set up an alternate time.



We have started planning preschool classes for next fall.

Watch for our registration information soon! If you would like us to email you when information is available, please let Mindy Knutson know: mknutson@triton.k12.mn.us.


Information will also be posted on our website, Facebook, and in the Cobra Connections newsletter.

*Friendly reminder that all students need to have early childhood screening before, or within 30 days, of starting preschool. If your child will start pre-k in the fall, please consider signing up for our February 7th screening date to meet this requirement!



**{YEL!} Robotics: Nature 'Bots
For 1st-5th grades**

Help nature and our environment by studying them more closely. We'll build a frog 'bot and discuss metamorphosis, then build a bumble bee and discuss the importance of pollination. We'll study nature while learning computer coding and engineering skills. Sign up today! Min 6/Max



Cost: \$80
Thursdays: 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13
3:15-4:15PM
TES Art Room

TRITON COMMUNITY ED YOUTH ENRICHMENT 507-418-7550

{YEL!} Grandmasters of Chess Winter Session For grades K-5

New and returning students invited. Learn, Practice and Play chess in each class. The {YEL!} Teach It! Practice It! Play It!@ method keeps students on track with new chess lessons and puzzles each week as well as guided games and in-class tournaments. Class fee includes ChessKid.com membership for the session. Sign up today. Visit YELKids.com for more info. Min 6/Max 20



Cost: \$84

Fridays: 2/7,2/14,2/21,2/28,3/7,3/14

3:15-4:15PM - TES Media Center

Canvas Art Painting with Sunshine and Roses Winter Wonderland and/or The Valentine Cow

Join Sunshine and Roses Traveling Art Studio to paint and create on canvas.

Classes are open to all ages (adults too) and you do not need any painting experience!

(Ages 6 and under must be accompanied by an adult). Choose Class 1, 2 or both!



** Classes are back-to-back and students taking both classes will stay in the room in between.

February 4

Cost: \$26 per painting, or do both canvases for \$48

Winter Wonderland 3:15-4:15PM

Valentine Cow 4:15-5:15PM



Home Technical Requirements For all Classes:

- Computer: PC (Windows 7 or later) or Mac (OSX) with at least a 2GHz processor and 4GB of RAM
Chromebooks, Tablets, and phones typically DO NOT Work.
- Internet: Broadband internet
- Webcam
- Microphone and Speakers
- Zoom Installed on Computers

Multiplayer Minecraft: Survival Challenge Grades 2-6

Survival Challenge in Minecraft: Team up & survive in our multiplayer world. Explore the unknown and join other Survival enthusiasts to overcome challenges, complete quests on our server.

Additional Technical Requirement:

Minecraft Java Edition
PC (Windows or MacBook), will not work on Chromebook, tablets, or phones



Cost: \$28

**Saturday, February 1
8-9:30AM**

An email with information and links will be sent to the email address you provide the week prior to the class. It is the parent's responsibility to read the email prior to the class and follow any preparation steps prior to the start of the class.

TRITON COMMUNITY ED ADULT ENRICHMENT 507-418-7550

Write a Riveting Mystery, Suspense, or Crime Story

Become a mystery writer for fun or profit!

You will discover the different subgenres and three-act story structure of mystery writing and create an intriguing cast of characters. Learn how to research and pick your setting, make sure your opening grabs readers' attention, use "red herrings" to misdirect your readers and create suspense until you're ready for the final reveal. Publishing options will also be discussed. Informative handouts for future use are included in the class fee. The instructor LeeAnne Krusemark is a former journalist, current author and editor, and a nationwide Professor of Publishing at higher learning institutions, including Harvard Adult Education. The webinar login information will be emailed the day before class.



