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JUNE 25, 2025

Volume 22 • Issue 6

The Circus is Coming to Dennison



Thanks to the sponsorship of the Dennison Lions Club & Fireside Lounge, the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus is coming to Dennison, MN on Thursday, July 31st, to the lot across from the Dennison Lutheran Church located at 37514 3 Ave. with shows at 5:00 & 7:30 pm.

(continued on page 10)



The Cannon Valley Fair kicks off Thursday July 3rd at the Fairgrounds in Cannon Falls. Open Calss and Exhibit Entry Day is Wednesday July 2nd.

Gold Star Amusements will be on the midway during the fair starting at 1 PM July 3rd. Advance discount unlimited ride-wristbands are available for \$25.00 each at Altoff Hardware, Cannon Specialties and Cannon Belles

Coffee & Ice Cream Shoppe until June 30th.

The Goodhue County Commissioners meeting will take place Thursday July 3rd at 10 AM. . Friday is Veterans & Senior Citizen Day and Free Grounds Admission Day. The 4th of July Grand Day Parade will be at 11 AM on Friday with the annual fireworks display at dusk on the 4th. This years grandstand highlights include the Demo Derby Thursday July 3rd, Harness Racing will be at 2 PM with Free Admission on Friday, July 4th. . Auto Cross will take place at 5 PM on



Saturday July 5th and Sunday afternoon July 6. The kids pedal pull will also take place at 11:30 am near the grandstand on Sunday.

Live music will round out each days events at the fair. Check out the schedule in this issue of the Messenger and watch for any updates on the fairs website, www.cannonvalleyfair.org along with their facebook page.

Announcements

• **Randolph Food Shelf** located at St. Mark's Church 28595 Randolph Blvd. Monthly Open Hours: 1st Tuesday 8:00 - 9:30 am; 2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays 4:30 - 6:00 pm. Questions call (507) 263-9182.

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!

REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 8

JULY 28TH

10AM SHOTGUN GOPHER HILLS GOLF COURSE

RANDOLPH BOOSTER CLUB

Golf Tournament!

Randolph Elementary Ag Day



FFA members shared their knowledge about Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources to over 400 students at Randolph Elementary School.

Courtesy of Randolph FFA



Open Regular Hours
July 2 & 3

WE WILL BE CLOSED
JULY 4, 5, 6 FOR
STAFF MAINTENANCE

Opening Wednesday, July 9 at 11:00am

Have a Safe & Happy 4th of July!



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The Good News



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

My focus in this article will be on the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ—something very important for the body of Christ to understand.

The gospel literally means “good news.” What is this good news? It’s that Jesus is the Savior. Savior from what? Savior from dark-

ness, turmoil, and hopelessness. Most importantly, He is the Savior from sin. We all are sinful people. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Some of those sins would be breaking the Ten Commandments. When we sin, it separates us from God because nothing unholy can be in His presence (Revelation 21:27). Therefore, if you die in separation, you die apart from Him, meaning you do not have access to heaven.

The good news, though, is there is a way to not be separated from God, a way to be forgiven of your sin. Since the penalty of sin is death, Christ came to this earth to be the perfect lamb (John 1:29, 36) and took on death. He died for us on the cross and then resurrected three days later (1 Corinthians 15:4).

When we accept this, it bridges the gap between God and us. We can then be in God’s presence because we are forgiven of sin. This is a free gift, and it is for anyone who believes the things previously mentioned, repents from sin, and confesses that Jesus is Lord (Romans 6:23b).

Here are some additional verses to guard our hearts and minds with truth.

• John 14:6 says, “I am the way, the truth,

and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

• John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

• Romans 10:9–10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

• Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

• Matthew 10:33 says, “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

We need to get back to preaching and teaching the gospel. We know Christ loves everyone, but He hates sin. Christ wants us to repent (meaning to turn away) from our sinful ways and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Let’s not forget that we are all called to walk out the Great Commission (Matthew

28:18–20). I would like to close with 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV), “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

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Ann Traxler
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to the
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AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

I Am God's Chosen Possession

He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. — Ephesians 1:4

The Bible explains that believers have been freely and generously chosen by God. This choosing is not based on our appearance, intelligence, personality, status, or anything else. It's not something we earn or deserve. Instead, it's a purely gracious act.

God, in his great love, initiates the process of salvation. By his sovereign will and good pleasure, God has decided to save us, making rescue and redemption possible for all who have been made in his image (Genesis 1:26-27). Even though we were ensnared in sin, Jesus died to deliver us from the curse of sin and death to make us holy in God's sight.

Being chosen by God is an overwhelming blessing that fills us with humility and helps us see that there is no room for pride or boasting. It also instills in us a sense of security and confidence, recognizing that our salvation is not based on our religious performance. Instead, as God's chosen possession, we belong to him. Body and soul—in life and in death—we are his, and nothing can snatch us from his hand (John 10:28-30).

What an exhilarating honor—to be chosen, wanted, and valued by the most significant being in the universe!

Gracious God, thank you for choosing us. Thank you for being the author, perfecter, and finisher of our faith. May we live with the assurance that you will complete the good work you have begun in us. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

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David Errington

David Errington, age 85, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, on Saturday morning, May 24, at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. David was born on February 18, 1940, in Northfield, the son of William Errington Sr. and Margaret Ohs. He was raised on the family farm near Randolph alongside his siblings and attended Randolph School.



