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JANUARY 29, 2025

Volume 22 • Issue 1

Township Elections Just Weeks Away, Slate of Candidates Set

Write-in votes will settle who takes at least two open seats on Rice County's townships boards.

(continued on page 15)

Supporting Our Local FFA Chapters & Celebrating National FFA Week Feb. 15 - 22, 2025



Starting in 1948, the National FFA Board of Directors designated a weeklong tradition to recognize George Washington's example and legacy as a leader and farmer. For the past 76 years, FFA members across the country have taken part in agricultural, leadership and service-based activities during National FFA Week.

(continued on page 4)

Hot Dish Cook Off and Live Music part of Dennison 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

What's Up at Windy Willows

By Cheri Roshon

Ahhh, winter is here, and the cabin fever epidemic is upon us! Ok, so we live in a place that half the year is cold, so we are used to it, but Cabin Fever is a real thing.

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Jim Tracy Scholarship Applications Being Accepted

The James Tracy scholarship program was established because of a Dennison area farmer, James W. Tracy.

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Jim Tracy



The Devney Brothers

the year.

A \$500 1st Prize, plus other cash and prizes will be given away.

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Announcements

- **Wednesday Wear, Nerstrand United Methodist Church** hours are **Wednesdays 1 - 5 and Saturdays 9 - 12**. Women's, men's and children's clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, toys and books. All things are free with donations accepted. Come and see what we have!

- **Dennison City Council** meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

- **The Nerstrand City Council** meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7p.m. at the Nerstrand City Hall. Office hours are: Monday 8:30-11:00; Tuesday by appointment; Wednesday 8:30-11:00; Thursday 5:00-7:00; Friday by appointment. 507-332-8000.



Nerstrand Elementary School has been busy this season

Submitted by Executive Director Nicole

We held our Winter Concert in January.

(continued on page 5)

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to Delicious



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There's Hope



BY Jon Dudek, co-founder of Isaiah Ministries, bringing Biblical teaching to help overcome life's everyday challenges.
www.isaiahministries.cc

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

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

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

I want to encourage you with a few verses that have spoken to me, and I hope they will minister to you. When we feel like we are all alone, a great verse that can bring comfort is,

"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b). You and I are not alone in the adventures of life. You and I are not alone in the ups and downs. God is right there with us—even if we don't sense Him, the Word of God says He is. We don't trust in what we feel, we trust in what the Bible declares.

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

You and I are blessed to walk our lives with Christ. He will help us, direct us, listen to us, and hear us. As I was doing my daily devotional the other day, in the book of Proverbs I read, "Don't get sidetracked" (4:27).

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

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

During times of feeling fear and anxiety with all areas of life, God wants to overwhelm us with His peace. A peace that manifests during a storm. A peace that will calm

our minds and hearts to make rational decisions during tough and challenging times in life. Have you ever experienced this?

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

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

"Jesus, I ask that you come into my life and my heart. I know I am a sinner, and I ask that you forgive me. I believe that you died on the

cross for my sins and that God raised you from the dead. Jesus, I believe that you are Lord and Savior. Help me grow in my relationship with you. Thank You. Amen" (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:9-10, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8, Acts 3:26).

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

Blessings, Jon Dudek

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Ann Traxler
 Attorney

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 Website: www.dennisonvang.org
 Email: dennisonvangoffice@gmail.com
 Pastor Paul A. Graham

Gol Lutheran Joe Jorgensen, Pastor
 507-838-2100
 Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m. September-December

Grace Lutheran, Nerstrand
 Mike Ahrens S.A.M.
 Service 9 a.m.; Coffee Hour 10:00 a.m.
 Sunday School 10:15 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran
 9:00a.m. Sunday School
 10:00a.m. Coffee Time 10:30a.m. Worship Service

Hegre Lutheran
 Pastor Chris Brekke
 Sunday School 9:15a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m.

Moland Lutheran
 507-456-4242
 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

First Ev. Lutheran, Kenyon
 David J. Chatelaine, Pastor
 Sunday 9:00 a.m. worship

Wangen Prairie Lutheran Church LCMC
 Shannon Bauer, Pastor
 24289 Cty. 24 Blvd., Cannon Falls
 Sunday Worship at 9:00a.m. followed by fellowship.
 Thursday Bible Study at 9:00a.m.

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

Lightening Our Burdens

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

— Deuteronomy 1:9

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

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

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

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

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Stanton United Methodist
 Rev. Tom Countryman
 Worship 10:15a.m.
 Church Phone 507-321-3598

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Curtis L. Piper

Curtis L. Piper, age 90, died on January 21, 2025 at the Northfield Hospital.



Funeral services were held at Boldt Funeral Home, Faribault on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. with visitation one hour prior to the service. Interment was at Cannon City Cemetery.

Curtis LeRoy, son of Donald and Christine (Silbernagle) Piper, was born on November 2, 1934 in Faribault. Curtis was a dedicated

farmer, tending to the family farm in Cannon City. He served in the MN National Guard for over twenty years. He was active with the Rice County Steam & Gas Association and enjoyed skiing, making maple syrup, cutting wood, caring for his cats, and traveling, including helping with the recovery after Hurricane Katrina.

He is survived by his sister, Arlene (David) Caron; sister-in-law, Diane Piper; nieces and nephews, Rick Caron, Doug (Linda) Caron, Brad Caron, Rhonda (Lee) Hagre, Travis (Amy) Piper and Crystal (Luke) Sargent; 13 great nieces and nephews; many great great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Donald; nephew, Jeff Caron; niece,

Pam Caron; great-nephew, Andy Caron.

Boldtfuneralhome.com for information and guest book.

Stanley N. Swanson

Stanley Norman Swanson, age 95 of Kenyon, MN passed away on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at his home following an extended illness.



Stanley, the son of Iver and Ingaborg (Neseth) Swanson, was born on April 19, 1929 on the family farm. Stanley grew up in Richland Township and attended the Epsom School through the 8th grade, until he started helping on the family farm. Stan met the love of his life, Eunice Tutewohl at the Farmington Roller Rink. They were united in marriage on June 8, 1957 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Rosemount. They moved near Stan's family farm before taking over the farm a short time afterwards. They farmed many crops and produced dairy before taking on beef cattle. They worked as milk testers towards the end of his farming career. He took a lot of pride in the farm and loved taking care of his yard and feeding the wildlife that lived nearby. While he wasn't working, Stan enjoyed fishing, hunting, polka dancing, going to the casino, long car rides, telling stories about the olden days and spending time with his family. He was quiet

and sly and had a warm heart.