Cost: \$31

**Tuesday, February 25
6-8PM
Via Zoom**

Make Money as a Freelance Writer: A Beginner's Guide

If you've got a way with words and love to write, freelance writing has emerged as a significant force in the gig economy, offering flexibility, independence and a way to make money online and offline, for supplemental income or a full-time career. You'll learn the top 10 areas of freelance writing, as well as how to create writing samples and pitches/queries, develop your freelance writing "brand," and find reliable job boards and avoid content mills. Informative handouts for future use are included in class fee, and include links to more than 1,000 ways to get paid as a freelance writer. The instructor LeeAnne Krusemark is a former journalist, current author and editor, and a nationwide Professor of Publishing at higher learning institutions, including Harvard Adult Education. The webinar login information will be emailed the day before class.



Cost: \$31

**Friday, February 28
6-8PM
Via Zoom**

Triton Community Ed and Storybook Theatre Present:

Order! Order in the courtroom! Today, we will be hearing the case of the Bear Family against one Goldilocks. But the question is... Will it be a fair trial?



Performances:
Friday, January 31 at 7PM
and Saturday, February 1 at 2PM
In the Triton Schools
Performing Arts Center

Admission:
Adults \$5,
Students \$3

**Starring
Triton Students
Grades 1-8!**

Goldilocks & The Three Bears

TRITON COMMUNITY ED ADULT ENRICHMENT

507-418-7550

A Perfect Wedding

Side Kick Theatre, Masonic Heritage Center, Bloomington, MN

The big day gone hilariously wrong! A groom wakes up on the morning of his wedding day with a hangover and a strange woman in his bed. Mix in the bride, her mother, the best man, and a maid that knows too much, and you have a recipe for disaster. Wedding bells or running for the hills? Their big day will be far from a piece of cake! We will have buffet lunch in the ballroom prior to the show.

Cost: \$92, includes guaranteed coach bus, lunch and ticket to the show.

April 23, 2025

Bus	Departs	Approx. Returns
Byron Middle School Parking Lot	9:30AM	5:15PM
Kasson Football Field Lot	9:45AM	5PM
Dodge Center Triton Activities Entrance	10 AM	4:45PM
Owatonna Target Parking Lot closest to the Hotel	10:25 AM	4:20PM

**YOU MUST CALL TRITON COMMUNITY ED
AT 507-418-7550 TO
REGISTER FOR THIS TRIP!**



**Triton Community Ed Office Hours:
M-F 8am-3:30 pm**

**Check Out Our Website
www.triton.k12.mn.us
and click on the
Community Education tab**

Cell Phones & Parenting: Balancing Connectivity and Safety

*Nickie Welsh,
Social Club Simple Instructor*



This engaging session will help you navigate the challenges of your child's digital world and provide helpful tools for your parenting toolbox. Learn practical strategies for social media/friendships, setting boundaries, ensuring online safety, and fostering healthy screen habits. Empower yourself with the tools to help raise a teen with a smart technology foundation they will use into Adulthood.

Cost: \$20

**February 4
12pm-1pm
Online Through Zoom (a link will be emailed to you prior to class)**

Google Sheets for Awesome Beginners

*Nickie Welsh,
Social Club Simple Instructor*



Unlock the full potential of Google Sheets and gain skills that will benefit you for a lifetime! Whether you're using it for work or personal projects, this comprehensive class will transform you from a novice into an expert. You'll master the essential functions of Google Sheets, including entering, organizing, refining, analyzing, and visualizing data. Join us to build a solid foundation in Google Sheets and enhance your productivity and data management capabilities!

Cost: \$20

**February 6
12pm-1pm
Online Through Zoom (a link will be emailed to you prior to class)**

Create Social Media Content Without Panicking

Nickie Welsh, Social Club Simple Instructor

Do you have a business, product, event, or service but panic at the thought of putting yourself on social media? In this beginner class, you'll learn helpful tips and strategies to create social media content with ease. Say goodbye to freezing up in front of the camera, thanks to the practical skills you'll gain. We'll guide you through a step-by-step process, so you can start creating content confidently today! Benefits to the Student: Students will leave the class with confidence on how to effectively create social media content for their specific audience, tips for filming a video and more! They will understand key terms and leave with action items to create successful social media posts without panicking.