David loved athletics and was an avid runner and baseball pitcher. He later attended the University of Minnesota, where he studied in the Agricultural program and was a member of the wrestling team.

David met the great love of his life, Patty Warner, and they were married on September 22, 1962. Together they raised three children: Mike, Chris, and Holly. David served as a secretary for the Farm Bureau and was a dedicated livestock and crop farmer,

working tirelessly up until his final days. He had a deep love for farming—especially his pigs—and cherished time spent outdoors.

A passionate storyteller, jokester, and devoted family man, David enjoyed family trips, playing kitten ball in the church leagues, fishing, bingo, popcorn, attending the State Fair, and cheering on the Twins and Vikings. He will be deeply missed by his family and all who knew him.

David is survived by his wife of 62 years, Patty; his children, Mike (Kibby) Errington and Chris (Ray) Smith; grandchildren, Alex (Sophie) Cherwinka, Megan (Drew) Fellows, Morgan (Kolt) Gorg, Samantha Errington, and Maddie Smith; and great-grandchildren, Harrison, Piper, and Miles Cherwinka, as well as Clay and Hudson Fellows. He is also survived by his sisters, Elizabeth “Betty” Bush and Geraldine Morrill; and by many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Sr. and Margaret; his beloved daughter, Holly; grandson, Nathan Smith; his brother, William Errington Jr. (Frances); and brother-in-law, Glenn Bush.

A Celebration of Life was held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, June 3, at Christ United Methodist Church of Cannon Falls, followed by a luncheon. Visitation took place prior to the service, from 9:30 to 11:00 AM. Interment followed at Lakeside Cemetery in Randolph.

Taste of Summer at Cannon Valley Ranch

Cannon Valley Ranch is presenting an experience at their annual Taste of the Ranch this Summer!

Bruce, LeeAnn, & Taylor Waugh are owners of Cannon Valley Ranch. Their son Aaron manages the event details & activities. Community members are welcome to come out to enjoy the high quality beef burgers, hot dogs, and fries made with beef tallow, as well as participate in ranch activities, music, games and fun for all ages. The Waugh Family raises registered Angus and Akaushi (Wagyu) beef cattle, conduct an annual bull auction, and



provide USDA inspected beef for the general public. Cannon Valley Ranch is located on 390th street a 1/2 mile off of county road 7. Come out and enjoy your time at the farm & ranch this summer!

Cannon Valley Ranch - 14495 390 Street, Goodhue MN 507-298-0820



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Musician 5:30 -7:45

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Musician 5:30 -7:45

Sunday Funday July 27th

Sunday 12-4

Aug 14th Thursday

Open at 4:30; Food served from 5-8 p.m.
Musician 5:30 -7:45

Aug 28th Thursday

Open at 4:30; Food served from 5-8 p.m.
Musician 5:30 -7:45

Sept 13 Saturday 5-8

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Fall Festival Oct 5th

Sunday 11:30-4



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LeeAnn Waugh
Cannon Valley Ranch
14495 390 Street
Goodhue MN
507-298-0820



Randolph Community Food Shelf

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

28595 Randolph Blvd.

Randolph, MN 55065

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stmarksrandolph@gmail.com

www.stmarksrandolph.com

Facebook: Randolph MN Area Food Shelf

Monthly Food Shelf Hours:

1st Tuesday 8:00 - 9:30 am


2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays 4:30-6 pm

**Randolph Community Food Shelf is for
anyone in need within the Randolph School District.
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More Than Marshmallows: How Summer Camp Builds Lifelong Friendships



By Sam Smith
Program Director Camp Victory

For many kids, summer camp is a place of adventure, discovery, and marshmallow-fueled campfires. But beyond crafts, canoe trips, and cabin games, camp offers something even more enduring: friendship. In a world where social interactions are increasingly filtered through screens, summer camps provide kids with a rare and vital opportunity to build deep,

in-person relationships that often last a lifetime.

A Natural Setting for Connection

Summer camps are uniquely designed to foster relationships. Removed from the pressures of school, extracurricular schedules, and technology, kids find themselves in a setting that encourages authenticity. They eat together, sleep in the same cabins, overcome challenges as a team, and support each other through new experiences. This constant proximity and shared routine naturally lead to bonding.

Without phones and the internet to distract them, campers rely on face-to-face interaction, eye contact, and real conversations. This environment helps kids develop interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence—foundational elements for meaningful friendships.

Shared Experiences Create Strong Bonds

One of the most powerful catalysts for friendship is a shared experience. At camp, kids aren't just hanging out, they're navigating obstacle courses, working on group skits, competing in friendly games, and maybe even singing off-key in front of an entire dining hall. These moments, big and small, create memories that glue kids together.

Conquering a ropes course or staying up late during cabin night can turn casual acquaintances into trusted allies. These shared adventures often forge connections deeper than those formed in typical day-to-day school life, where academic pressures and social cliques can create barriers.

Everyone Starts on Equal Footing

Camp is a great social reset. Whether a child is shy or outgoing, athletic or artistic, every camper begins their experience on relatively equal footing. Most campers don't know each other when they arrive, which eliminates the pre-existing social hierarchies that often dominate school life.

