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MAY 21, 2025

Volume 19 • Issue 5

Dundas Publishes Regular Drinking Water Report Showing No Issues In City Water

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The City of Dundas released a statement in response to questions city leadership had been receiving about the water in the city, in particular, if Dundas had high levels of manganese like Northfield.

Dundas conducts annual testing of the city's two wells, working with the Minnesota Health Department to test for over 100 different contaminants. The latest test was completed in July 2024.

(continued on page 20)

Announcements

- The 2024 Drinking Water Report is available at <https://www.cityofdundas.org/utility-services/pages/drinking-water-report> or in-person at Dundas City Hall. To request a paper copy, please contact Dundas City Hall.
- The Memorial Park pavilion is available for rent, please contact City Hall at 507-645-2852 for availability. Half day rentals Monday through Friday, or all day rentals any day of the week.

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Rice County Steam & Gas Annual Flea Market & Swap Meet May 24th & 25th

The Rice County Steam & Gas Show has announced their annual Swap Meet and Flea Market for May 24th & 25th.

Annual Swap Meet & Flea Market; Consignment Auction 9am Saturday
S.E.A.T. P. Tractor Pull 9am Sunday; Miniature Railroad Train Rides

Free admission, held rain or shine.

Check out their website and facebook page for more information. www.ricecountysteamandgas.com



Field Renamed to Bill Nelson Field at Memorial Park

BILL NELSON FIELD 16
AT MEMORIAL PARK

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Dukes are playing at the same ballpark but with a new name, recently approved by the Dundas City Council, to Bill Nelson Field at Memorial Park. The City Administrator of Dundas, Jenelle Teppen, noted Nelson's legacy as a fundamental part of the Dukes and Dundas:

"Certainly the biggest news in terms of you know the wider community and the support that the Dukes in particular received from Dundas". – Jenelle Teppen, Dundas City Administrator on the KYMN Morning Show

Nelson worked for decades to improve the ballpark. He also played for the Dukes, helping them go to state three times in his time on the team, and is in the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame.

The Duke's field is considered one of the nicest ballparks in the state amateur baseball league, undergoing major renovations in 2021 and being featured in the book, Town Ball Parks of Minnesota. Duke's games are free to attend, though food and drinks are served, and donations are appreciated. (continued on page 3)

Russ Franek and The Biscuits to Headline Dennison Days

Summer festival season kicks off soon as area communities plan their summer events and festivals.

Dennison Days takes place this year Friday and Saturday, June 20 & 21, 2025.



(continued on page 11)

HAVE A SAFE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

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Congratulations & Best Wishes

We wish all of this year's hardworking graduates good luck and great success as they start the next chapter.

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The Future Is Bright!

By Pastor Larry Grove,
Hauge Lutheran Church, Kenyon

At the end of this month, young men and women will be graduating from high school all around this country. They will be leaving friends that they have spent years with and entering a new phase of life that, regardless of the path that they choose, will be exciting and often filled with wonder and apprehension.

My graduation day happened to land on my 18th birthday. The emotions that I felt that evening were all over the map. Excitement over what the future would bring my way coupled with the memories of teachers that had invested their time and efforts to pour knowledge and wisdom into my life flooded me with gratitude. The camaraderie with teammates that was fostered through all the sporting events over the years would prove to last a lifetime. The time to turn the page in my book of life had come. When I finally turned it over I found a clean, unmarked leaf that was waiting for me to fill it with the words in the next chapter.

We are blessed as a community to have a class of young people graduating this year that are special and unique in so many ways. Having watched this group over the years it is obvious that wherever they might land, that locality will be enriched.

As we look across the landscape of our

country and see all the turmoil and division happening before us, I find great hope in the words of scripture. Isaiah 59:19b says, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him."

It is my belief that the standard God is raising up is Godly young men and women. All around the world you can see young people taking a stand for Christ. My hope for this group is that they would join the ranks of those that are speaking out for morality and Biblical truth in the public square. Our country is in desperate need of warriors that are willing to be a part of that standard that God is raising up against the enemy of truth and

righteousness.

Please pray for these graduates and encourage them in their walk. Their future is bright and they are the hope we are passing the torch to.

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Area Church Directory

Thomas

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. — John 20:24

I can understand Thomas's doubt. For whatever reason, he wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus first visited them after his resurrection, so he hadn't seen Jesus firsthand. Maybe he should have taken the disciples' word for it when they told him they had seen Jesus. Maybe he should have had more faith. Or maybe he was just an untrusting sort of person. Whatever the case, Thomas said he just couldn't believe Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself.

When Jesus came again and Thomas could see him, Jesus was patient with Thomas. Jesus even showed Thomas what he said he needed to see in order to believe. But Jesus also noted that all who believe without seeing him will be blessed.

Today that includes you and me. Belief without seeing is the nature of our faith most of the time. We probably won't see Christ in person until we join him in eternity. Until then, though, we believe even though we have not seen.

We are called to have faith in Jesus for who he is, all he has done, and all he has promised. We believe because others have seen, because others have witnessed, and because their testimony is in God's Word to us, along with all of God's promises. We believe because the Spirit of God guides us into the truth of God's Word and gives us faith (see John 16:7-15; Ephesians 2:6-10). And in believing we are blessed.

Lord, help us to believe even though we have not seen. By your Spirit, lead us to know the truth that brings life in you. Amen.

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404 Schilling Drive, Dundas

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

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

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

LITTLE PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST 2980 130th St. E.

Pastor Penny Bonsell • pastor@littleprairieumc.org

507-663-6150 church phone • 651-503-4279 Cell
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship; Sunday School & Nursery; Adult Group 8a.m.

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

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

LIFE21 CHURCH 2100 Jefferson Road (just north of Target)

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

10:00a.m. Worship Experience

NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

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

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

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

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

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

Fellowship time with refreshments between services.

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

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

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William “Bill” Wayne Nelson

William “Bill” Wayne Nelson, age 73, of Northfield, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, Saturday morning, April 19, 2025, at his home.

Bill was born on October 23, 1951, in Albert Lea, MN to parents Harold and Marilyn (Sunde) Nelson. He graduated from Albert Lea High School in 1970. Bill was an accomplished athlete and sports enthusiast. In high school, Bill was the co-captain of the Albert Lea basketball and baseball teams and was named to the all-conference teams in both sports. He also pitched in all 3 games as Albert Lea finished

2nd in the 1969 state baseball tournament.

After high school, Bill attended Augsburg College where he received his BA in English. He then started working as a teacher at Kenyon Schools. At Augsburg, Bill was a two-time all-conference pitcher, co-captain, and led Augsburg to the conference championship in 1973 and runner-up in 1974. He was also an outstanding softball player and was a key member of the 1975 state championship team.

Bill was a major advocate of amateur (town-team) baseball. He started playing in 1970 with Hayward, Mn. In 1974, Bill joined the power-house team Dick’s Place from Columbia Heights. Then in 1975, Bill joined the Dundas Dukes. He started as a player and later as the manager. During his over 30 years with the Dukes, Dundas won the Minnesota state tournament 4 times (twice as a player and twice as manager) and finished runner up 6 times. Bill was also the head baseball coach at Carleton College from 1994 to 2005 and was elected to the Augsburg Athletic Hall of Fame in 1996, and to the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007.