Cost: \$20

**March 18
12pm-1pm
Online Through Zoom (a link will be emailed to you prior to class)**

Join us for

BINGO!

**Every Saturday
January, February and March**

Dodge Country Club, 1 pm

Meat raffles

Must play all games to qualify for Blackout

Progressive number Blackout each week until \$1,000 is won guaranteed

Benefitting Triton-related activities

*Sponsored by Claremont Area
Chamber of Commerce
License #05159*

TRITON COMMUNITY ED ADULT ENRICHMENT

507-418-7550

Medicare Basics

Beth Fahning-Hanggi

Understanding Medicare doesn't have to be complicated. By familiarizing yourself with the basics—how Medicare works, the different parts, and how to choose the right plan—you can make informed decisions that best fit your health needs and budget. Whether you're a senior or a family member helping with the process, taking the time to understand Medicare can help ensure you or your loved one gets the healthcare coverage needed in retirement. You're not alone in this journey!



Cost: \$5/family

March 11

Two class options, please indicate which time you are reserving when registering.

10-11AM at the Union Coffee Café back-room area
or
6:30-7:30PM at the Triton Highschool Media Center

Safe Driving Class

Jim Jensen

In the Safe Driving Class, you will learn driving strategies that can keep you safer on the road.

You will learn updates to traffic laws, how to reduce distractions to driving and how to navigate different intersections.

Drivers aged 55 years old and older who successfully complete the Safe Driver Class will qualify for reductions in their automobile insurance premiums.

Please remember to bring your driver's license with you to class.

It's important to pre-register so that Jim can ensure accommodation for all.

Please call Triton CE at 507-418-7550.



4-Hour Refresher Course (for those that have taken the 8-Hour before)

Cost: \$20, checks should be made to Jim Jensen

2-Class Dates Available:

March 20

Or

May 15

5-9PM in the THS Media Center

Saturday
March 29, 2025

8AM-2PM

Free Admission

Over 100 Local Vendors

Rookie the Clown

Live Music with Colton Smisek & Chris Rolo

25 Cent Breakfast Served 8-9:30AM

TASTE OF DODGE COUNTY FOOD COURT 10AM-2PM

Triton High School • 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
813 West Hwy Street, Dodge Center
www.dodgecountyexpo.com

TRITON ABE
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

GED CLASSES
 Tuesday and Thursday
 3:30 - 5:30

ESL CLASSES
 Tuesday and Thursday
 6:00 - 8:00

We offer in person learning, online learning for GED test preparation and online learning for general English

Classes Start
Oct. 1, 2024

More Information
507-418-7550
 tbradford@triton.k12.mn.us

Legal Notices

**TRITON ISD NO. 2125 –
SUMMARY SCHOOL
BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR SCHOOL
BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER
16, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.
TRITON HIGH SCHOOL
MEDIA CENTER –
DODGE CENTER, MN
& ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCING**

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of the December 16, 2024, Triton School Board meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing in the Triton District Office, 813 West Highway Street, Dodge Center, or online at www.triton.k12.mn.us.

Present: Wendy Kenworthy, Rebecca Knutson, J. Jensen, D. Jensen, Lloyd Henslin, Jr., Duane Bartel, Brian Ginder, Craig Schlichting, Luke Lutterman, Tricia Johnson, Aimee Lake, Tina Kozisek, Romina Medina, and others.