This leveling of the playing field gives kids a chance to be themselves, discover who they are, and be accepted for it. When kids are free to express themselves without fear of judgment, they often find friends who appreciate them for exactly who they are.

Counselors: Role Models in Friendship

Camp counselors play a huge role in modeling healthy, supportive friendships. These leaders often demonstrate what it looks like to communicate openly, resolve conflicts kindly, and support one another. Their guidance helps kids learn how to navigate the inevitable ups and downs of friendship in positive ways.

Many camps also include specific programming around empathy, teamwork, and inclusion. These intentional efforts teach kids how to be good friends—skills that stay with them far beyond the summer.

Diversity and Exposure to New Perspectives

Camps often bring together kids from different cities, backgrounds, and cultures. This exposure helps campers develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for people who are different from themselves. When kids spend weeks living and learning together, they realize that deep connections can be formed across all kinds of boundaries.

This kind of early exposure to diversity

strengthens social skills and prepares kids to thrive in a global society. And many campers find that friendships formed in this kind of open-minded environment are more meaningful and lasting.

A Network That Extends Beyond Summer

Ask any former camper, and they'll tell you: the friendships made at camp don't end with the final campfire. Many kids stay in touch with their camp friends for years, visiting during the school year, connecting through letters, texts, or video calls, and reuniting summer after summer. Some even end up attending the same colleges, becoming roommates, or standing beside each other at weddings.

These relationships, forged in shared experience and sincere connection, often last far beyond the years of bunk beds and bug spray.

Final Thoughts

In a world where kids are often overwhelmed by academics, sports, and social media, summer camp offers something simple but profound: a space to connect, laugh, grow, and make friends who feel like family. Whether it's a quiet chat in a hammock, a goofy campfire song, or a tearful goodbye at the end of the session, these moments lay the foundation for lifelong relationships.

Camp is more than just a place—it's a community where kids learn that friendship isn't about popularity or perfection. It's about showing up, sharing experiences, and being yourself. And for many, the friendships made at camp become the most treasured relationships of all.






Camp Victory

ZUMBRO FALLS, MN

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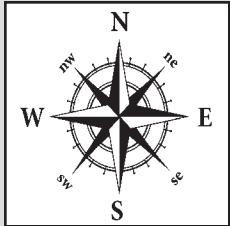
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*Changes in Latitudes,
Changes in Attitudes*

New Life for an Old Axe Head



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.

Tennessee was settled by pioneers about a century before Minnesota, so there is a wealth of historical items to be found. Daniel Boone had first explored this part of the country in 1760. The area we live in was the site of a significant Civil War battle and items turn up from time to time from that era and before.

One morning I was walking at the north-



east end of our property and I saw something metal imbedded in the ground. After kicking the soil away, I realized it was more substantial than just a tin can. I became more interested by the moment as I extracted it from the earth. Even covered in crusty scales of rust and dirt I could identify what it was. Excitedly, I headed for the shop. That is just where a man goes when he has a project to work on. My mind was imagining all the scenarios that the history of this axe head might have included. I had the foresight to take a picture of it on my workbench before the restoration began.

My mind wandered across axe stories as I pondered the direction I would take with this new project. An axe is the tool of a woodsman. Paul Bunyon had a big axe for shopping down trees in the Northwoods. I used a mattock to chop frozen silage off the silo walls in

the winter. We always carried an axe when cutting wood to free a pinched chainsaw bar from a large tree trunk or limb. I remembered a story from the Bible back in 848 BC when a workman had the axe head fly off the handle and out into the river. The prophet Elisha threw a stick out onto the river and the iron axe head floated to the surface for the man to retrieve. (2 Kings 6:1-6) Axe heads always had value.

I started cleaning the axe head up and then polished the rust off using the wire brush on my bench grinder. It was pitted from years in the mud, but I eventually got down to the bare metal. What began as just another day was suddenly exciting and interesting in a way I had never imagined. I love to work in the shop on most any project and this was a most unusual one. It was by far the oldest artifact I had found here on any of our properties in Tennessee. Once the axe head was cleaned up, I began to think of what to do with it.

I already had nice new hatchet for splitting kindling wood. It was shiny and bright, but had been purchased and not discovered on



our property. I bought oak slab wood from the Swift Sawmill to burn in our firepit in the evenings. I would split the wood into small pieces for an easy fire. I started thinking that this new found axe head would be excellent for that job.

I selected a nice slab of oak board from the firewood rack and began to cut it to size. Measuring and cutting and lots of wood chisel work formed the top of the handle to fit precisely into the opening of the axe head. I drove it firmly into place and trimmed off the excess from the top. Was an enjoyable morning in the shop and I had a new tool from an old relic. Quite satisfying.

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A Minnesotan: Outdoor Weather



By RosaLin Alcoser

Once again it's summer in Minnesota which means that it's time for all Minnesotans to migrate outside. We all know that the four Minnesota seasons are pre winter, winter, still winter and construction season; otherwise known as summer. Which is the cue for all of us to go outside while we can.

We all know that we have to take advan-

tage of the good weather while we have it. After all, we live where it can snow for about seven months out of the year; so we all have to make the best of it when we can.

For some people this means gardening, going to the lake, or biking. When I was a little kid in rural Minnesota this ment us getting sent out to play in the field until supper time. As an older child and teen it meant running around the woods until it was time to come back.