Stan is survived by his wife of 67 years, Eunice of Kenyon; daughters, Patricia (Douglas) Sahl of Nerstrand and Katherine Swanson of Faribault; grandchildren, Stacy (Josh) Belko, Sandra (Brock) Bohaty, Christopher Knott, Shari (Ryan) McCabe, Kaitlin (Nathan) Lexvold, Kayla Knott, Sarah Sahl, Kyle Knott, and Corey Knott; great-grandchildren, Brecken, Callen, and Soren McCabe and Lochlan and Avery Belko; brothers-in-law, Leo Tutewohl, Jack (Donna) Tutewohl, Butch (Diane) Tutewohl, Dan Tutewohl; sisters-in-law, Ann (Nick) Guetter and Mary Tix; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Iver and Ingaborg; brothers, Orlando (Donna) Swanson, Duane (Margie) Swanson, and Lester Swanson in infancy; sisters, Helen (Leonard) Olson, Clarissa Swanson, Jeanette (Don) Reschke, Myrtle (Bill) Banker, and Norma (Bud) Johnson; brothers-in-law, Richard Tix and Jim Tutewohl; and sister-in-law, Sharon Tutewohl.

Funeral Service will be held on Sunday, February 2, 2025, at 2:00 P.M. at the Parker Kohl Funeral Home & Crematory, Faribault, with Pastor Mike Ahrens officiating. Interment will be held at Kenyon Cemetery on Monday, February 3, 2025, at 12:00 P.M.

Visitation will be held from 12:00 to 2:00 P.M. at the funeral home prior to the service.


Funeral arrangements are being completed by the Parker Kohl Funeral Home & Crematory.



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SUPPORTING OUR AREA FUTURE FARMERS

National FFA Week February 15-22, 2025

Supporting Our Local FFA Chapters & Celebrating National FFA Week Feb. 15 - 22, 2025

(continued from page 1)

"National FFA Week is a significant event that really showcases the heart of our organization," says Christine White, chief program officer for the National FFA Organization. "Local chapters use this as an opportunity to highlight program success, recognize community supporters and amplify the mission of the organization."

Again this year, more than 700,000 FFA members will spend the week of February 15 - 22 developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

They will do so in creative and innovative ways. Whether volunteering to clean up the local fairgrounds or throwing a citywide party to celebrate the 1732 birth of our first president, there is no limit to how this week can be recognized.

"It could be hosting a breakfast for teachers, an open house for FFA supporters or bestowing chapter-level degrees. It truly is an opportunity to celebrate all things FFA. As a former member and agricultural educator, FFA Week

is something I always looked forward to since it was a way to share my passion for the organization," White says. "FFA members should embrace the planning, execution and celebration that occurs with developing activities and events for FFA Week. The skills of teamwork, communication and advocating are ones you will carry with you beyond your FFA experience."

Keep track of all that is happening by following #FFAWeek on your social channels. Find more about all the resources available at FFA.org/National-FFA-Week.

The organization also wants to Thank Alumni and Supporters!

Whether they wore the blue jacket or simply support an organization they were never a member of, these individuals are celebrated on National FFA Alumni and Supporters Day. Since 1971, alumni and supporters have found ways to significantly contribute to their local chapters.

Jeremy Krerowicz, the past president of the Denmark FFA Alumni in Wisconsin, fondly remembers his time as a member, and he used those experiences as motivation to lead the 2020 Outstanding FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter.

"Our members love to see the students grow," Krerowicz says. "We love seeing them being recognized at state and national conventions, during their chapter banquet and throughout the community. It shows that we are doing our part. We help them with the resources they need to get that far."

In every state in the nation, alumni and supporters chapters work to create environments

where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

Find out more information at www.mnffa.org, or www.ffa.org

Jim Tracy Scholarship Applications Being Accepted

(continued from page 1)

This will be the 10th year the Minnesota FFA Foundation will be offering the James W. Tracy Scholarships. The Minnesota FFA Foundation is pleased to bring life to James Tracy's dream of supporting youth in agriculture, keep rural America strong, and support FFA and 4-H members by providing scholarships to youth involved in agriculture.

James W. Tracy was born in 1941. He grew up on a farm near Dennison, Minnesota. During his childhood, James was an active FFA and 4-H member. After graduating from high school, Jim served two years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He loved helping young people and wanted to see agriculture and rural America remain strong. He farmed his land until he lost his battle with illness in 2014.

Besides being a lifelong member of his church, he was an active member in the Lions Club. Jim was a generous man who donated to many causes. He loved helping young people and wanted to see agriculture and rural America remain strong. Tracy had a deep love for the land and farming.

But Jim's story doesn't end there, his desire to support youth in Agriculture led him to donate his farm to an organization that he admired most, the FFA. The Minnesota FFA Foundation is pleased to bring life to James Tracy's dream of providing scholarships to youth involved in Agriculture. Generations of young people will benefit from this donation as the funds will be used to support youth agricultural scholarships.

This scholarship is open to Minnesota FFA and 4-H Members.

Scholarship Eligibility:

Must be a resident of Minnesota

Must be enrolled or plan to enroll in an accredited post-secondary school in the U.S.

Must plan to pursue an academic award (certificate, diploma, or degree) in agriculture or animal husbandry

This year \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded to students based on the following criteria:

Leadership, involvement, and agriculture interest

Three essay questions, limited to no more than 500 words

Two letters of recommendation. Letters must be from non family members. One letter of recommendation is required to be from someone who has known / worked with the student during the previous 12 months.

Upon completion of the recipients Fall 2025 semester at a post-secondary school, the scholarship recipient will need to send a transcript (copy acceptable) to the MN FFA Foundation showing satisfactory progress. Transcript can be emailed to: amanda.sommers@mnffaafoundation.org. Once transcript is received by the MN FFA Foundation and upon completion of your following semester/term, a check will be sent to the scholarship recipient.

Scholarship Timeline:

Applications are due by February 1st, 2025

Scholarship recipients will be announced by April 15, 2025.

For full details please go to our website. Again this year students will apply with a Google Form application that can be found here. Applicants can edit their applications if need be. Just an FYI: Applicants no longer need to be limited to High School Seniors. College students can apply. If selected as a recipient of this scholarship, students will be able to receive this scholarship once as a high school student and once as a college student.