The School Board approved the following items:

- Agenda and consent agenda including the consent agenda including the November 13, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented; budget update; claims and bills; treasurer's report; approve contracts for Sabree Runnels as Cobra Kids Assistant, and Sue Torgeson as TES Special Education Teacher; resignations for Makiya Vagt as Paraprofessional effective November 15, 2024, Sue Torgeson as TES Special Education Teacher effective December 2, 2024, and Coltt Ullom as Head Baseball Coach effective December 16, 2024; and extra-curricular contracts for Dale Tate as Boys 9th Grade/C Squad Basketball Coach, Mark Evjen as Wrestling Head Coach, Jamie Bodestab as Head Dance Coach, Jaime Geers as Assistant Dance

Coach, Zak Hanegraaf as Boys Basketball Head Coach, Sam Storlie as Boys Basketball Assistant Coach, and Drew Kelly as Boys Basketball Jr. High Coach;

- Final 2024 Payable 2025 Levy Certification for \$3,512,154.81;

- Overnight trip for students to attend Wolf Ridge ELC January 15-18, 2026;

- Overnight stay for 6th grade students to attend Eagle Bluff March 26-28, 2025;

- Final Classified Staff Seniority List for 2024-2025.

Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

**TRITON ISD NO. 2125 –
SUMMARY SCHOOL
BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR SCHOOL
BOARD MEETING/
CANVASS ELECTION
RESULTS
WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 13, 2024 –
6:00 P.M.**

**TRITON HIGH SCHOOL
MEDIA CENTER –
DODGE CENTER, MN
& ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCING**

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of the November 13, 2024, Triton School Board meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing in the Triton District Office, 813 West Highway Street, Dodge Center, or online at www.triton.k12.mn.us.

Present: Wendy Kenworthy, Rebecca Knutson, J. Jensen, D. Jensen, Lloyd Henslin, Jr., Duane Bartel, Brian Ginder, Craig Schlichting, Luke Lutterman, Shane Van Beek, Tricia Johnson, Corey Black, Tina Kozisek, and others.

The School Board approved the following items:

- Agenda and consent agenda including the consent agenda including the October

21, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented; budget update; claims and bills; treasurer's report; open enrollment/nonresident agreements for students #111324A, #111324B, and #111324C; long-term substitute agreement for Elaine French as THS Teacher; maternity leave request for #111324A effective March 7, 2025-June 6, 2025;

- Resolution Canvassing Returns of Votes of School District General Election;

- Resolution Authorizing Issuance of Certificates of Election and Directing School District Clerk to Perform other Election Related Duties;

- Overnight stay for students to attend the FFA State Convention in St. Cloud, December 9-10, 2024;

- Resolution of Governing Board Supporting Form A Application to Minnesota State High School League Foundation;

- Resolution of School Board/Governing Board Supporting Form B Application to Minnesota State High School League Foundation;

- 2024-2025 snow removal quote with Rohwer Enterprises, LLC;

- Adding April 22, 2025 as a no school day on the 2024-2025 calendar.

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

**Office of the Minnesota
Secretary of State
Certificate of
Assumed Name
Minnesota Statutes,
Chapter 333**

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name.

The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAME:
Fresh Bites
PRINCIPAL PLACE
OF BUSINESS: 710 2nd
Street Kenyon, MN 55946

USA APPLICANT(S):
Name: Angies Inc
Address: 631 2nd Street
Kenyon, MN 55946

If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document.

If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document

supersedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities.

I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: Byron Neseth

MAILING ADDRESS:
631 2nd Street Kenyon,
MN 55946

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL
NOTICES: barneyneseth@gmail.com

**WEST CONCORD CITY
COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2024
7:00 P.M.**

**Meeting at the City of
West ConCORDs Bell Tower
Center**

PRESENT: Mayor Jeffrey McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen and Ripley.