Now that I'm an adult in the Twin Cities it means my household is going hiking nearly every chance we get. Whether it is through the local nature center or on a trail in a State Park we hike as much as possible. From the time that it gets into the 40's, mainly because I'm a translatplant and can't be pried outside until it's at least 40 degrees, onward we hike.

Easy path, hard path, paved, unpaved, even the occaual not quite a path. We will hike it. Until the winter comes around again and all the Minnesotans go back inside for the winter. Except for those of you that are really into winter outdoors activities. However, I think that the rest of us will leave the cold weather outdoor exursions to you.

Randolph Theatre Members Perform at the State Theater

On June 9, members of Randolph Rockets Theatre had the honor of performing at the State Theater in Minneapolis at the annual Spotlight Showcase! These individuals had received honors and recognition for their role following Spotlight Education's evaluation of our production of Mamma Mia! We are so proud of all of your hard work and accomplishments! It's always a great day to be a rocket!

Congratulations to the following students who participated at the Spotlight Showcase:
School Representative - Grady Taylor
Featured Dancer - Marilla Emery

Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role - Sarah Streiff

Honorable Mention in a Supporting Role - Avery Gillen-Rexroad, Collin Almen, Hayden Huddleston, and Max Kuhn

Honorable Mention in Technical Leadership - Kyra Brochman and Ryleigh Wencel (not pictured)

These students spent last week up in Minneapolis preparing for the Showcase and learning from professionals in the industry.

Addi Davis, Adrian Golden, and Taryn Alexon also received recognition but were unable to attend. *Courtesy of Randolph School*



We would like to welcome Mackenna Otte as our Head Varsity Girls Basketball Coach! Coach Otte becomes the 10th coach in program history. **Congratulations!**

Courtesy of Randolph School



As we celebrate June Dairy Month, we celebrate our area's dedicated dairy farm families.

Thanks, dairy farmers!



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Stanton, MN

Best Informed Greenhand at the MN State Convention



Levi Marthaler, Georgia Otte, and Jonathan Tate received Gold Placing. Hunter Mlsna, Kaitlyn Taylor, Carlee Miller, Maddi Beissel, and Emery Marthaler received Bronze placings. *Courtesy of Randolph FFA*

Maria Hegland - State Degree



Maria Hegland received her State Degree at the MN State Convention.

Courtesy of Randolph FFA

Gradyn Taylor

Randolph FFA Sentinel

 Gradyn Taylor is the Randolph FFA Sentinel. Gradyn is a 10th grader at Randolph High School. This is his 4th year in FFA. Gradyn plans to attend a 4 year school and get a degree in poultry veterinary ag science. Gradyn's SAE is poultry proficiency placement. He takes care of turkeys and does daily chores for the best animal health and welfare. He enjoys taking care of turkeys and that's why he enjoys this SAE. Gradyn's favorite FFA memory was attending the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana and competing in the Creed LDE. "It was a very cool experience to compete and meet kids from all around America who love agriculture just like me!" Outside of FFA Gradyn is involved in 4-H, Cross Country, Track and Field, Knowledge Bowl, Band, Chamber Choir, Speech, Theater, and NHS at Randolph High School.

- *Courtesy of Randolph FFA*



500 BALLROOM
NATIONAL CHAPTER TOP 3 FINALIST PRESENTATIONS
Wednesday | OCT. 23, 2024
9:00-10:00 a.m. Model of Excellence
10:00 a.m.-Noon Middle School Model of Excellence
1:30-4:30 p.m. Premier Chapter
CAREER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday | OCT. 23, 2024
5:30-6:30 p.m. Creed Speaking Awards and Finals
Thursday | OCT. 24, 2024
8:00 a.m. Extemporaneous Public Speaking Awards
9:30-11 a.m. Extemporaneous Public Speaking Finals

A piece of advice Gradyn would give to another FFA member is, "FFA is a very big organization, there is a lot to do. So never stop learning and try new things!"


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Wyatt Herman

Randolph FFA Assistant Officer

 Wyatt is a junior at Hastings High School. This is his 4th year in FFA. After school Wyatt plans to judge at a junior college and then senior college level, and one day own his own embryology company. Wyatt's SAE is Beef Production. Wyatt's favorite FFA memory was being 7th overall in the livestock judging contest in Kansas City and the American Royal. Outside of FFA Wyatt is involved in 4-H, and the Minnesota State Simmental Association.

- *Courtesy of Randolph FFA*




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9:30-11 a.m. Extemporaneous Public Speaking Finals

A piece of advice Wyatt would give to another FFA member is "Take every opportunity you can and enjoy it while it lasts."


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Randolph FFA Assistant Advisor - Farm Manager

Job description

Randolph Public School is looking to add an FFA Assistant Advisor to their team. The agriculture department is well-established and includes a variety of experiences for students, such as Junior High Intro to Agriculture, Plant Science, Animal Science, Food Science, Natural Resources, and Work-Based Learning.



Duties

This person would work closely with the primary advisor in all matters related to FFA and the agricultural classes.

Assist with managing the FFA 40-acre Tracy Research Farm and 9-acre CFS research Plot.

Assist the advisor with crop production and agricultural mechanics learning opportunities.

Assist the advisor in coaching and transporting students to career development opportunities.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of FFA

Knowledge in crop production and ag mechanics.

Knowledge of agricultural science and practices.