Bill married Patricia Stanton on November 16, 1990. He was loved and will be dearly

missed.

Bill is survived by his wife, Patricia Nelson; children Allan (Nicole) Gill of Northfield, Eric (Samantha) Gill of Nerstrand and Amanda (Cam) Edmonds of Northfield; grandchildren Sydney Gill, Dominic Gill, Michael Strandberg and Miranda Strandberg; brothers Bruce (Elizabeth) Nelson of The Villages, FL, Robert of Minneapolis, Byron (Sharon) of Lakewood WA, Greg (Sharon) of Dayton, OH, and John (Cindy) of Rogers; sisters and brothers-in-law Val Zweber of Prior Lake, Loriann Stanton of Shakopee, JoAnne (Ken) Egger of Spokane, WA, Colleen (Leo) Skluzacek of Northfield, Billy (Jan) Stanton of Dundas, Marcia Stanton of Northfield, Mary Ellen (Jerry) Jirik of Lakeville, Monica (Kevin) Lynch of Northfield, Tim (Christine) Stanton of Northfield and Michelle (Patrick) Fox of Lakeville; nephews and nieces Jeff and Amy, Maridee and Mark; Eric; Jessica, Laura, Justin and Sarah; and Erin, Emily and Sarah. He was preceded in death by his parents; father and mother-in-law, William and Loretta Stanton; sisters-in-law Loretta Zweber, Donna Stanton and Diane Nelson; and brothers-in-law Donald Stanton, David Stanton and Mark

Stanton.

Special thanks to neighbors and long-time friends that were there for Bill in his final journey, Rick and Pam. To his grandchildren, Dominic and Sydney Gill, Bill helped care for you when you were born early and needed extra special care, thank you for the extra special care you gave Bill, we love you.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Dundas Baseball or Augsburg Baseball.

A dedication to rename the field at Memorial Park to Bill Nelson Field will be held at 1 PM on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at Memorial Park. A Celebration of Life will follow the dedication, at the Ballpark, until 4 PM.

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



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DO YOU HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT?
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Dundas Messenger

Field Renamed to Bill Nelson Field at Memorial Park

(continued from page 1)

The Dundas Dukes Baseball Club is an amateur baseball team located in Dundas, Minn. The Dukes have won five state championships and have finished runner up eight times.

A dedication to rename the field at Memorial Park to Bill Nelson Field will be held at 1 PM on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at Memorial Park. A Celebration of Life for Bill Nelson will follow the dedication, at the Ballpark, until 4 PM.

As the team would say: “Have Fun. You’re in the Town of Baseball.”

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The Life-Changing Benefits of Working at a Christian Summer Camp



By Emmarie Moon
Director of Discipleship
and Recruiting at Camp Victory

Every summer, my job is to convince young adults to trade traditional internships or seasonal jobs for something more meaningful: working at a Christian summer camp. While camps are known for offering children and teens a place to grow in faith, friendships, and

fun, the staff behind the scenes often experience just as much—if not more—personal and spiritual transformation. Whether you're considering it for the first time or returning for another summer, there are many reasons why working at a Christian camp might be one of the best decisions you ever make.

1. Spiritual Growth

At a Christian camp, faith is woven into the daily routine—through morning devotionals, chapels, small group discussions, and prayer. As a staff member, you're not just facilitating these activities for campers; you're also participating and growing spiritually alongside them. This experience deepens your relationship with God and strengthens your ability to lead others in faith.

Being responsible for the spiritual guidance of young campers is a humbling and formative role. You'll learn how to lead Bible studies, pray publicly, and share your testimony. These are valuable skills that will serve you in church, school, and future leadership positions.

2. Building Lifelong Friendships

The bonds formed at camp are often among the strongest you'll ever make. Living and working in close quarters with like-minded peers—often through late nights, challenging days, and incredible highs—creates a unique environment for authentic connection. Many staff members leave camp with friends who feel like family and a support system that lasts long after the summer ends. This is the most common reason why staff come back to work at Camp. They love the community.

Even after moving states and into my young adult years, I am still friends with people I worked at camp with eight summers ago. From different states, weddings, kids and jobs, the bonds formed at camp are strong.

3. Making an Eternal Impact

Few jobs give you the opportunity to make such a direct and lasting impact on someone's life. As a counselor or staff member, you're a role model, mentor, and spiritual guide to the campers in your care. Whether it's through a late-night conversation by the campfire, a moment of prayer, or simply being a consistent source of kindness and encouragement, your influence could help shape a young person's faith for life. This is the reason many campers return to camp to work on staff, their life was impacted by a summer staff member and they want to give that experience to campers too.

4. Developing Real-World Skills

Christian camps provide hands-on training in areas like communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, time management, and adaptability—the top 5 most sought-after skills in the workplace. From organizing events and leading activities to handling unexpected situations, the job pushes you to grow in confidence and competence. A camp alumni and area school principal says this of camp staff: "When you see camp experience on an applicant's resume you pay attention. Camp staff are energetic problem-solvers, and the ultimate team players. They have an attitude of joy that comes from serving a higher purpose. That skill set raises their ap-

plication to the top of the list."

Plus, many camps offer certifications in areas like first aid, lifeguarding, or ropes course instruction, which can be valuable resume additions for jobs beyond the summer.

5. A Break from the Digital World

Unlike many jobs that revolve around screens and office spaces, working at a camp immerses you in nature and face-to-face interaction. The simplicity of camp life—free from technology and distractions—gives you space to reflect, connect with others, and be fully present.

Final Thoughts

Working at a Christian summer camp is more than just a job—it's a calling and a journey of transformation. It challenges you, grows you, and blesses you in ways few other experiences can. Whether you're drawn by the opportunity to lead, grow in your faith, or serve others, one summer at camp could leave an eternal mark on your life—and the lives of others.

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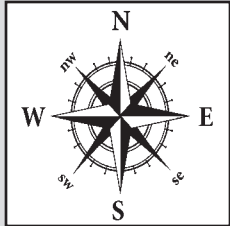
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

My First Mini Bike



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.

Growing up a farm boy, I was intrigued by anything with an engine. Tractors, combines, swathers, skid loaders, etc. Grease and gasoline smelled wonderful to me. And diesel fuel smoke was the best. So, anything that was not foot powered had my attention. My dad had a Harley-Davidson Type 74 before he had a family, so maybe the idea of a two-wheeler was in my blood.

In the 1960's many companies made mini-bikes. Basically, made of a leftover lawnmower engine and wheels. But they were fun

to zoom around on. I already had horse, but a mini-bike didn't require any feed when not in use. One day I looked at the hardware flyer from Beaver's Hardware in Kasson, and there was a new in box minibike for sale that week. My father took me in and we ordered it. I was so excited and couldn't wait for it to come. I had heard that some people go to the factory to see their vehicle assembled and I got to do the next best thing. I convinced him to let me ride along in the truck to bring it back.

My dad would drive a large cattle truck to the twin cities to haul freight back to the local retailers when he wasn't busy farming. I loved to ride along with him whenever I could. He would load livestock at local farms and deliver the cattle or hogs to the South Saint Paul Stockyards. Next the truck box was blasted clean with a high-volume water hose at a truck wash. Then he would drive all over the twin cities loading on freight for Kasson and Rochester retailers. It was so much fun to ride from warehouse to warehouse getting the truck filled with huge boxes. Every week there was a shipment hauled back to the hardware stores in Kasson. There was the Gambles Store, Erickson's Our Own Hardware and Beavers Hardware.