Deadline is February 1, 2025. Scholarship recipients will be announced by April 15, 2025.

Questions on the James Tracy Scholarship Program can be directed to:

Amanda Sommers, Program Coordinator

Phone: (507)461-2214

OR

Email: amanda.sommers@mnffaafoundation.org

PROUD TO SUPPORT NATIONAL FFA WEEK
February 15-22, 2025



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Nerstrand Elementary School has been busy this season

(continued from page 1)

The children did a great job singing all about their love of winter.

We also hosted a Community Lunch Celebration.

Friends, family and community members joined us for lunch on January 16th. Learn and Serve took care of our guests serving them coffee and water. It was a wonderful experience. We are grateful to everyone for their support of our school. Our students will be going to the MN History Center in February. This is our whole school field trip for the year. Our generous PTO is sponsoring this event.



Shop Local for your Valentine's Delights!

By Cheri Roshon

We all know, living in small towns, that "things" are usually cheaper if we go to a larger town to purchase what we need.

But do we factor in the cost of driving to Rochester, Minneapolis, or any of the places that the price of a product may save a buck? Or the time we spend getting there?

Or, most importantly, how our local friends and neighbors are doing their part to have available the things we need to have for our daily living without driving to another town?

Starting a business in a small town is a gamble. There are less people to buy from us, and maybe not such a wide variety in the things we can stock. But most of the businesses around these parts are willing to try their best to find what you want, and at a competitive price. Sure, you can go online and find almost anything these days, but you will also spend time to find what you want, can't ask any questions, and oh yeah....pay for shipping and handling. And as I have found out recently, you may not get the product that was advertised. And just TRY to get your money back! In most cases, that won't happen.

I believe the people in this area are honest, friendly, and willing to meet you halfway to make a deal. And look around! We have bakeries, clothing stores, gift shops, and some of the best restaurants around. Gift certificates are an easy way to gift the ones you love! You can purchase everything from guns to tires. Or cookies to massages. Even flowers to liquor. Perhaps your mom would like a gift certificate for her house to be cleaned? Or your father needs some hunting supplies? Grandma and grandpa could use a gift certificate to a restaurant so they can have a night out, and not have to cook. How about a round of golf, or a goat yoga class at Windy Willow Adventures? And jewelry! Who wouldn't like the gift of bling? A day at the spa with a massage, a foot bath and a facial, all topped off with a new hair style? All these things can be found near you, and the people who sell them to you stand by their products, and are proud to be able to sell them to you.

So, I invite you to sit down and make a list of the people you wish to gift this Valentine's Day, and shop local! Save time and money, and get the perfect gift for the ones you love!

Elementary School Site in Wanamingo to Close

Dear Kenyon-Wanamingo Families, Staff, and Community Members,



Beth Giese
Superintendent
K-W School
District

It is with a heavy heart that I share an important decision regarding the future of our schools. After careful consideration and extensive discussions with stakeholders, the Kenyon-Wanamingo School Board has made the difficult decision to permanently close the elementary site in Wanamingo, effective Fall 2025. This decision was not made lightly and reflects our responsibility to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of our district.

We understand the deep ties many of you have to this site. Generations of students, staff, and families have walked its halls, building memories and traditions that are an integral part of our district's story. The Wanamingo site has been more than just a building—it has been a place where young minds have grown, friendships have formed, and futures have been shaped.

As we move forward, we are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible for our students, families, and staff. The PK-4th grade programming and Knights Kids Daycare will be consolidated into the Kenyon site beginning in Fall 2025. We are actively working on detailed plans to ensure a seamless transition.

We recognize that this news may bring mixed emotions. While there is sadness in saying goodbye to the Wanamingo site, there is also a resolve to focus our resources on strengthening educational opportunities for all Kenyon-Wanamingo students. Our theme for this school year, Igniting Potential, Inspiring Excellence, reminds us that change, though challenging, can be a spark for growth and innovation.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our district. Your partnership is essential as we navigate this transition and continue to provide an exceptional educational experience for our students. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or ideas. Together, we will honor our past while embracing the future with courage and determination.

Open Enrollment has begun for the 2025-2026 school year. We are now accepting applications for all grade levels. If you are

interested in enrolling your child at our school, please visit our website at <https://nerstrand.charter.k12.mn.us/> and click on the register now button. You can also call our office at 507.333.6850.



What's Up at Windy Willows

(continued from page 1)

Unable to get out as much when the temperatures dip below freezing, there is only so much you can do in the house. I know some folks love to be outdoors in this cold, but I am not one of them. I prefer the warmth of my own home, and going out looking for new and

fun things to do. One place I love going to is Windy Willow Farm Adventures. Located at 9748 110th St. E, Northfield, it is not far from Dennison, and once you get there, you will be greeted by humans and animals, all of which are friendly!

This winter, Colleen and the crew have come up with some pretty fun and unique classes for you to not only enjoy, but come away with a handmade treasure to keep or to gift to someone special. On top of the classes, there is a very nice collection of handmade gifts for everyone on your list. You can get farm fresh eggs, baked goods, jewelry, coffee cups and so much more!

Some of the classes coming up are:

Glass Mosaic Class where you will pick one of 3 projects to make with glass. Class



part 1 is on Feb. 8 at 1 pm, and Class part 2 is Feb. 15th at 4:30 pm.

Next up is Mandala Rock Painting on Feb 9th at 1:30 pm

Bunny Bonanza Come and play with the bunnies! A very popular event, bring the whole family and immerse your self in some bunny fun from 10 am to 4 pm on Feb 15th & 16th!

And the most fun class ever...GOAT YOGA! There will be about 15 classes for

this very popular class, so go to the website and get signed up for this or any other classes happening through the winter!

Who says winter can't be fun??? For more information, shoot them an email at windy-willowfarmadventure@gmail.com, or visit the website to learn more about this incredibly fun place to play!!! And please pass this along to any of your peeps who are interested in turning a cold Minnesota winter into a really fun adventure!! See you there!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

When making your resolutions, why not schedule an appointment to review your insurance coverages? It's easy, and could save you money. Call us today for an appointment.



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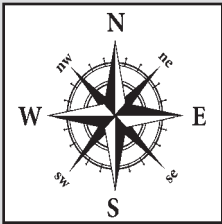
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

I Can Fix Most Anything



By Terry Campbell

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

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

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

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

erwise.