Experience with technology and its application in agriculture

Ability to help students learn and explore careers in agriculture.

Effectively communicate expectations and support students.

Strong leadership and communication skills.

Ability to mentor and motivate students.

This is a stipend position that would run from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. There is some flexibility in contact hours, but you must be able to help with some instructional programming during class hours and/or during the Monday Outreach program.

Submit resume to:

Michael Kelley, Superintendent

Randolph Public Schools

P.O. Box 38, 29101 Dawson Avenue Randolph, MN 55065

Phone 507-263-2151, ext. 204

OR send via email to: kelley@m@district195.org Position will be open until filled.



18TH ANNUAL

RANDOLPH ROCKETS BOOSTER GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, July 28, 2025

10:00 a.m. shotgun start

Gopher Hills Golf Course

26155 Nicolai Ave, Cannon Falls

\$95 entry fee per golfer if paid by July 1st

\$115 entry fee per golfer if paid after July 1st

Fee includes 18 holes golf, cart, and lunch

*Golf range opens & registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Raffle ticket sales end at ~2pm. Winners will be drawn & prizes labeled before tournament completion.

Awards & raffle grand prize winner will be announced following tournament completion (Grand prize winner must be present to win!)

For more information on the tournament, sponsoring a hole, or donating raffle items, contact.

Deena Otto 507-351-4431 boosterclub@district195.org

Ashley Icaza 507-301-8360

Deana Miller 612-3000-1777

Golfer 1: _____ Golfer 2: _____

Golfer 3: _____ Golfer 4: _____

Team Captain: _____ Phone: _____

Sorry, I am unable to play, but I would like to donate \$ _____.

☐ Yes, I would like to donate a raffle prize.

☐ Yes, I want to pay \$450 to be a Golfing Hole Sponsor

▪ Entry fee for 4 golfers into the tournament

▪ Hole Sponsorship Sign

☐ Yes, I want to pay \$150 to be a Non-Golfing Sponsor

▪ Hole Sponsorship Sign

Business Name: _____

Contact: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please include a business card or logo that will be used for signage on the golf course.

Please return this form by July 1st to:

Randolph Rockets Booster Club

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Minnesota Farm Bureau Welcomes Summer Interns

EAGAN, Minn. – The Minnesota Farm Bureau is excited to welcome two summer interns, Katie Thome and Katie Radman, to its state office for the summer of 2025. They began their internships on May 27. Thome and Radman support Minnesota Farm Bu-

reau’s mission of advocating Minnesota agriculture through communication, outreach, and education.

Thome joins the team as the communications intern. Recently completing her sophomore year at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, Thome is now planning to transfer to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities this fall, where she will major in agricultural communications and marketing.

Raised on a farrow-to-finish farm in Adams, Minnesota, Thome developed a deep appreciation for the agriculture industry early in life. This has developed her passion to tell the stories of Minnesota’s farmers while creating a greater understanding of how agriculture shapes and supports communities. During her internship, Thome will assist with content creation, media outreach, and help to share



Pictured (L to R): 2025 Minnesota Farm Bureau Interns Katie Radman and Katie Thome

the stories that showcase the impact of agriculture in Minnesota.

“I am excited to join the team here at Minnesota Farm Bureau and look forward to continuing to promote agriculture across the state,” remarked Thome.

Radman comes on board as the special programs intern. A junior at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, she is double majoring in animal science and agricultural communications and marketing.

Radman grew up on a corn and soybean farm in Randolph, Minnesota, and found her passion for agriculture through her active involvement in 4-H and FFA. In her free time,

Katie enjoys working with sheep and goats and volunteering with the Dakota/Washington County 4-H Livestock Judging Team.

This summer with Farm Bureau, she will be working on organizing special programs and events that engage Minnesota’s farming community, focusing on livestock management and sustainable farming practices. Radman will also support outreach efforts and help organize conferences and member meetings across the state.


“I am looking forward to a great summer with the Minnesota Farm Bureau staff,” Radman said. “I cannot wait to meet with members across the state.”



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June Dairy Month

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The Circus is Coming to Dennison

(continued from page 1)

C&M Circus has been providing quality, local family entertainment for 40 years.

This authentic One-Ring, Big Top Circus has been featured on the A&E Special: Under the Big Top, Nick News: On the Road with Circus Kids and most recently OETA's Big Top Town.

This year, we're very excited to bring you our brand new 2025 performance featuring Big Cats presented by Trey Key, our Aerialist Extraordinaire Simone on the trapeze, the Perez Daredevil Duo on the Tight Rope and Wheel of Destiny, the high energy Macias family hand and foot juggling, and everyone's favorite Circus Clown Leo Acton.

Circus Day Schedule

9:30 a.m. - Tent Raising & Tour

Everyone is invited to watch the Big Top rise! You'll also get a chance to tour the

grounds and get a behind-the-scenes look at our show! Learn about life on the road and the care our animals receive.

4:00 p.m. - Midway Opens

Pony Rides, Moon Bounce, Giant Slide, Face Painting, Concession Stand and Box Office open up for some extra fun!

5:00 & 7:30 - Circus Performance

Get ready for an amazing show the whole family will love! Each show lasts about 90 minutes.