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator/Clerk Paula Even Trenda, Maintenance Supervisor Keith Clemmer, Police Chief Shannon Boerner, Fire Chief Chad Finne

Regular Meeting began at 7:00 PM

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA;**

MOTION: Motion to approve the agenda as presented

Consent Agenda

- Approve of Council Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2024, 2024

- Approval of Payment of Claims: November 14 – December 13, 2024: \$59,383.83

MOTION: Motion to approve Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion made by Councilmember Ripley, seconded by Councilmember Koeckeritz

Ayes: Mayor McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen and Ripley

ley
Nays: None
Motion passed

**PUBLIC COMMENT -
No Public Comment
CITY BUSINESS**

A: Resolution 24-58: Approve Tax Levy and 2025 Budget

Jeanne Vogt from Ehler's was present to discuss the tax levy, long range financial plan, and utility rate study. The Truth in Taxation Meeting was held prior to the City Council Meeting. Details can be found in the council packet, available at City Hall and minutes from the special meeting. Levy is a 6.1% increase over 2024 and Water rates are going up by 10%. This increase is due to water consumption/revenue being lower than anticipated. Council will do a one-time transfer of \$50,000 from storm water fund to water fund to keep increases lower. Sewer and Storm Sewer rates will remain the same. Jeanne gave a brief history on why rates are high which is because the water fund was being supported by the city. A G.O. Bond was issued in 2017 and the goal was to get the water fund to be able to stand on its own. Water fund should have 50% of its yearly operating expenses and a 100% of debt service as fund balance. The reason is that if something catastrophic happens, water/utilities can still operate for 6 months while everything else is getting brought back online.

MOTION: Resolution 24-58: Approve Tax Levy/2025 City Budget

Motion made by Councilmember Koeckeritz. Second by Councilmember Nielsen.

Ayes: Mayor McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

Nays: None
Motion passed

B. Resolution 24-59: Approve 2025 Fee Schedule

After all departments reviewed proposed fees presented in November, the council was presented with a final version. The 2025 Fee Schedule was approved with the addition of the water rates from the study presented by Ehler's.

MOTION: Resolution 24-59: Adopt 2025 Fee Schedule
Motion made by Councilmember Nielsen. Second by Councilmember Ripley.

Ayes: Mayor McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

Nays: None
Motion passed

C. Resolution 24-61: Adopt Jake Break Ordinance

The Police Chief requested we add an ordinance to prohibit large vehicles from using their jake breaks when slowing down in town. The new ordinance will take effect January 1, 2025 and signs will be ordered and placed along Highway 56 on both north and south side of the city.

MOTION: Resolution 24-61: Adopt Jake Break Ordinance

Motion made by Councilmember Ripley. Second by Councilmember Nielsen.

Ayes: Mayor McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

Nays: None
Motion passed

D. Resolution 24-62: Approve hiring of two additional part-time officers, Kimberly Parta and David Kunz.

The police chief conducted background checks and was awaiting a few items before he would begin training officers. The additional part-time officers will allow for more coverage on weekends and holidays.

MOTION: Resolution 24-62: Approval of Hiring Kimberly Parta and David Kunz

Motion made by Councilmember Nielsen. Second by Councilmember Ripley.

Ayes: Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

Nays: None
Motion passed

E. Resolution 24-63: Hiring of Ambulance Director Adam La Plount

Adam La Plount accepted our offer of full-time employment as the new Ambulance Director. This paid position will work the Fire and Ambulance Department to increase volunteers, engage in with the community, and bring stability to EMS.

MOTION: Resolution 24-63: Approval of Hiring Adam La Plount

Motion made by Councilmember Nielsen. Second by Councilmember Koeckeritz.

Ayes: Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

(continued on page 34)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Planning and Zoning Commission of Dodge Center, Minnesota, will meet in the Council Chambers, Municipal Building, on Monday, February 3, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. to consider a setback variance request and parking variance request made by Swamibapa Inc., also known as Everyday Spirits, in a new location at 505 3rd Avenue NW.

All people desiring to be heard with reference to the above-named request should attend this meeting or submit written comment to the Community Development Technician. Written comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 3, 2025, at the Dodge Center City Hall, c/o Planning and Zoning, 35 East Main Street, PO Box 430, Dodge Center, Minnesota, 55927.