The shipment was rather anti-climactic. Except for a small picture on the side, one wouldn't know what was inside the large brown cardboard box. It was partially disassembled and completely in a box. And we still had to bring it home from the store and unpack it. Once the handle bars were installed, oil added to the crankcase and fuel tank filled, it was ready. A couple pulls on the



recoil start and it roared to life.

I drove that mini bike all over the farm. In the woods, through the creek and out to the field. It crossed the river and went up every hill just to prove it could be done. My dad was quite the stickler for obeying the law and explained that I must get off and push the mini-bike across the highway. It wasn't street legal and I was expected to abide by man-made rules. At least when he was watching, anyway. But that smooth asphalt road was so much better to ride on. If I looked both ways and there was nothing approaching, I would head right down Highway 57 to the field drive, instead to riding down the road ditch.

Soon I learned a few things about that little gas engine. I still have a scar on my wrist from where I touched the exhaust pipe as I checked the oil on a hot engine. I also dis-

covered that touching the spark plug while the engine was running was a shocking experience. I could override the governor and that little 3 1/2 horse power engine would double the top end speed. I would just put my foot up and push governor over and that thing would fly. I never thought about the little Tecumseh engine flying apart from the high rpm's. Coming back down the field drive I felt like I was flyin'.

One day I was heading back from the hog barn and I realized too late that the electric fence gate was closed at the driveway. I locked up the brake and laid the mini-bike down, sliding right under the wire. To my amazement I came back up on two wheels and continued on. That little blue mini-bike gave me hours of fun as a kid.

**We'd like to extend our
sincere congratulations
to all area graduates.**

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A Minnesotan: Mother's Day



By RosaLin Alcoser

May is here which means Mother's Day is once again upon us. I for one am looking forward to spending time with my own mother this Mother's Day.

Now that we're adults my mom generally spends one year with me and the other with my sister. Partly to be fair, but mainly because we live in two different states with Iowa in the middle. So unless one of us travels to the other she only gets to see one of us at a time. And she always insists on coming to us. I think it is mainly a ploy to get us to take her out to different ice cream places then she has where she lives. Which is besides the point.

These days mother's day typically means I take my mother out to brunch if she's visiting me or sending her something I know she'll enjoy if she's with my sister. But

when I was little it meant making cards, little tinkety things that we picked out for mom and homemade gifts. My mom even has a couple of the tissue paper flowers I made for her one year.

However, every once in a while when I was a child we would get her a nice gift. Which often meant doing something with my older sister or our dad getting involved. I was probably about eight the year I decided to get her a really nice gift all on my own.

After months of saving up to buy her something really nice. I managed to talk my dad into taking me into town to buy mom's Mother's Day gift at the JC Penny in Rochester. Where I picked out a pair of tiny opal earrings for her; which she still wears every Mother's Day.

I picked those earrings out from the jewelry counter at JC Penny's. Not from one of the display tables, from the counter. I looked into the case and told the lady working the counter which ones I wanted to buy. Then I paid for them all by myself.

Those earrings cost eight year old me about \$30; which is a lot of money if you're an eight year-old circa 2005. But I was so excited to give them to her, because I bought them myself without any help from my dad or older sister.

While taking my mom out to brunch doesn't have the same thrill of giving her my first big deal gift I had bought her myself. I am still looking forward to getting to spend this Mother's Day with her.

Spring Projects and Wetland Protection: What Landowners Need to Know



By Al Henderson,
Rice SWCD Resource Specialist

Spring is starting to make an appearance here in Minnesota. The trees are starting to leaf out, flowers are beginning to bloom, and the birds are chirping! For many, spring is a busy time to start projects around your property, whether you're getting ready for the crop season, wanting to start a new construction project, or maintaining existing projects after the long winter months.

It is important as a landowner to know the regulations involving your land. One of the regulations to consider is the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The WCA was enacted

in 1991 and designed to protect wetlands in Minnesota. Wetlands provide several benefits to the environment including, but not limited to, flood control, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality. The protection of these unique ecosystems is done by regulating draining, filling, and excavating activities in a wetland area.

While some wetland areas have long periods of standing water and aquatic vegetation, other wetland areas aren't as obvious. As planting season kicks into gear, many Rice County farmers and rural landowners are out preparing fields, repairing tile lines, or planning new construction. But before digging, ditching, tiling, or filling any low-lying areas, it's important to consider potential wetland areas. It is a good practice to contact the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District before starting any earthwork on your property. Rice SWCD Staff can help determine if a wetland is present and offer technical assistance on next steps for wetland permitting and applications.

Another great resource available to landowners is the Rice County Beacon online mapping system. By visiting the Beacon website, you can search for the property in question and turn on the Wetland layer under the Water Resources Tab. Once activated, the map will highlight potential wetland areas in blue, giving you a visual reference of where wetlands may exist on your land. While this tool doesn't provide one hundred percent accurate wetland boundaries, it's a helpful first step in identifying areas that may require further review. If you notice those blue wetland areas on your property map, it's a good idea



Before you dig, ditch, tile, fill, or excavate, it is important to identify the wetlands on your property and obtain the proper permits.

to follow up with the Rice SWCD to determine if a formal wetland determination is needed before starting any earthmoving projects.

Whether you're new to rural landownership or have been farming for decades, understanding how wetlands interact with your

land is key to avoiding surprises. If you're planning a project this spring, no matter how small, give Rice SWCD a call. We're here to help you stay compliant and make the most of your land! For more information about wetlands, visit our website at www.riceswcd.org/wetlands.

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MDA Reminds Minnesotans to Use Pesticides and Fertilizers with Care

With the arrival of spring, many Minnesotans are thinking about their lawns, trees, and gardens. Whether you do yardwork yourself or hire a professional, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) urges the safe use of pesticides and fertilizers on your property by following all label directions.

Pesticide and fertilizer labels specify how to use products safely and effectively. In Minnesota, it is unlawful to apply products without following label instructions. The label is the law.

If you hire a professional lawn care provider, do your homework. State law requires pesticide applicators to be licensed by the MDA to commercially apply pesticides and fertilizers, including weed and feed product. Applicators must know and understand state and federal regulations regarding all aspects of pesticide and fertilizer handling, application, and disposal to be licensed by the MDA. The following are helpful tips for a safe spring season.

If you hire a professional:

Professionals must be licensed by the MDA and carry their pesticide applicator license with them. Ask to see their license before they start work. You can also look up license holders on the MDA website:

mda.state.mn.us/licensinglookup. Search under "Fertilizer Companies with Commercial Pesticide Applicators" or "Pesticide Applicator/Manure License" with a "Commercial Pesticide Applicator – Turf and Ornamentals" license type.

Be cautious of people who claim their products are completely safe or pressure you to sign a service contract.

Recognize posted warning flags in areas that have been chemically treated.

Applicators are required to provide an application record to you. Review the records, including products used and the amounts applied.

Be sure the applicator sweeps the sidewalks and hard surfaces clean of any dry or granular products.

If you do it yourself:

Read and follow all label directions.