Tickets

Advance Tickets Prices

Adult Ticket - \$13 Child (2-12) or Senior (65+) - \$8 Advance tickets can be purchased BEFORE Circus Day from these locations:

Heritage Bank - Dennison

Dennison Depot

Fireside Lounge & Supper Club

Parkside General Store - Nerstrand


A higher percentage of advance tickets goes back to the sponsor, meaning more moneyback into your community! You'll also save money and can skip the lines at the box office!

Box Office Prices

Adult Ticket - \$16 Child (2-12) or Senior (65+) - \$9 Box office tickets go on sale at the Circus grounds starting one hour before each show.



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Thursday, July 31

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Showtimes: 5:00 & 7:30 pm

Sponsored by: Dennison Lions Club & Fireside Lounge

Advance Adult - \$13
Advance Child/Senior - \$8


Circus Day Adult - \$16
Circus Day Child/Senior - \$9



Get Tickets

Buy before circus day at...

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- Dennison Depot
- Fireside Lounge & Supper Club
- Parkside General Store - Nerstrand



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midway!**
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1:00pm-10:00pm

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**JULY 4th
GRANDE DAY PARADE
11:00am
FIREWORKS
SHOW!
Dusk**

CANNON VALLEY FAIR ★ JULY 3-6, 2025

Cannon Falls, Minnesota

2025 SCHEDULE

June 28th

9 am-5pm 4H, FFA & WSCA Open Horse Show – Horse Arena

July 2nd – ENTRY DAY

2-7 pm – Open Class Exhibit Building Entry
2-7 pm – 4 H Building Exhibit Entry and Judging

July 3 – KIDS DAY

9 am – 5 pm – Livestock Entry
9 am – 12:30 – Girl Scouts Art Project – LEGION PAVILION
10 am – Goodhue County Commissioners Meeting – PAVILION
10 am – Noon – Wanda the Clown – STROLLING THE GROUNDS
11 am – 11:30 am – Zeko & Vito Show – FREE STAGE
1 pm-11 pm – Gold Star Amusements OPEN – All Day Wristband Special
1 pm-3 PM – Wanda the Clown – STROLLING THE GROUNDS
1:30 PM – 2 pm – Zeko & Vito Show – FREE STAGE
2 pm – DEMO DERBY Pit Gates Open
3 – 5 pm – Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Market Sheep Show Weigh-In and Check-In
6 pm – Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Market Sheep Show
6 pm – DEMO DERBY Starts
9:00 – Midnight – THE BOOZE CRUIZERS – FREE STAGE

July 4th – VETERAN & SENIOR CITIZEN DAY – FREE GROUNDS ADMISSION DAY!

11 am – Grande Day Parade Starts
1 pm-11 pm – Gold Star Amusements OPEN – All Day Wristband Special
2 pm – Harness Horse Racing – GRANDSTAND – FREE Admission
3 pm – 4-H Dog Project Demonstration – ARENA
8:30 – Midnight – CURSED BY LIGHTNING – FREE STAGE
Dusk – Fireworks Show

July 5th

8:30 am – 4-H & FFA Dairy Show – ARENA
10 am – 4-H & FFA Goat Show – SHEEP ARENA
10:30 am – 11:30 am – Dr. Street Magician – STROLLING THE GROUNDS
11 am – 1 pm – Caricatures by Jen – PAVILION
Noon – DR. Street Magic Show – FREE STAGE
Noon – District VI Holstein Show
1 pm-11 pm – Gold Star Amusements OPEN – All Day Wristband Special
1 pm – Auto Cross Pit Gate Opens
2 pm – 3 pm – Dr. Street Magician – STROLLING THE GROUNDS
2 pm – 4 pm – Caricatures by Jen – PAVILION
3 pm – 6 pm – Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Beef Check-In and Weigh-In
3:30 pm – DR. Street Magic Show – FREE STAGE
5 pm Auto Cross Starts – GRANDSTAND
6 pm – 4-H & FFA Beef Show – ARENA
7 pm – Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Beef Show
8:30 – Midnight – THE DAD'S BAND – FREE STAGE

July 6th

9 am – 4-H & FFA Sheep Show followed by Open Class Sheep Show – SHEEP ARENA
10 am – 4-H & FFA Rabbit Show followed by 4-H & FFA Poultry Show
11 am Auto Cross Pit Gate Opens
1 pm-11 pm – Gold Star Amusements OPEN – All Day Wristband Special
2 pm – 4-H Demonstrations – 4-H BUILDING
3 pm – Auto Cross Starts- GRANDSTAND
6 – 8 pm – Livestock Released & Building Exhibits Released
7 pm – 10 pm – Mark Perkins – FREE STAGE

Admission to the fairgrounds is
\$7.00 per person daily
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Demo
Derby &
Auto Cross grandstand admission
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12 years
and under.
Pit Pass is available
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Harness Racing
GRANDSTAND
Admission
is FREE.

AUTO CROSS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JULY 5 & 6

Pit gate open at 11:00
Grandstand Ticket Gates Open 1:30 P.M.