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

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

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

This fall she sent back something she found



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

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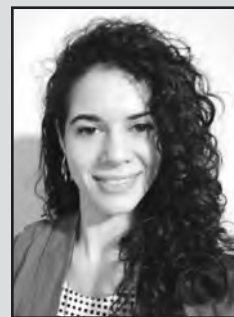
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A Minnesotan: Sledding



By RosaLin Alcoser

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

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

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

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

There were two problems with this idea. The first was we had no idea how to sled. The same TV specials that hadn't prepared us for snow also hadn't given clear instructions on how to sled. The second problem was that we did not own sleds.

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

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

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

The Importance of Time Spent Outdoors for Children



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



all the tools you need to get started affordably.

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

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

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

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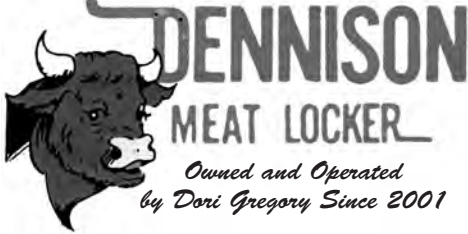
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Hot Dish Cook Off and Live Music part of Dennison Flake Out Festival Sat., Feb. 1st

(continued from page 1)

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 evening festivities, with Melissa Schultz at 625 beginning at 6 PM and The Devney Brothers returning to entertain at the Fireside beginning at 8 PM

If you have any questions, contact Lion President Diane at 612-532-0268. Check out the full schedule in this issue of the Messenger.






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

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

Dairy – overconsumption can lead to constipation

Red Beets – overconsumption can result in red colored stool

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

Vitamin C – overconsumption can result in loose stools

Magnesium – overconsumption can have a laxative effect

Knowing the side effects places you in a better position to manage your life and your health goals. Your body genetics successfully

operate on the nutrients provided on a daily basis. Your body is asking for more nutrients. Every health challenge you face in the year ahead has a nutritional answer to it. Your health challenge is not a result of a medication deficiency.

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

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

FLAKE OUT Festival & WINTER PARADE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

HOT DISH COOK OFF

\$5.00/entry. Tasters will pay \$5.00 to taste all entries/vote.

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2:00 PM Hot Dish Winner Announced
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Multigenerational Farm Transition Retreats Available for Farmers

Events are free of charge and held in three different locations

Multigenerational Farm Transition Retreats are available for Minnesota farmers considering farm transition or succession plans. These retreats are offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) in partnership with the University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension, and the Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence.

Attendees will be guided through hands-on planning and discussion on farm transition for the whole farm family; all generations actively involved in the farm are encouraged to attend. Topics covered in detail will include family and business goals, job responsibilities, financial needs of farm and families, inheritance considerations, and mechanisms of transfer.

These events are free of charge and are being held in three different locations; farmers can choose the one most convenient for them. Attendees should plan on attending both days.



Mankato

Friday, February 21, 5 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, February 22, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

St. Cloud

Friday, March 7, 5 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 8, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Rochester

Friday, March 21, 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 22, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Registration is available online; the event address and further meeting details will be provided in the registration confirmation.

Educational resources on farm transition and estate planning are available on the UMN Extension website. For questions or comments contact Nathan Hulinsky at huli0013@umn.edu or 218-828-2680.

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\$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!
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8:00 PM LIVE MUSIC AT THE FIRESIDE "The Devney Brothers"

9:00 PM Raffle Winners Announced at Fireside

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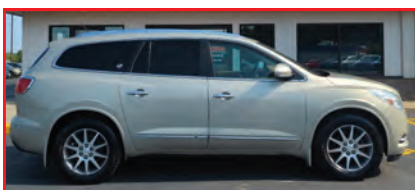
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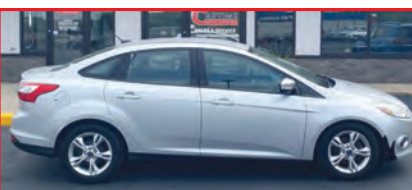


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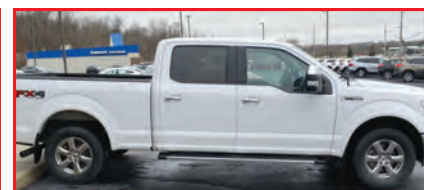


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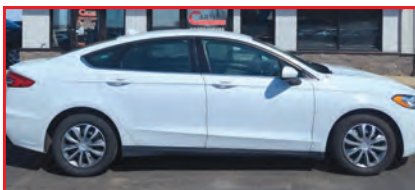


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Applications are now open for the Minnesota Farm Bureau Sesquicentennial Farm program, honoring Minnesota families that have owned their farms for at least 150 years. The deadline to apply is March 3, 2025.

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

Applications are available at www.fbmn.org. For more information, contact Pam Debele at pam.debele@fbmn.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.

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Township Elections Just Weeks Away, Slate of Candidates Set

(continued from page 1)

No affidavits for candidacy were filed in the 2025 race for Northfield Township treasurer, or to fill the term of the remaining year of the term for the Morristown Township clerk.

The treasurer's seat, a two-year term, is up in all every township except Forest Township where the treasurer is appointed, rather than elected.

In addition to two open seats on the ballot, Erin Township voters will decide whether or not to appoint, rather than elect its town clerk and treasurer. While Forest is currently the only township to appoint its treasurer, four Rice County townships appoint their clerk.

One supervisor seat is up in each township. All are threeyear terms.

Township elections and their annual meetings are Tuesday, March 11. Polls hours and meeting times vary and are listed below.

Tuesday, Feb. 18 is the last day to pre-register to vote for the 2025 township elections. Paper applications must be received by the Elections Office at the Rice County Government Services Building, 320 Third St. NW, Faribault by 5 p.m. on Feb. 18. Voters regis-

tering online through the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State's secure website -- bit.ly/33cMK5X -- have an 11:59 p.m. deadline.

Residents can also vote absentee from Friday, Feb. 7 through Friday, March 7 at the Rice County Government Services Building. The office is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except for Monday, Feb. 17, when county offices close for Presidents Day. Voters can also cast an absentee ballot from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, March 8 and from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, March 10 at the Government Services Building.