Do not apply products in windy or adverse weather conditions. High wind can cause products to drift and potentially harm people, pets, or plants.

Sweep sidewalks and hard surfaces of any dry or granular product and reapply to the intended site. Pesticides left on watertight surfaces easily wash into our water supply.

For more information about how to dispose of pesticides, visit the MDA website: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/household-waste-pesticides>

For information about applicator licenses, call the MDA at 651-201-6615. To report unlicensed applicators, please file a complaint on the MDA website or call 651-201-6333.

Consumers can contact the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org/us/mn and check customer satisfaction histories for lawn care companies.



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Dangers of Chewing Gum



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

Sun Exposure: Natural sunlight plays a vital role in supporting overall health. Sunlight-derived vitamin D remains in the bloodstream two to three times longer than supplements, making it a more effective and sustainable way of maintaining optimal levels. When the sun's rays touch your skin, a cascade of benefits begins. Your body produces beta-endorphins, which are natural pain relievers and mood enhancers, helping to reduce stress and boost mental well-being. At the same time, sun exposure triggers the release of nitric oxide, a compound that lowers blood pressure and improves circulation, ultimately reducing the risk of heart disease. It's amazing how something as simple as a few minutes of sunlight can make such an impact on both your mood and your body.

However, the benefits of sunlight do come with a caveat—strategic and safe exposure is key. Overuse of sunscreen, for example, can block up to 97.5% of UVB rays, limiting your body's ability to synthesize sufficient vitamin D. While all natural sunscreen is essential for preventing sunburn and reducing the risk of skin cancer, it's important to balance its use with safe, unprotected exposure during low-UV hours, such as early morning or late afternoon. Experts recommend spending around 10–20 minutes in the sun a few times a week—just enough for your skin to kickstart the production of vitamin D without causing damage. Simple practices like this allow you to reap the benefits of the sun while staying safe.

The importance of sunlight becomes even clearer when considering longevity. Research

shows that people who actively avoid sunlight often have a shorter lifespan compared to those who incorporate sensible sun exposure into their routine. Sun avoidance has been equated with the health risks of heavy smoking, serving as a stark reminder of how critical natural sunlight is for our bodies. Beyond physical health, the psychological impact cannot be overstated—whether it's the calming warmth of sunlit mornings or the sense of renewal that comes from a sunny afternoon, the sun has a way of nurturing both body and mind.

While soaking up the sunshine does wonders, remember that balance is crucial.

If you're fair-skinned or live in an area with intense sunlight, consider wearing hats or lightweight, protective clothing to prevent overexposure during peak UV hours. For deeper skin tones, slightly longer exposure may be necessary to achieve the same vitamin D benefits. The sun isn't just a source of light—it's a natural healer. Learning how to use it wisely not only enhances your health but also strengthens your connection to something that's been a part of life since the beginning.

Chew Gum? Recent research has revealed that chewing gum could be far more concerning than we previously thought, acting as a significant source of microplastic exposure. A study soon to be published in the *Journal of Hazardous Materials Letters* found that each piece of gum may release hundreds to thousands of microplastic particles into our mouths during chewing, placing it among the top contributors to microplastic exposure in everyday life. Microplastics, defined as tiny fragments of plastic smaller than a sesame seed, are all around us—in the water we drink, the air we breathe, and now, potentially, in something as routine as chewing gum.

The study, conducted by researchers at UCLA, observed that both synthetic and natural gum bases can release microplastics, especially in the first eight minutes of chewing. While the exact health implications of ingesting these tiny plastic particles remain unknown, the findings highlight another unsettling way microplastics infiltrate our bodies. It leaves us questioning whether this seemingly harmless habit could carry unforeseen consequences and sparks concern over what else we might unknowingly ingest as part of our everyday routines.

These findings underscore the urgent need for closer regulation of materials used in con-

sumer products like chewing gum, as well as a broader discussion about microplastic pollution and its pervasive role in our lives. While the full health impact is still unclear, studies like this remind us of the ongoing challenge of living in a world where plastic has become so deeply embedded in our daily experience. It's not just about chewing gum; it's about taking a step back and looking at how intertwined plastic is with the choices we make every day.

Chiropractic and Knee trouble: Chiropractic care for knee problems is often overlooked yet can be incredibly effective in addressing not just the symptoms but the underlying causes of discomfort. When the knee functions improperly, it isn't always just the knee that's to blame—it can stem from areas like the hips, lower back, or even foot alignment. Chiropractors focus on realigning the body to promote proper joint mechanics and reduce stress on the knee. I've talked to countless patients who initially thought their pain was "all in the knee," only to discover that subtle imbalances elsewhere in their bodies were the culprits.

One of my favorite aspects of chiropractic care is its ability to provide relief without invasive procedures. Techniques like gentle manual adjustments, soft tissue therapy, and targeted exercises work together to restore mobility and alleviate inflammation in the knee. I've seen patients walk out with smiles after realizing they could move more freely after months of being hindered by stiffness or pain. What's more, many report improved overall posture and balance, which further re-



duces strain on the knees in their daily lives. It's amazing how a few adjustments can make such a difference.

Of course, every knee problem is unique, and that's what makes chiropractic care so personal and effective. I've worked with athletes recovering from ACL injuries as well as people in their golden years simply looking to stay mobile and active. Each plan is carefully tailored to the individual's needs, ensuring long-term support for their lifestyle. For me, it's about helping patients feel heard and cared for while guiding them toward a better quality of life—something that keeps me passionate about this field every single day.

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



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67-year-old Killed in Rice County Crash Wasn't Wearing a Seatbelt, State Patrol Says

Courtesy of KSTP & MN State Patrol

A 67-year-old man who was killed Friday after his vehicle collided with another on a wet road was reportedly not wearing a seatbelt.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Craig Eugene Johnson, 67, of Nerstrand, MN, was driving a 2014 Ford Escape in the east-bound lanes on Highway 246 around 1:42 p.m.

A GMC Yukon, driven by a 44-year-old woman from Kenyon, MN, was driving west on the highway when the two vehicles collided near 170th Street East.

The Minnesota State Patrol said Johnson was killed in the crash, and the other driver received non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to the hospital. She, according to the State Patrol, was also not wearing a seat belt.



Craig Johnson

Dependent



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

There is a strong drive within many of us to be able to do an activity without the assistance of another. Perhaps this started when you discovered how much more of the world you could explore when you learned to walk, or maybe when you learned to ride a bike without someone holding on to you. As we move into May, many young people will graduate from school and take on new responsibilities and new adventures. We use phrases like “spreading their wings” and “gaining independence.” While it cannot be denied that knowledge and practice lead to new abilities, some reflection will note there are things we are dependent on that should not be forgotten.

Being dependent on something is not a sign of weakness. Recognizing what we are dependent on can give us greater clarity and wisdom on the essentials of life. For example, you are dependent on oxygen. We take this for granted until we get “the wind knocked out” of us, or when we find ourselves in a hospital bed with an oxygen mask. You are dependent on pure water. When you were born, your body was 70% water. How important that you keep pure water flowing through so that you do not become a “stagnant pond” growing all kinds of unhealthy things. The general guideline is half your body weight in fluid ounces, so a 200 pound individual should be drinking around 100 ounces of water a day, which is about 12 cups.