- Compact Car 4 cyl
- Compact Car 4 cyl AWD
- Mid Size Car 6 cyl
- Mid Size Car 6 cyl Powder Puff
- Mini Vans
- Full Size Car
- Full Size Car Front Wheel Drive
- Full Size Car Rear Wheel Drive
- Compact Truck/SUV No V8
- Compact Truck/SUV V8
- Full Size Truck 2x4
- Full Size Truck 4x4



ADULTS: \$15 – CHILDREN 12 & UNDER, \$5 • PIT PASS: \$25
For rules and regulations go to: www.cannonvalleyfair.org

SATURDAY JULY 5 SUNDAY, JULY 6



Mark Perkins

DEMOLITION DERBY

THURSDAY, JULY 3 – 6 PM

Pit gate open at 2:00 P.M.
Grandstand Ticket Gates Open 3:00 P.M.

- Mega Stock Mid Size Car (Youth)
- Mega Stock Mid Size Car (Adult)
- Mega Stock Mini's
- Mega Stock 80's & Newer
- Mega Stock Full Size Truck
- Limited Weld Mid Size Car
- Limited Weld Mini's
- Limited Weld Full Size Car
- Limited Weld Full Size Truck



ADULTS: \$15 – CHILDREN 12 & UNDER, \$5 • PIT PASS: \$25
For rules and regulations go to: www.cannonvalleyfair.org

HARNES HORSE RACING

FRIDAY, JULY 4 – 2 PM



8:30 PM – Midnight



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July 4 – Dusk

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Sunday 9:00am-9:00pm

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The Next Generation of Leadership at SMIF



Tim Penny
So. MN Initiative Foundation

After 18 years of sharing stories with southern Minnesota readers, this is my last op-ed as President and CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). As I prepare to retire, I do so with immense gratitude and pride. For nearly two decades, I've had the

privilege of working alongside passionate individuals, dedicated partners and visionary communities all unified by a common goal: to build a stronger, more vibrant southern Minnesota. Together, we've championed small towns, nurtured early childhood development and empowered rural entrepreneurs – creating a legacy that will continue to grow and evolve far beyond my tenure.

This journey has been deeply personal and much more than a career – it's been a calling. Growing up near Kiester, and later serving southern Minnesota in Congress, I've long believed in the power and promise of rural places and the people who call them home. At SMIF, I've seen that spirit in action every day. It has been an incredible honor to help lift up those stories, support those dreams, and be part of a shared journey that continues to inspire me.

As SMIF approaches its 40th anniversary, I couldn't be more confident in the road ahead. The Foundation is in exceptional hands, guided by a remarkable team and bolstered by strong community partnerships.

I am so proud to pass the torch on to Benya Kraus, who will be starting as SMIF's next President and CEO in mid-June. Benya has deep family roots in Waseca County, going back six generations. More importantly, she brings with her a fresh perspective and an in-

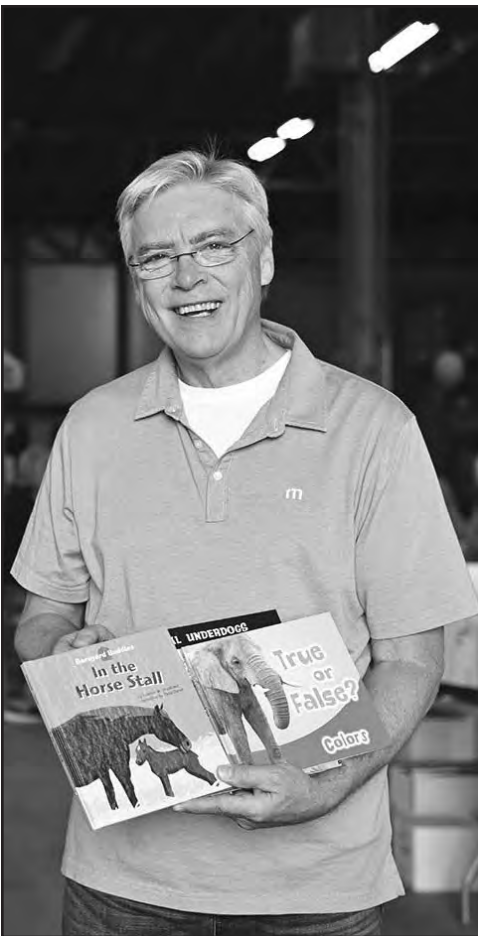
spiring track record as a rising leader in rural development, earning national recognition for elevating the value of rural living. Benya represents the next generation of leadership in our region, and I have every confidence that she will bring energy, vision and purpose to the role.

Benya's work is grounded in both lived experience and a deep commitment to community. As a co-founder of Lead for America, she has led efforts to reconnect young people with their hometowns and invest in home-grown leadership. Her values and approach align beautifully with SMIF's mission, and I know she will honor the Foundation's legacy while charting bold new paths. Southern Minnesota is fortunate to have her, and I look forward to cheering on her success as she helps shape the future of this region we all love.

While I am turning the page on this chapter, I will always be a champion for southern Minnesota, and going forward I will gladly volunteer some time to assist SMIF where appropriate. In fact, I am excited to share that a new endowed fund has been established in my name to support small towns across our region – ensuring this work will flourish.

I am deeply grateful to all of you for your friendship, your trust, and the chance to serve a place I will always proudly call home.

If you are inclined to donate to the Tim Penny Small Towns Fund, visit smifoundation.org/smalltownfund.



[tion.org/smalltownfund](http://smifoundation.org/smalltownfund).



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Courageous Listening



By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern
Minnesota Initiative Foundation

My Grandma Vivan Zimmerman was one of Tim Penny's earliest and most emphatic supporters during his initial run for Congress – so much so that she convinced my Grandpa Jim, an active member of Waseca County's Republican Party, to vote for Tim despite the "D" behind his name.