Legal Notices

WEST CONCORD CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 33)

Nays: Motion passed
Adam took a few minutes to introduce himself and his background for community members present.

F. Resolution 24-64: Deferment of Special Assessment from 2024A for PID 26.10034.10

Local Resident requested deferment for the special assessment from the 2024 street reconstruction project. Residents met the requirements for deferment per city code.

MOTION: Resolution 24-64: Approval of Special Assessment Deferment

Motion made by Councilmember Koeckeritz. Second by Councilmember Ripley.

Ayes: Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen, and Ripley

Nays: Motion passed

REPORT OF OFFICERS ADMINISTRATOR/CLE RK REPORT:

The Historical Society do-

nated \$2,294.99 for November gambling rents for the Municipal.

Included was a YTD Financial Report for all funds with 2025 budget. Nothing out of the ordinary. Things seem to be steady.

YTD Municipal On/Off Sale Financial Report with 2025 Budget. Muni had great sales for all of 2024. Labor and inventory/resale were higher than I would like to see. Personnel had a meeting and performance review with Charlie Phillips. During this meeting, we decided to expand hours at the Muni, move Charlie to hourly (same 40 hrs/week and benefits), and will be launching new POS systems that will make inventory more accurate, as well as allow for a cash discount price and credit card preauthorization for anyone looking to run a bar tab.

People's Service has been communicating better. The president, Chad Meyer, has agreed to purchase a new pump for well house #2, that

has been down since last winter.

LIBRARIAN REPORT:

Heather Fredericks was not present. Her update is attached to council packets. She used donations to purchase 8 "adult" sized matching chairs and have reduced hours during the holidays.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Maintenance Supervisor Keith Clammer presented his report. Doing carpet cleaning on January 17. Starting at Bell Tower and then City Hall. He presented an update on the EAB Grant. Going into 2025, we took a hit on matching cash in 2024. We need to spend \$19,000 next year and will be reimbursed from state. We purchased 13 different species and currently have 18 different species. Had tree pruning event in September and all reports have been submitted. Will need to provide \$2000-\$3000 over the next few years for tree maintenance.

PEOPLESERVICE RE-

PORT:

Chris Sanders was not available but submitted his report. Required meeting readings, water sample pulls, etc. have all been included. Water tower inspection was done via drone this week and we hope to be able to get the report in January. We have an included maintenance amount in our Peoples Service contract. We are over budget on this and found out that the well tower #2 door, electrical, plumbing that we did not pay for was billed to People's Service and they, in turn billed to our maintenance contract. Our maintenance budget is over budget and so we are working with Chad to get the plumbing and

electrical for new pump covered by them.

POLICE CHIEF:

Police Chief Boerner provided monthly call log to council.

Interagency agreement is standard. Nothing new in it. No Through Traffic signs are helping to reduce traffic through alley/lot.

Received a grant for National Night Out from Police Chiefs Association for \$2500.

Officer Myrom was hit by a car who couldn't stop on the ice. There is minor damage but covered by other drivers insurance.

FIRE CHIEF:

Fire Chief Chad Finne mentioned the Toys 4 Tots drive went well. Been buying res-

cue gear for grain bin rescue through a grant received from Compeer Financial.

OTHER BUSINESS

None
ADJOURNMENT
MOTION: Motion to Adjourn at 7:56 pm.

Motion made by Mayor McCool, seconded Councilmember Ripley.

Ayes: Mayor McCool, Councilmembers Burse, Koeckeritz, Nielsen and Ripley.

Nays: Motion passed

By: _____
Mayor Jeffrey McCool
Attest:

By: _____
Paula Even Trender
Clerk/Administrator

DODGE CENTER SUMMARY COUNCIL MINUTES Monday, December 23, 2024

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of the December 23, 2024 Dodge Center City Council regular meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing at City Hall, 35 East Main Street or online at www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us.