You are also dependent on vitamins and minerals. Most of the vitamins were discovered in science observations during the first part of the 1900s. They were first described as “vital amines” noting the vital role these nutrients played in providing health and vitality. With each vitamin there is a list of deficiencies noted when the vitamin is absent in a person’s regular diet. Deficiencies point to our dependence on these essential nutrients. When Vitamin A is absent, you may notice night-blindness, or some kinds of skin disorders like eczema or psoriasis. When B vitamins are absent, you will notice mood swings, fatigue, or mental health challenges.

When Vitamin C is absent, illness increases and sores develop in the mouth and on the skin. When Vitamin D is absent, illness increases, weight can increase, and insomnia can increase. These are just the beginning of the ABCs and Ds of vitamins.

Minerals are essential for a healthy immune response, promoting energy, and helping the body muscles to function properly. Most

Americans do not consume enough magnesium each day. Magnesium is essential for helping you to relax as well as helping the body to produce energy. Zinc is used in more than 300 different reactions in the body, aiding the proper activation of the immune system and helping the digestive process. Iodine is the key mineral for the hormone produced by the thyroid that keeps your metabolism in balance. This mineral tends to be deficient in many clients living in the Midwest region. Minerals and vitamins work as a team to complete the perfectly designed function of your body.

Knowing you are dependent on vitamins and minerals for healthy living should help you to consider the best way to acquire these nutrients each day so that you can be more independent on other activities. Will taking a multi-vitamin or mineral tablet work best for you? Can you identify those foods that are the best source for these nutrients and make sure to eat them regularly? You will note our great grandparents were strong and lived active lives without supplements, so getting your nutrients from food is possible. In today’s world of convenience foods and fast eating, the nutrient value has significantly declined requiring us to take a closer look at the sources of our food.

If you choose to take vitamin supplements to help maintain a healthy life, make sure to identify a quality supplement that obtains its vitamins from fruits and vegetables. There should be ingredients listed that mention fruits and vegetables on the nutrition label. A simple test on the quality of the supplement is to place a tablet in a glass of water and return one hour later. If the tablet has fallen apart in the water then it is a tablet your body can easily absorb. If the tablet has not fallen apart and remains whole there is a chance you are not getting any nutrients from that vitamin.

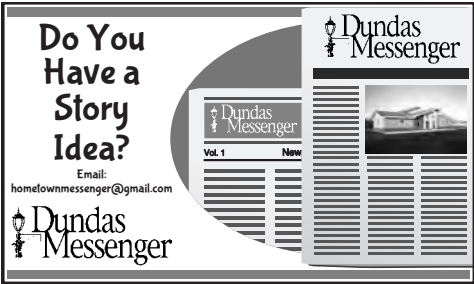
I am available to review your questions about supplements, testing, and food plans. Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. I can help you realize greater health freedom in 2025. You can contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

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



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Public Health Spotlight Rabies Prevention and Control

By Tammy Fiedler, BSN, RN, PHN
& Dr. Sarah Fries, DVM



Public Health
Prevent. Educate. Protect.

Rabies is a fatal neurologic disease caused by infection with Rabies Lyssavirus. In the U.S., people can be exposed to rabies by coming into contact with wild animals carrying the virus or through their pets, if the pet has encountered a rabid animal. All warm-blooded animals and humans of all ages are susceptible to rabies. Rabies infection is transmitted by the saliva from a bite of an infected animal, by aerosol (inhaled) in caves populated by bats, and rarely from the scratch of an infected animal. People who are exposed to rabies should seek medical care immediately.

In the United States, cats are the domestic species most frequently reported to be rabid, with 200 to 300 cases per year. Worldwide, dogs are the predominant domestic animal to be infected by rabies. Wildlife is the main source of human infection in developed countries. Common carriers in the U.S. include raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. The best way to avoid rabies in the U.S. is to keep your distance from wildlife. Never approach injured animals; instead, contact animal control for assistance.

Pet owners can lower their risk by keeping pets up to date on rabies vaccines. For cats and dogs, the first rabies vaccine is given at 16 weeks of age. The rabies vaccine is then repeated one year later. After these first two rabies vaccines, dogs and cats are usually vaccinated for rabies every two to three years. Large animals can also be vaccinated for rabies. To reduce risk of rabies exposure, keep your pets away from wild animals and unfamiliar pets as much as possible. Pets that are exposed are quarantined for ten days to six months or euthanized and sent for testing. Testing to detect rabies infection is always done post-mortem. If you have questions regarding rabies exposure and your pet, call your veterinarian.

If you suspect you have been exposed to rabies or if you have been bitten or scratched by an animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water, then call your health care provider. You must wash and seek medical help right away. Mammals infected with rabies typically die within 10 days of onset of clinical signs. Your healthcare provider will be able to guide you on whether you need treatment. The treatment after rabies exposure is called post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). This treatment is highly effective if it's given as soon as possible after exposure. Delaying PEP can lead to an untreatable rabies infection and death.



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LET'S BANK TOGETHER.

Mark Your Calendar for Dennison Days June 20 & 21

(continued from page 1)



The Gopher State Garden Tractor Pullers will return to Main Street Friday evening in Dennison, hosted by 625 Bar & Grill. More information is available at www.gsgtp.com.

Following the Pull, 625 will host live music from Andy Tackett.

A full schedule of events will take place Saturday. Kicking off the days will be the annual pancake breakfast, hosted by the Nerstrand Fire Department and Dennison Church. The Farmers Market is scheduled to return along with The Classic Car Show.

Trophies will be awarded for the Car Show at 1 PM.

Euchre will take place at The Fireside at 8:30. New this year is a Scavenger Hunt at 9 AM. Those wishing to participate should sign up at the Mainstreet Tent to learn about the search area. The First person to find the treasure will win \$100.00.

The Antique Tractor Pull begins on the hill at 10 AM. The Cow milking Contest hosted by Flom Dairy will be at 10 AM downtown.

The Kids Pedal Pull will take place at 11



Andy Tackett will perform during Dennison Days Friday, June 20th at 625 Bar & Grill

AM, and Kids Bingo under the tent will be at noon. A kickball tournament will be at Noon in the city park area. The kids carnival will be from 1-3 PM, with the parade on mainstreet at 1:30. Be a part of the parade! Best Parade entry can win \$100.00. A Bags tournament will start at 2:30 hosted by 625 Bar & Grill.

Other activities on the afternoon calendar include Purse & Gift Card Bingo at 4 pm, a Pie Eating Contest, with a \$250.00 prize at 6 pm.

The Keg Toss returns at 6:30 across from Fireside, and the day rounds out with local musicians, RUSS FRANEK and THE BISCUITS playing entertaining for the evening. A Full Schedule is available at www.dennisondays.org.

Also watch for any updates on the website and on Facebook!