Running for office are: Bridgewater

Treasurer: Debbie Salaba
Supervisor Seat B: Andrew Ebling
Vote from 2 p.m-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 500 Railway St, Dundas
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Cannon City

Treasurer: Brandi Sprung
Supervisor: Karl R. Francis Jr.
Vote from 4-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 4490 Crystal Lake Trail, Faribault
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Erin

Treasurer: Elgin Trcka
Supervisor: David Cepelcha
Vote from 3-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 12378 Independence Ave., Lonsdale
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Forest

Supervisor: Ronald Gernandt and Bob Jacobson
Vote from 2-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 3625 Millersburg Boulevard, Faribault
Annual meeting: 1 p.m.

Morristown

Treasurer: Vicky Timm
Supervisor: Wayne Saemrow
Clerk: No affidavits for candidacy were filed
Vote from 5-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 402 Division St. S, Morristown
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Northfield (Precincts 1 and 2)

Treasurer: No affidavits for candidacy were filed
Supervisor: Josh Malecha and Cole Lindenfelser
Vote from 2-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 10901 Jacobs Ave., Northfield
Annual meeting: 8:10 p.m.

Richland

Treasurer: Alan Meyer
Supervisor: James Donkers
Vote from 5-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 9985 240th St. E, Faribault
Annual meeting: 4 p.m.

Shieldsville

Treasurer: Kimberly Pesta
Supervisor: Dale Kuchinka
Vote from 3-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 7250 154th St. W, Faribault
Annual meeting: 2 p.m.

Walcott

Treasurer: Carrie Heiderscheidt

Supervisor: Paul Wunderlich and Donald Novak
Vote from 5-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 4020 240th St E., Faribault
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Warsaw

Treasurer: Ron Kuball
Supervisor: Ryan Witte
Vote from 5-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 22955 Dalton Ave, Faribault
Annual meeting: 4 p.m.

Webster

Treasurer: Robert Michel
Supervisor: Brian L. McFadden and Daniel Rogers
Vote from 3-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 4175 Delano Ave., Webster
Annual meeting: 1 p.m.

Wells

Treasurer: Flavia Berg
Supervisor: Richard G. Cap
Vote from 2-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 18400 Roberds Lake Boulevard, Faribault
Annual meeting: 1 p.m.

Wheatland

Treasurer: Sara Chlan
Supervisor: Brian Pieper
Vote from 3-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 9641 50th St W, Veseli
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

Wheeling

Treasurer: Marilyn Danks
Supervisor: Duane Bailey
Vote from 5-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 8492 Nerstrand Boulevard, Nerstrand
Annual meeting: 8:15 p.m.

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Prevent Lung Cancer: Test Your Home for Radon Gas



January is National Radon Action Month. Rice County Public Health joins the Minnesota Department of Health and US Environmental Protection Agency to encourage everyone to test their home for radon, the invisible radioactive gas found at elevated levels in many Minnesota homes. Radon is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that occurs naturally in Minnesota soils. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among people who never smoked. Fortunately, the risk is largely preventable through testing homes and fixing radon problems. The only way for residents to know if their home has radon is to test.

With more people working and schooling from home, it's even more important to test homes.

Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. Test devices are usually placed in the home for 2-5 days. The best time to test is during the heating season, but testing can be done year-round.

Test kits are available at many hardware stores, or directly from radon testing laboratories. Rice County residents may also stop

by the Faribault office located in the lower level of the Rice County Government Services Building, 320 Third St. NW, to request a free kit.

Health professionals recommend testing for radon during real estate transactions and a radon test should be incorporated into a home inspection. Sellers must disclose any prior radon testing and provide a twopage publication to buyers, under state law. MDH licenses home inspectors and other professionals who test for radon. A list of currently licensed radon measurement professionals can be found on the Find a Radon Measurement Professional page on the MDH site.

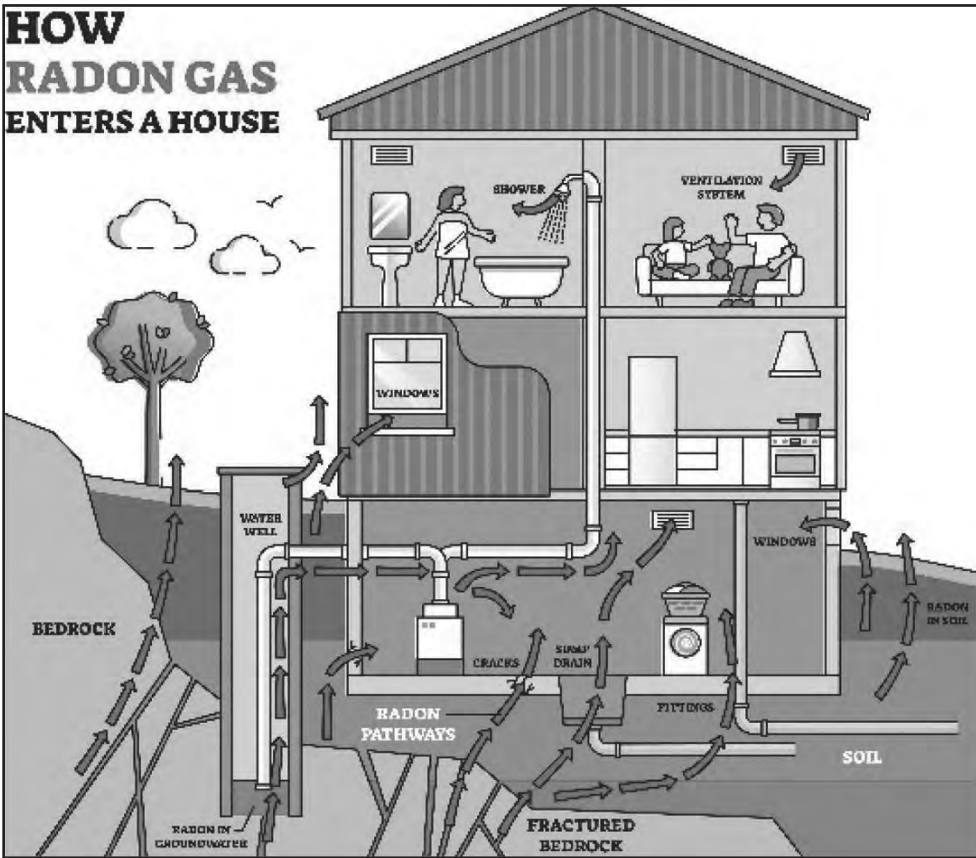
In homes found to have high radon levels, radon reduction typically involves installing a venting pipe and fan to pull the gas from under the home to the outside. This reduces the amount of radon in the home to low levels. A list of currently licensed radon mitigation professionals can be found on the Find a Radon Mitigation Professional page on the MDH website.