Present: Mayor Bill Ketchum, Cathy Skogen (via video), Gary Trelstad, Matt Maas, Lee Mattson, Deputy Tyler Vermeersch, Jeremy Dostal, AJ Gengler, and Kathy Freeman
Absent: Paul Blaisdell

City Council approved the following items:

- Agenda and consent agenda to include: Minutes from December 09, 2024 City Council Meeting and the November 4, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting; Year-End Invoice Payment Memo; On-Site NVR and Firewall Quotes; Authorization to Implement 2025 Salary Plan; Surplus Memo – Public Works and Payment of Bills;
- Extension of abatement at 18 1st Ave NE until February 1, 2025 at which time the order to abate will take place;
- Move forward with the order to abate 14 2nd St NE;
- Amendment to Ordinance No. 164, Second Series, adding Section 6. Lower-Potency Hemp Edibles;
- Amended Ordinance No. 164, Second Series – An Ordinance of the City of Dodge Center to Regulate Cannabis Businesses;
- Publishing the Summary of Ordinance No. 164, Second Series;
- Fire Department appointments effective January 1, 2025: Fire Chief – Jeremy Dostal; Secretary - Pat Giesler; Captain – Joe Wernecke and Training Lieutenant – Jeff Runnells;
- Hiring of AJ Gengler as a Paid-On-Call Paramedic at Step 3 of the salary plan;
- Appointment of John Fox as Interim Ambulance Director at Step 1 of the Ambulance Director's Salary Plan;
- Appointment of Rod Duryee as Interim Operation Supervisor at a pay rate of \$28.08/hour;
- Hiring of Collin Anding as a Part-Time Paramedic at \$29.66/hour;
- Creation of a higher ceiling rate of \$4.00/hour for regular paid-on-call EMT's after twelve (12) months of service;
- Creation of a higher ceiling rate of \$3.50/hour for casual paid-on-call EMT's after twelve (12) months of service;
- Resolution 2024-034 – A Resolution Opting to Increase the Benefit Level for Firefighters who are Vested in the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan;
- Stryker quote for two (2) ambulance monitors in the amount of \$72,620;
- Mayo Advanced Life Support Intercept Agreement;
- Widseth's request to submit information to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency pertaining to our request for a variance of the chloride limits;
- Rental of five (5) radio's from ANCOM for five (5) months at the quoted price of \$725.00.

Meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

City of West Concord 2025 Budget

Summary General Fund

	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Difference
REVENUES			
1 General property tax	\$ 393,143	\$ 412,644	\$ 19,501
2 Special assessments	-	-	-
3 Licences, permits and fees	11,131	7,850	(3,281)
4 Intergovernmental	372,987	379,900	6,913
5 Charges for services	24,185	24,275	90
6 Fines and forfeits	3,200	3,000	(200)
7 Interest earnings	1,400	1,400	-
8 Miscellaneous revenue	2,150	5,900	3,750
9 TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 808,196	\$ 834,969	\$ 26,773
EXPENDITURES			
10 General Government	\$ 302,850	\$ 297,316	\$ (5,534)
11 Public Safety	189,598	214,011	24,413
12 Public Works	170,519	162,695	(7,824)
13 Parks and Recreation	152,799	150,547	(2,252)
14 Miscellaneous	-	-	-
15 Capital Outlay	7,550	10,400	2,850
16 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 823,316	\$ 834,969	\$ 11,653
17 REVENUES OVER/(UNDER) EXPENDITURES	\$ (15,120)	\$ (0)	\$ 15,120
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)			
18 Transfers In/(Out)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
19 Sales of Fixed Assets	-	-	-
20 Bond Proceeds	-	-	-
21 TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES / (USES)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
22 BEGINNING CASH FUND BALANCE	\$ 381,173	\$ 366,053	\$ 15,120
23 ENDING CASH FUND BALANCE	\$ 366,053	\$ 366,053	\$ 30,239



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