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Saturday Schedule of Events

- 8-11a.m. All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast Under Mainstreet tent. Hosted by Nerstrand-Dennison Fire Dept., and Dennison Community Church. \$12 for adults, \$5 for kids 12 & under, 3 & under FREE. Includes pancakes, eggs, sausage, coffee, juice, milk
- 8a.m. Farmers Market Downtown
Citywide Garage Sales
Classic Car Show on Mainstreet Presented by Clutchmen Car Club. Registration \$10. Trophies at 1p.m. Contact Jason Aldorfer 612-203-4172
- 8:30a.m. Euchre at Fireside Lounge For information, contact Jen Eggum 507-649-0602
- 9:00a.m. Scavenger Hunt - \$100 Cash Prize! Meet and sign up at the tent. Hunt will begin at 9am.
- 10a.m. Antique Tractor Pull Begins on the Hill Sign up begins at 8:30a.m.
Cow Milking Contest Main Street, hosted by David Flom Dairy
- 11a.m. Food Stands Open
Kids Pedal Tractor Pull on Mainstreet (At Mainstreet intersection) Sign up begins at 10:30a.m.
- Noon Kids Bingo Under the tent. Presented by Dennison Lions. Ages 3-11
Kickball Tournament Hosted by 625 Bar & Grill. Sign up at 625 Bar & Grill
- 1:00p.m. Car Show Trophies Awarded
- 1-3p.m. Kids Carnival
- 1:30p.m. Parade Downtown - A Kiddie Parade Leads Off Main Parade (Ages 12 & Under)
\$100.00 Prize for Best Parade Entry! Sign up at Noon. South Mainstreet. Call 507-645-9992
- 2:30p.m. 625 Bar & Grill Bags Tournament - Prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place! Sign up at 625 or call 507-782-9061
- 4:00p.m. Purse & Gift Card Bingo Presented by Dennison Lions & Fireside Lounge
- 6:00p.m. Pie Eating Contest - \$250 Cash Prize! Under the tent. Sign up at 625 Bar & Grill
- 6:30p.m. Keg Toss - \$150 Cash Prize! Across from Fireside Lounge
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For updated info. go to www.dennisondays.org

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SMIF Announces Benya Kraus as next President & CEO

 Southern Minnesota
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

OWATONNA, Minn – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) is proud to announce the appointment of Benya Kraus as its next President and CEO, effective June 16, 2025. Benya succeeds Tim Penny, who has served the Foundation with distinction for nearly two decades.

A nationally recognized rural leader and social entrepreneur, Benya brings a deep personal commitment to southern Minnesota and a career defined by advancing rural vitality across the country. As part of a sixth-generation family native to Waseca County, she embodies what it means to choose to live and work in rural Minnesota as a powerful, intentional commitment to community and opportunity.

“Benya represents not just the future of SMIF, but the future of rural philanthropy across Minnesota and beyond,” said Shawn Vogt Sween, SMIF Board Chair. “She brings an extraordinary combination of vision, humility, operational excellence, and a deep personal tie to our region. We could not be more

excited for this next chapter.”

Benya most recently served as Network Advancement Director at Resource Rural, supporting a national portfolio of rural development organizations in securing nearly \$300 million in federal and state grants over the last year. She previously co-founded and scaled Lead For America, a nationwide non-profit investing in emerging rural leaders, and led strategic partnerships that secured over \$60 million for broadband expansion, early childhood initiatives, and small-town revitalization projects. She holds an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with concentrations in finance and entrepreneurship.

Reflecting on her new role, Benya shared, “SMIF has built deep roots by investing in entrepreneurs, supporting young children and families, and strengthening the communities that define this region. I am excited to listen, to learn, and to help plant the seeds for an even stronger future — one rooted in belonging, innovation, and possibility for all who choose this beautiful region as their home.”

Later this summer, Benya and Tim will embark on a listening and relationship-building tour across SMIF’s 20-county region. This series of community conversations and storytelling sessions will spotlight the energy, innovation, and leadership thriving across southern Minnesota. The tour will celebrate how rural philanthropy, through SMIF and the broader Minnesota Initiative Foundation network, is helping to shape the future of Greater Minnesota.

“Southern Minnesota’s future is bright because of leaders like Benya,” said Tim. “The next generation of leadership is going to de-



fine the success of this region. Now, as I step into retirement, I am excited to turn this important role over to Benya who carries the same deep commitment to strengthening our rural places.”

SMIF’s President & CEO search was conducted by Ballinger | Leafblad, an executive search firm dedicated to serving the civic sector, partnering with foundations and non-profits to identify and recruit exceptional leaders.

About Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

(SMIF) is a donor-supported foundation investing for economic growth and community vitality in the 20 counties of south central and southeastern Minnesota. Since 1986, SMIF has invested more than \$170 million in the region, supporting entrepreneurship, early childhood development, and community vitality initiatives. SMIF is part of the Minnesota Initiative Foundations, a nationally recognized model for rural philanthropy and regional development. Learn more at www.smifoundation.org.

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Sun, May 11	Red Wing Aces	Home	2 p.m.	Pocket Schedule Day, Presented by Firehouse Liquor
Sun, May 18	St. Paul Hops	Home	2 p.m.	Schedule Poster Day, Presented by Dawn’s Corner Bar
Fri, May 23	Cannon Falls Bears	Home	7:30 p.m.	90’s Night Presented by Budweiser
Mon, May 26	at Northfield Knights	Northfield	2 p.m.	
Fri, May 30	Elko Express	Home	7:30 p.m.	Presented by Streitz Heating and Cooling
Sun, June 1	Baseball 365	Home	2 p.m.	Camping Day, Presented by Scouting America Troups 313 and Pack 300
Wed, June 4	Highland Park Beavers	Home	7:30 p.m.	
Fri, June 6	Crystal Cowboys	Home	7:30 p.m.	Yard Games Presented by Applebee’s Northfield
Sun, June 8	at St. Patrick	St. Patrick	2 p.m.	
Wed, June 11	Faribault Lakers	Home	7:30 p.m.	Presented by Complete Chiropractic
Fri, June 13	Hastings Hawks	Home	7:30 p.m.	Presented by Keith Pumper Plumbing and Heating
Sun, June 15	Miesville Mudhens	Home	2 p.m.	Presented by Merchant’s Bank
Wed, June 18	Hampton Cardinals	Home	7:30 p.m.	Presented by Blesener’s Quality Exteriors
Fri, June 20	Stewartville-Racine Sharks	Home	7:30 p.m.	Presented by Re Max Advantage Plus Mary Jo Winter
Sun, June 22	New Market Muskies	Home	2 p.m.	Reading Day, Presented by Northfield Public Library
Wed, June 25	Lyon’s Pub Warriors	Home	7:30 p.m.	Orange Night, Presented by Dundas Paint Center
Fri, June 27	at Hastings Hawks	Hastings	7:30 p.m.	
Sun, June 29	at Miesville Mudhens	Miesville	2 p.m.	
Fri, July 4	Northfield Knights	Home	2 p.m.	
Sun, July 6	at Red Wing Aces	Red Wing	2 p.m.	
Wed, July 9	St. Paul Mudhens	Home	7:30 pm.	
Fri, July 11	Rochester Royals	Home	7:30 p.m.	Street Dance Night Presented by the L&M Bar and Grill
Sun, July 13	at Hampton Cardinals	Hampton	2 p.m.	
Fri, July 18	St. Patrick Irish	Home	7:30 p.m.	80’s Night, Presented by Baird Koenig Jones
Sun, July 20	at Elko Express	Elko	2 p.m.	
Wed, July 23	Metro Knights	Home	7:30 p.m.	
Fri, July 25	at Rochester Royals	Rochester	7:30 p.m.	
Sun, July 27	at New Market Muskies	New Market	2 p.m.	