MDH conducts free inspections of radon mitigation systems installed after June 1, 2020. The inspections ensure systems were installed correctly and meet minimum requirements. To learn more, contact the MDH Indoor Air Unit to request an inspection at health.indoorair@state.mn.us.

To help residents get a more accurate picture of radon levels in Minnesota, MDH has a series of maps showing information about Radon in Minnesota. Some of the key findings were:

- About 40% of Minnesota homes have dangerous levels of radon.
- The average radon level in Minnesota

HOW RADON GAS ENTERS A HOUSE



homes is about 4.2 pCi/L compared to 1.3 pCi/L nationwide.

- Only about 1-2% of homes in Minnesota are tested annually, but every home in Minnesota should be tested at least every five years.
- Testing and mitigation is less frequent in communities with lower incomes and more renters.

Learn more about the radon maps, radon testing, radon mitigation, and licensure in Minnesota:

- MN Public Health Radon Data Maps
- Purchase a low-cost radon test kit
- Radon in Homes
- Or call the MDH Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601 or 1-800-798-9050



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RCSO Captain Completes Intensive 10-week Leadership Program



The Rice County Sheriff's Office proudly announces that Capt. Paul LaRoche has graduated from the School of Police Staff & Command through the Northwestern Center for Public Safety.

The 10-week course is an intensive leadership and management education program that helps prepare experienced law enforcement

professionals for success in senior command positions. The program's curriculum includes command-level content such as planning and policies, media relations, budgeting and resource allocation, human resources and contemporary policing, according to the Northwestern website.

LaRoche, a Faribault native who has served as a law enforcement officer for more than 17 years, began his career with the Rice County Sheriff's Office in early 2008. He's served in multiple roles during his tenure, including patrol deputy, instructor in use-of-force topics and field training officer for new deputies.

He was a member of two regional tactical teams for nearly 10 years and from 2014-18 worked in Investigations. He was promoted to sergeant in January 2018 and by that fall was named commander of the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force, a collaborative effort of Faribault and Northfield Police departments and the Rice and Le Sueur County Sheriff's offices.

Promoted to captain in January 2023, LaRoche oversees the office's patrol operations, scheduling, training, purchasing and up fitting squad cars, handling of forfeitures, and other various administrative duties.



Capt. Paul LaRoche, left, poses with his diploma from the School of Police Staff & Command, an intensive 10-week course for experienced law enforcement officers. Pictured with LaRoche is Sheriff Jesse Thomas.

"I appreciate Capt. LaRoche's interest in this very difficult training program and am anxious to learn what new information, ideas and perspectives he can now bring to the Sheriff's Office that will help improve services to the residents of Rice County," said

Sheriff Jesse Thomas.

LaRoche is the second member of the Rice County Sheriff's Office to complete the program. Former Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn graduated from the School of Police Staff & Command in 2008.

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: I see the sign boards along the highway with different messages posted. Do they use these for Amber Alerts? I

know I get the alert on my phone and was just curious.

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

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

Question: Do you have any advice on what a person should do if they are driving along



in the dark and their headlights go out?

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

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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)



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**Nerstrand City Council Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2024
7:00 P.M.
221 Main Street
Nerstrand, MN**

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Todd Evavold, Council Members Monica Gernandt, John Harris, Kevin O’Brien

ABSENT:
STAFF PRESENT: Clerk Frances Boehning, Public Works Steve McDowell, Fire Chief Joe Johnson

GUESTS: City residents –Karla Ingersoll, Darren, Luanne Kuntz, Don Quistorff, Nick and Trisha Streitz

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Council member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Council member John Harris. All approved.

CONSENT AGENDA:
A. Payment of Claims dated December 10, 2024.

B. Minutes from November 12, 2024
MOTION:
Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion made by Council Member Monica Gernandt, second by Council Member Kevin O’Brien. All approved.

CLERK’S REPORT:
• The Clerk reviewed the status of current projects including a suggestion by the City Attorney to conduct a comprehensive review of the City Code/ordinances in 2025. A committee will be formed in 2025 to review the ordinances.

• The Clerk noted that a grant is available to complete the upstairs of City Hall. Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve application for this grant through Bollig, Council Member John Harris seconded, all approved.

NEW BUSINESS:
• **Public Hearing for final 2025 budget/property tax levy resolution 2024-22** – Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve the 2025 tax levy at \$150,000 with no increase, Council Member John Harris seconded the motion. Following discussion, Mayor Todd Evavold noted that while he does not agree with keeping the levy with no increase, he is willing to approve the motion to avoid a standstill with two members for the motion and two against. Council Members approving the motion of the 2025 tax levy at \$150,000 with no increase; Monica Gernandt, John Harris, Todd Evavold. Council Members not approving the tax levy; Kevin O’Brien.

• **Public Hearing regarding Fee Schedule Ordinance – 2024-01 and resolution 2024-24-** Council Member John Harris made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-01 with the correct sewer increase numbers, the schedule will also remove the E-1 Pump2 line item. The Council determined that the late fee for utility payments would take effect 10 days after the utility billing due date. Council Member Monica Gernandt seconded the motion. All Council Members approved Ordinance 2024-01. Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve the publication summary in Resolution 2024-24, Kevin O’Brien seconded the motion, all approved.

• **Rick Swenson new house concern**– Planning Commission member Luanne Kuntz re-

viewed that following a planning commission meeting with Mr. Swenson, the builders would like to build the house at an angle with a 10-foot setback. The Mayor and Planning Commissioner noted the current ordinance language and determined that the ordinance setbacks of the R2 zone would apply to the property.

• **Bollig SCDP public hearing schedule for January 2025.** – Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to schedule a public hearing at next month’s regular meeting at 7:00pm on January 14th, 2025, to discuss the proposed infrastructure project and for the submission of an application to DEED’s SCDP program and to Rural Development program, Council Member John Harris seconded, all approved.

• **Insurance Renewal** – Following review, there were questions regarding why the Band Shell parcel number was listed twice and if one of those listings was the playground equipment; and a request to review the vehicle equipment. The Clerk will follow up on these questions. Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to allow the mayor to sign the form stating that the City would not waive monetary tort limits, Council Member Kevin O’Brien seconded the motion, all approved.