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: Are trailer hitch load extenders legal? Occasionally I haul some lumber that sticks out beyond my tailgate and would like to know if I can use this.

Answer: Yes you can. Note that when the load upon any vehicle extends to the rear four feet or more beyond the bed or body of such vehicle there are some requirements. At the extreme rear end of such load a red, yellow

or orange flag or cloth not less than 16 inches square shall be displayed.

At the times when lighted lamps on vehicles are required, a red light or lantern plainly visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the sides and rear shall be in addition to the rear light required upon every vehicle.

Another good reminder is to always make sure any and all items you are transporting are properly secured.

Question: The other day I came across a railroad crossing sign with the word "EX-EMPT" placed on it. What is that all about?

Answer: An X-shaped sign identifies a railroad crossing. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks.

Warning signs, pavement markings, gates and flashing red lights are positioned at most railroad crossings. Pavement markings include a stop line, an "X," and the letters "RR" painted on the pavement in front of the crossing.

An "exempt" sign means that bus and truck drivers, who are usually required to stop at railroad crossings, may proceed without stopping. However, drivers still need to look in both directions for trains.

Question: In one day, Monday I had three incidents where cars did not yield right of way when they had a flashing left turn arrow. I have observed several other incidents involving other drives as well. It seems of late people seem to think the flashing arrow gives them the right of way.

Answer: A flashing yellow light or arrow means "caution." Proceed through the intersection with caution. Yield the right of way to

vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection. If you are turning left or making a U-turn, you must yield to oncoming vehicles that are close enough to be an immediate hazard.

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)



Stay Focused: Share the Road Safely

Distracted driving is dangerous for everyone — especially motorcyclists, who are harder to see. Drivers: Even a quick look at your phone can mean missing a motorcycle or not stopping in time. Motorcyclists: Distractions make it harder to react to drivers who don't see you. These tips will help riders and motorists safely share the road and prevent deadly crashes.

Drivers:

Look twice before turning or changing lanes — motorcycles can be hard to spot.

Avoid distractions like phones, food or adjusting controls. Stay focused.

Give space — allow at least 3 seconds of following distance.

Check blind spots carefully before merging or switching lanes.

Use your signals and be predictable on the road.

Motorcyclists:

Stay alert — assume drivers may not see you.

Wear full protective gear, including a DOT-approved helmet.

Avoid distractions — don't use phones or other devices while riding.

Ride sober and keep your speed in check.

Be visible — use lights, wear bright clothing and ride defensively.

**We all share the road. Let's make sure we're sharing it distraction-free.
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Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management Announces Date for Cannabis License Application Lotteries

Lotteries for social equity and general applicants set for June 5

ST. PAUL, MINN. – The Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) announced it will hold license application lotteries on June 5 for social equity and general applicants for three license types critical to establishing the supply chain in the state's emerging adult-use market: cannabis cultivator, cannabis manufacturer, and cannabis mezzobusiness. The office will also hold a lottery for social equity applicants (SEAs) applying for a cannabis retailer license on June 5, preserving some of the advantages to SEAs envisioned in legislation. A lottery for general applicants for the cannabis retailer license—which includes a second chance for social equity applicants not selected in the first lottery—will follow this summer.

"The office has prioritized the review of applications for the license types necessary to successfully stage the market," said OCM In-

terim Director Eric Taubel. "Today's announcement reflects the office's goal to license the supply chain from the starting points in order to foster an equitable cannabis market that prioritizes public health and safety, consumer confidence, and market integrity."

The lotteries mark a significant milestone in the state's work to launch a legal adult-use cannabis industry that is expected to mature over the next several years. In order to qualify for the lottery, each application was rigorously reviewed to ensure consistency with statutory requirements and baseline standards of readiness. In reviewing applications, OCM assigned half of its reviewers to focus on the four license types limited in quantity by state statute, prioritizing those essential to building up the cannabis supply chain—cultivator, manufacturer, and mezzobusiness—followed closely by retailers.

The other half of reviewers focused on license types available in unlimited quantities, beginning with testing facilities – another type essential to the launch of the state's cannabis market. They then turned to applications for microbusiness and medical cannabis combination businesses to support cultivation capacity and continuity of access to medicine for medical patients. Finally, reviewers will focus on cannabis wholesaler, transporter, and delivery service license types, which represent downstream market services. Applications for cannabis event organizers and lower-potency hemp edible manufacturers and retailers will follow later this year.

"In the coming weeks, more and more ap-



plicants will be notified that they are advancing to the application lotteries. They will soon join the hundreds of qualified social equity applicants who are already deep in the process of completing application requirements," said Jess Jackson, OCM's director of social equity. "It's exciting to see the entrepreneurial spirit of our applicants as they get closer to having a license in hand and prepare to open their doors for business."

Following the lotteries

The license application lotteries will be livestreamed for members of the public and the media via the office's YouTube Chan-

nel: youtube.com/@MNCannabisManagement. Results will be posted to OCM's website and shared with applicants after completion. OCM is partnering with Smartplay International, Inc., a recognized leader in digital lottery drawing systems, and Baker Tilly, an advisory tax and assurance firm, to conduct the lotteries. Both vendors have conducted cannabis license lotteries in other states. OCM has also engaged idream.tv Location Images, a local provider of video production and video streaming services, to assist in managing the lottery livestream on June 5.

For more information, visit mn.gov/ocm.



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BRYAN ANDERSON 8:30 PM	

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Phased Closure of Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater

St. Paul, MN: Legislative Leaders along with Governor Walz have agreed to a phased closure of MCF-Stillwater to consolidate the state's prison facilities to enhance the DOC's economic efficiency, to end state investments into the crumbling infrastructure at MCF-Stillwater, and to minimize the ongoing health and safety concerns the facility presents to both staff and the incarcerated population.

For years, lawmakers have discussed and heard testimony from community advocates, formerly incarcerated people, and DOC staff, including union leaders, on the hazardous conditions at MCF-Stillwater. Ensuring the health and safety of staff and incarcerated individuals and practicing good stewardship of taxpayer dollars are primary factors in the decision.

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MCF-Stillwater was built 1914 and is the second oldest facility in Minnesota. Despite the dedicated efforts of staff, the prison is long past its useful life. The deferred maintenance needs at the facility are currently estimated at \$180 million and fully modernizing or replacing the facility on site has an estimated cost of \$1.3 billion. This legislative decision enables the decommissioning of an outdated institution and supports the state's goal of maintaining a modern, safe, and cost-effective correctional infrastructure while aligning fiscal resources with budgetary priorities.

The closure of Stillwater is expected to occur over the next four years, with full decommissioning anticipated in FY2029. Over time, this phased closure will result in annual state savings of more than \$40 million.

The decision reflects recognition of the unsustainable condition of the Stillwater facility. Consolidating the state's prison system makes sound economic sense. Each correctional facility requires a wide range of operational resources. Reducing Minnesota's correctional facility footprint decreases the need to replicate the purchase and replacement of the facility security systems and basic operational equipment, such as commercial food service equipment, office furniture, and maintenance equipment like tools, lawn mowers, and snow removal machinery.

"This is a moment of real change for our agency," said Paul Schnell, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections. "We fully recognize the impact this decision will have on both the lives and careers of the Stillwater staff and on the incarcerated people for



whom Stillwater has been home for years or even decades. We will be open and honest with staff and the incarcerated population throughout the implementation," he added.