• **ATV Concern** – Follow discussion, Council Member Monica Gernandt noted that the City does not have enforcement capabilities and the resident should call local law enforcement.

• **Resolution 2024-23 accepting donation from Dennison Lions Club**– Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve accepting the donation, Council Member John Harris seconded the motion, all approved.

Old Business
• **Update regarding liquor ordinance, and zoning map** – Mayor Todd Evavold reviewed that the attorney is working on the ordinances. Mr. Streitz noted that for their business the person renting the facility and caters would be responsible for obtaining the annual liquor license. Council Member Monica Gernandt suggested to Mr. Streitz that the renters also be asked to provide a certificate of insurance.

• **Cannabis Ordinance discussion** – The attorney is working on a draft ordinance.

• **Resolution 2024-25 Approving Minor Subdivisions – Farm Street** – Steve McDowell reviewed the layout of Farm Street and the lot splits. Council Member John Harris made a motion to approve the resolution approving the lot splits for Farm Street, Council Member Monica Gernandt seconded the motion, all approved.

Reports of Officers
• **Public Works Director – Steve McDowell reviewed that everything had been winterized.** A new standpipe was installed, and hydrant markers were placed. The lead and copper informational letters were sent to all residents. Harvey Anderson’s property has been disconnected from the sewer system. Per a prior approved quote, a tree service will be coming through to trim the trees. The sewer and water heaters in the utility buildings are good. The brush pile will be burned when conditions are good. A short discussion was held regarding how possible grant

monies could be spent.

• **Mayor – Mayor Evavold thanked the outgoing Council Members for their service and commitment to the community.**

• **Fire Department – Truck purchase.** – **Joe Johnson reviewed recent meetings with the townships and City in the contract area.** The other jurisdictions will donate funds toward the new truck as much as they are able. Joe Johnson noted that he may have funds left over at the end of the year to contribute also. Following discussion regarding the bids and quotes (per state statute) for the new truck and outfitting, a request was made for Council to approve the purchase of the truck. Two quotes were received for the truck base while only one quote was received for outfitting (requests for bids were sent to multiple companies). Council Member Monica Gernandt made a motion to approve the purchase of the truck from Harry Browns for \$49,590, outfitting of the truck from Fire Safety USA for \$47,117.38, and graphics from National Fleet Graphics for \$1,750 for a total cost of \$98,497.38, Council Member John Harris seconded the motion, all approved.

MOTION ADJOURN:
MOTION: Motion by Council Member John Harris second by Council Member Monica Gernandt to adjourn. All Approved.

Todd Evavold, Mayor

Frances Boehning, City Clerk

Next City Council Meeting is scheduled for January 14th, 2025, at Nerstrand City Hall

**City of Dennison
Meeting minutes
December 5th, 2024**

The December Dennison City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Flaten on Thursday, December 5th, 2024 at 7:00 pm. Present were Councilors Diane Ruddle, and Kaylyn Nygaard and clerk Jessica Page. Councilors Heidi Cooke and Nichole Schloesser were unable to attend.

Councilor Nygaard moved to approve the Meeting Minutes from the November City Council meeting. Councilor Ruddle second. Motion passed 3:0.

Councilor Ruddle moved to approve the Treasurer’s report. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0.

Old Business/Committee Reports/Building Permits:

See Utilities report below:
Sheriff’s deputy: Sgt Ayrs. No concerns for Dennison. He asked Council if they had any concerns. Council didn’t have anything.

Todd Greseth: 3.4 budget increase for the County. Currently the county is full staffed. Todd noted that there was a one time home-
stead credit increase to reduce taxable values.

Administrative Issues:

1. Truth and Taxation: Preliminary Levy was set at \$200,000, with no bond amounts for the Levy as that was paid off in January of 2024. Councilor Ruddle move to approve Resolution 12-2024-01, setting the Final Levy amount at \$200,000. Councilor Nygaard second . Motion passed 3:0.

2. Reviewed the proposals submitted to the

City for fixing the city streets. Mayor contacted Pearson Bros. Inc., Deutsch Excavating, Dohmen Concrete Enterprises, Bill's Blacktop and Seykora Asphalt for bids. The project list and map was forwarded to the council before the December meeting. The City has \$13,589.84 left to use from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), and needs to obligate that money before 12/31/24 or risk losing those funds. The clerk attempted to do this for the crack sealing project last year, but since the City had completed the work before it was obligated by the U.S. Treasury reporting system, it wasn’t accepted then. Pearson Bros. was only business to submit a quote. The bid was for two components, the chip sealing, and fog sealing. Council opted not to complete the Fog Sealing. Councilor Ruddle moved to accept the Pearson bid and apply the ARPA money towards this bid. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0.

3. Neal Wilson asked the City to suspend paying his sewer fees on his second property next to Dennison Meats until he has City water service. He pointed out he is annexed into the City and doesn't have a working well and is unable to hook up to the City water supply at this time. Discussion was held on the matter. The possibility of setting a time limit to get water service to his second property then reapply sewer fees was discussed. Councilor Ruddle move to suspend the utility debt fee of \$25 and the sewer base fee of \$15 for up to 12 months for Neal Wilson’s, with quarterly reports as to whether his well is working again made to the City. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0

4. Liquor licenses and Cigarette licenses for 2025: 625 Bar and Grill has had their application returned from the Goodhue County Sheriff’s office already with no issues. We are waiting for Fireside’s to be come back from the Sheriff’s Office, but do not anticipate any issues. Councilor Ruddle move to approve 625’s liquor license, as well as Fireside’s liquor license, pending county approval. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0
Fireside and Dennison Depot would both like to renew their Cigarette Licenses for 2025. Councilor Ruddle move to approve Fireside’s and Dennison Depot’s cigarette licenses for 2025. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0

5. Mayor is requesting that the council set up a payment plan (at least a \$1,000 a year) for Karl Brogger to repay the City for the 3 hook-ups he purchased/used for his building (\$21,000). The City forgave over \$18,000 in interest (Cannon Tackle project). Karl approached the City about setting up a payment plan and forgiving the interest amounts on the hookups that would start in 2018. He has paid the City \$8500 since that time. He still owes \$12,500. Councilor Nygaard move to put in writing that the City would like to have him pay at least \$1000 per year. Mayor Flaten second. Motion passed 3:0.

6. Xcel Energy Lighting Retrofit Rebate Application update. Required documentation and application has been sent to Xcel.