A Two-Phase Closure Plan

To implement and manage planned closure, the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) is planning a two-phase approach to first reduce operations at MCF-Stillwater, followed by step-down to full closure of the site. This strategy will maintain critical service options at the Stillwater facility while still achieving significant cost savings and maintaining safety throughout the system.

Phase 1: Reduced Operations

Upon passage of the public safety omnibus bill, DOC leadership will initiate steps to begin a reduction of the population and operational footprint at MCF-Stillwater over several months. Approximately half of the incarcerated population will be transferred to one of the DOC's other nine male facilities, with several living units remaining at Stillwater during this period.

Staffing will be reduced proportionally. The DOC will explore various mechanisms to transfer staff to other positions, but a reduction in staffing is expected. The DOC will work closely with labor unions to ensure that the staff impact is as minimal as possible.

During Phase 1, the DOC will launch two critical studies:

A management study to guide operations,

staff logistics, and community considerations. The study will assess and provide recommendations for the operational processes involved in permanently vacating MCF-Stillwater. Key areas of focus will include labor management, logistics for transferring incarcerated individuals, community impacts, and an analysis of the state's future need for prison bed space.

A decommissioning study to plan the long-term future of the Stillwater site. This study will explore options for decommissioning the facility's physical infrastructure and examine future opportunities for the site's buildings and land.

Phase 2: Full Closure

Beginning July 2027, the DOC will start the final transition to fully vacate the MCF-Stillwater site, transferring the remaining incarcerated individuals and staff, with a complete closure expected by June 30, 2029.

Once legislative approval is secured and the Governor signs the public safety omnibus bill into law, the DOC will begin implementing the phased closure plan. Updates will be shared with staff, the state's incarcerated population, and the public throughout the transition. This process represents an important step toward building a state correctional system that is safer, more sustainable, and produces more effective outcomes for all Minnesotans.



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Senate Human Services budget would cut millions from local nursing homes

By: SENATOR BILL LIESKE

On May 7, the Minnesota Senate passed its Human Services budget proposal. I opposed this bill, which I should be clear is not yet law. The House still needs to pass its version,

and then the two chambers will work out a final agreement. That said, you need to know what's in it because the impacts would be serious for our communities.

The most concerning aspect of the Senate's bill is that it would make major cuts to long-term care and nursing homes while preserving funding for taxpayer-funded healthcare for undocumented individuals. In my view, these priorities are backward. We should pro-

tect our most vulnerable and put Minnesota citizens first.

Here's a quick look at what else is in the Senate Democrats' Human Services proposal:

Cuts more than \$1 billion from long-term care and disability services over the next four years

Fails to address fraud, despite repeated warnings from the Office of the Legislative Auditor and even U.S. Attorney Andy Luger, who said "Minnesota has a fraud problem"

Preserves taxpayer-funded MinnesotaCare benefits for over 17,000 undocumented individuals, while cutting care for seniors and people with disabilities

Causes property taxes hikes by shifting nearly \$200 million in new costs onto counties

Adds new regulations for nursing homes, even as it cuts their budgets

What does that mean for us locally? If this bill becomes law, nursing homes in our area could lose \$3.6 million in funding over the next four years:

Trinity Care Center (Farmington): \$844,689

Mala Strana Rehabilitation Center (New Prague): \$848,975

Three Links Care Center (Northfield): \$723,906

Augustana Health Care Center of Hastings: \$704,270

Benedictine Living Regina Campus (Hastings): \$490,437

We are only facing these cuts because Democrats were reckless over the last two years when they had one party control. They spent the entire \$18 billion surplus, increased the government budget by 40%, raised taxes \$10 billion, and now we are facing a \$6 billion deficit that they want to balance on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Republicans did, however, manage to

slightly improve the bill. We adopted an amendment during the floor debate that eliminated expensive cost-shifts onto local governments. Without our amendment, counties would have faced \$192 million in new costs, which local officials warned could have led to property tax hikes of 5 to 10 percent across the state. Our amendment removed those cost shifts and redirected funding to better serve Minnesotans in need. That includes restoring rates for family foster care and facilities that serve disproportionately high-need populations.

While the amendment helped, the overall bill still pursues the wrong priorities for Minnesota. As budget negotiations move forward, I'll keep pushing for a final agreement that protects the vulnerable, reins in reckless spending, and puts Minnesotans first.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Lieske Cottage Food Reform Clears Senate as Part of 2025 Ag Budget Compromise; Heads to Governor's Desk

Minnesota State Senator Bill Lieske (R-Lonsdale) announced on Sunday that his cottage food reform package was approved by the Senate as part of the 2025 agriculture and broadband budget compromise. The bill will now head to the governor's desk for his signature or veto.

The agriculture conference committee kept the Lieske cottage food reform proposal intact but did decide to push out the effective date by two years. The reforms will now take effect August 1, 2027.

"While I am disappointed these changes will not take effect for another two years, this is still a big win for the thousands of Minnesotans who sell home-baked goods and other homemade treats at local farmers markets, community events, and right from their own kitchens," Sen. Lieske said. "It's about giving people more freedom to grow their side hustle or family venture without jumping through unnecessary hoops. And it still protects consumers with clear labeling, safety training, and transparency."

Sen. Lieske's bill updates Minnesota's cot-

tage food laws, which allow people to sell homemade, non-hazardous foods without needing a commercial kitchen license. The new reforms make it easier for families, hobbyists, and part-time producers to turn their passion into a small business.

Key changes include:

Lower costs for small producers: The annual registration fee drops from \$50 to \$30, making it more affordable to get started.

Clearer eligibility rules: Cottage food producers can now be individuals, sole proprietors, or even small two-person LLCs as long as both owners live in the same household.

Expanded delivery options: Producers can now deliver by mail or commercial services in addition to hand delivery.

Better food safety standards: Registered producers will complete a food safety training course every three years, instead of annually.

Keeping up with inflation: The current \$78,000 annual sales cap will now adjust every two years to keep pace with inflation.

County unveils new website design, introduces mobile app

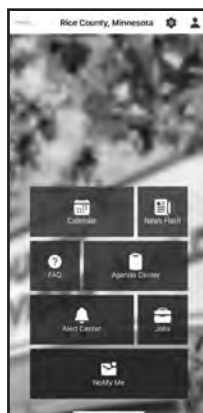
Frequent visitors to Rice County's website may have noticed a new look designed to be more user friendly and visually appealing, with clear pathways to the most requested information.

At the same time, the county has rolled out a mobile app to help residents quickly get the latest Rice County government news and information.

The app, a modified version of the website, includes a calendar of events, meeting agendas, news stories, alerts and many of the most frequently asked questions from each department. Additionally, app users can find a continually updated list of job postings and a streamlined way to subscribe to county notifications.

"The website update was designed with the end user in mind," said County Administrator Sara Folsted. "We looked at the most viewed pages on our website and got input from staff about frequently asked questions and used that information to help guide the redesign. The new app is a great addition, and will allow users to get many of their questions answered with a few clicks -- and right in the palm of their hand."

The Rice County, Minnesota app can be found at the App Store or Google Play. The county's website is at www.ricecountymn.gov.



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