(continued on page 21)

City of Dennison Meeting minutes December 5, 2024

(continued from page 20)

Rebate checks will be sent to the City in approximately 6-8 weeks and will amount to \$370. Councilor Nygaard move to accept Diane Ruddle's donation of \$350 for the lighting. Mayor Flaten second. Motion passed 2:0 Councilor Ruddle abstained.

7. FEMA has reported to the mayor that the gravel roads damaged during the June flooding events have been obligated and the City will be reimbursed for those costs (approximately \$6,700). FEMA will also reimburse Dennison for the time the mayor spent for his administrative work and the mileage costs to go to meetings in Red Wing and Faribault.

8. Update regarding City providing dental benefits for Jessica and Nate. Jessica reached out to Jenny Van Deinse from Gallagher and she relayed the information that the City would need to set up a Section 125 premium only (POP) plan document that allows the City to take the dental premiums pre-tax from employees paychecks. There wouldn't be an additional charge for Gallagher to be the broker. Jenny recommended using a TPA (Third Party Administrator) or a tax attorney. She thought it would be a couple thousand to do this. Mayor talked with the city attorney about potentially doing the Section 125, but she is unable and recommended hiring a tax attorney. Possible TPAs recommended by Jenny would be Benefit Extras and Wex. If the council wants to move forward in providing dental benefits for Jessica and Nate, the City can get estimates from a tax attorney

or a TPA before our January meeting. Jessica and Nate can get enrolled in Delta Dental anytime next year, if that is the case. Get some additional information. Small cities group to see if they have any examples.

9. Update about a new City Ordinance for Cannabis. Nothing ready at this point.

10. Goodhue County Hazard Mitigation Plan and approval. Information forwarded to the council in advance of our monthly meeting. It is something that is required by FEMA (to receive FEMA financial help) and updated every 5 years. Councilor Ruddle move to approve Resolution 12-24-02, approving the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0.

11. Work was completed to extend the City Shop/Fire Station driveway on 11-25. Gravel was donated by Kielmeyer's. Bill Duetsch donated his work also. Thank you to both of those business'! Curbs painted by the mayor. Thanks Jeff! 2 "No Parking" signs were installed next to the driveway, 20 feet from the entrance, on both sides by the Fire Department.

12. Work completed to rock and grade the stub street on 11-25. Rock was added to Farm Road, and graded. 5th Avenue and Goodhue Avenue were also graded on 11-25.

13. Dan Storlie assisted Nate with some lawn care duties this summer due to excessive rainfall in late May and all June. He was paid using the same plan as Nate, but his pay rate is currently \$18.00 hourly, and has been the same since probably before 2014. This brought up the question regarding mowing wages. Does the City need to establish a "mowing wage"? Should Dan's salary be in-

creased to be more in line with Nate's? What if someone else were to mow? What rate would they get? Dan should probably have his salary looked at also since he has not had an increase in pay for at least 10 years. Table this discussion until additional people are in attendance.

14. Street sweeping was completed 11-14-24 by Charlie Terpstra.

15. Two stumps by Fireside were ground on 11-25. Chips left in place to prevent falls from stepping in a hole.

16. Discussion on Nerstrand Fire Department's ask to assist with purchase of new vehicle. They received a grant from the Taylor Family Foundation and need to come up with a matching funds for the \$50,000 grant they received. They have some money already, but are still in need of \$17,500.

Citizens Issues:

Mayors Issues:

Mayor had a consultation with Peter Lindstrom and Jennifer Lindahl on 11-8-24 regarding Solar on Public Buildings. One possible location discussed for solar panels was City Hall. After further examination that particular area is constrained by lack of capacity for transmission lines, 100% full for capacity, according to Xcel Energy's information/capacity maps. Other City properties were discussed, and the same issue about lack of capacity was identified. If there weren't any capacity issues, 60% of the project would be covered by state grants, 30% federally guaranteed (direct pay or rebates) and 10% federal grant requiring domestic content, (Made in America requirement). Question asked about the cost of recycling solar panels. It is part of the grant program. Cities are required to recycle the solar panels. Contractors are obligated to show these potential costs. \$20 per panel to recycle, currently.

Utilities:

1. Update from Nate: Nate is planning on reading the meters at the houses that have issues with dogs on Friday the 3rd. He is currently getting ready for the final discharge of the year. He is working on changing out Pohl's water meter soon. There was discussion on whether there is an expiration date on the acid stored in the shed. Mayor thought there isn't one on the barrel. Councilor Ruddle noted that we should use the acid, as it would likely be expensive to dispose of. Councilor Ruddle brought up items for using

while working with chemicals. Nate said he has gloves, face shield already. Will work on getting a lab coat for Nate.

2. Nate hasn't calibrated the DO meter, but is planning on using it for the next discharge. He is planning on putting calibration information on the chain of custody sheets so that is kept on the record. The question was asked about trying to sell the other DO meter? Might be a lab quality meter, vs one for a small City.

3. Mayor read water meters for Beam's, Thompson's and the Duplex properties on 11-17-24. Mayor stopped by the Thompson house on 11-18 to figure out why the City wasn't getting a reading. Presume the problem is the splice made between the new and old wires on the outside of the house. Nate said he'd take a look and fix the issue. When it comes to reading meters and dog issues, mayor asked Nate if he could read water meters on either January 2nd or the 3rd and the city could notify the Beam and Duplex properties to let them know in advance. Mayor also talked with Joe Amy about his property (old Johnny Angel's place) and said we would like to have a meter reader on the north side of his building. He's willing to work with the City and help get this installed in December. Mayor asked Nate if he could replace the water meter for the Pohl property the early part of December. If not completed, the City could use Paul's Plumbing.

4. MPCA annual review was sent to the City. City missed a set of influent samples in December 2023, had one pH reading over 9 at 9.1 on one of the discharges, and was over in phosphorus total kg for the year. Clerk went through and reviewed the information, and found that the automatic calculations for two of the months were incorrect, and the correct calculations should keep the City below the annual Phosphorus limit for 2024. Emailed MPCA regarding this, but haven't heard back.


It was Councilor Nygaard's last meeting and she was thanked for her service over the last two years.

Mayor Flaten move to approve the bills. Councilor Nygaard second. Motion passed 3:0.

Mayor Flaten move to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Nygaard second. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Next meeting: Regular meeting is Thursday, January 2nd, 2025 at 7:00.

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