This traversing across political identities seems almost miraculous in today's eyes. But I am told that it was Tim's willingness to listen, his commitment to knock on the doors of every house in the district, to see national problems with the specificity of a local context, that won my Grandpa over. Tim brought these virtues to his role as President of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) for nearly two decades. As I now step into the

role of the next SMIF president, I can't help but feel my Grandma's pride and hopefulness that I, too, may carry forward Tim's legacy of service and courageous listening.

It is a courageous thing to listen.

In light of the recent acts of violence that have shaken our state, I've found myself reflecting on what it means to truly listen – especially in difficult, divided, and uncertain times. These moments test our belief in the goodness of our neighbors and the strength of the communities we call home. And yet, I come to my first week in my new role with a deep sense of gratitude and knowing that this spirit of connection and care still defines who the vast majority of Minnesotans are – thanks in large part to the civic institutions, like SMIF, that model the virtues of empathy, trust and shared responsibility. Our work to foster belonging across our programs and region feels all the more urgent. I'm grateful to step into this role with all of you, to live out our values more boldly, and to keep listening – one of the most powerful tools we have to build community – as we move forward together.

Listening requires us to temporarily suspend our own judgments and ways of thinking of the world, in order to make space for another's story to take shape in our mind – and potentially, to take hold of our heart. We may find that when we listen, we see problems and uncover new solutions we didn't see earlier. Or maybe we listen, and the stories we hear don't change our minds at all and instead, give us a perspective on why others may see things differently. However, sometimes when we really listen, we are

called to hold two opposite things true at the same time. Living in paradox runs almost counter to the very human, biological desire to sort and categorize the world around us.

Yet, I am no stranger to paradox.

For one, I am both native and newcomer. I was born in Bangkok, Thailand where I spent most of my childhood and high school years, but I also enjoyed summers on the family farm in Waseca County, where my dad's side of the family has farmed for six generations. As the daughter of a first-generation Thai immigrant and a blonde-hair, blue-eyed Minnesota farm boy, I've had the gift of seeing southern Minnesota through the eyes of both parents. Since moving back six years ago, I feel connected to a family history tied to this prairie land, yet still miss the taste of lemon-grass and scent of jasmine flowers from my childhood home.

I am a social entrepreneur who co-founded a national nonprofit that encourages young people to return to their rural hometowns, embracing fresh perspectives and new ways of building community. And yet, I'm also a Rotarian and a Catholic who loves tradition and the wisdom found in faith institutions and having friendships with people older than me. I'm a humanities student who also earned her master's in business administration, energized by private sector solutions while also attentive to community needs that arise from market failures. I worked to redirect national philanthropy toward rural America, and also believe that the most innovative investment strategies are forged at the local level.

Living in paradox takes courage because very often, you don't feel "enough" of either

identity. And when one part of myself gets territorial of the other, it takes courage to remind myself that all the parts of me need each other.

I believe this is true for us as a region, too. We need all of each other.

At SMIF, we are a funder, convener and capacity builder for southern Minnesota. Our issue areas focus on Entrepreneurship, Early Childhood Education, and Community Vitality – and while almost all of us can agree that these are important factors for a thriving community, we likely have different, perhaps paradoxical, ideas on how to get there. Rather than see paradox as a peril, I see it as a promise. It is a promise to listen deeply and courageously, to build a region that is resilient because of its dynamism and diversity, to strive for a culture that balances the needs between old and young, newcomer and native, private and public, small and large.

In my first 100 days in this role, I'll be hitting the road to every corner of our region, eager to listen with the same courage and persistence as my predecessor, Tim Penny. I look forward to hearing your stories and weaving together the paradoxes of our region as we craft a shared path, and shared identity of who we are, together.

I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at benyak@smifoundation.org or 507-455-3215.

About Benya Kraus

Benya Kraus is the President & CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Benya is the co-founder of Lead for America and served as the Network Advancement Director at Resource Rural.

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Ghost Poops?? Allergy Season, Worst Ever?



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

What Foods Trigger the Greatest Cravings, Leading to Overeating? Researchers at the German Center for Diabetes Research have found that just five days of overeating ultra-processed snack foods can alter how insulin functions in the brain—even before you notice a single pound gained. Insulin isn't just about blood sugar; it's a hormone that helps the brain manage hunger, satisfaction, and that all-important feeling of self-control after eating. When insulin's signaling breaks down, that gentle nudge telling you "enough for now" goes silent. Suddenly, you find yourself craving more food, regardless of real hunger or need. What really surprised me about this study, published in *Nature Metabolism*, is how the negative effects on the brain outlasted the unhealthy eating itself. After returning to a regular diet, the brain scans revealed lingering disruptions in areas tied to memory, decision-making, and reward—actually resembling patterns seen in obesity. This tells us that even short encounters with ultra-processed foods can leave a mark, echoing long after the bags and boxes are emptied. The environment doesn't help matters. The smell of cookies in the air, a well-placed ad, or even the crinkle of packaging works like Pavlov's bell, triggering the brain to seek out food, hunger or not. All of this manipulates our natural satiety cues, teaching us to eat for reasons other than nourishing our bodies. Even more, these ultraprocessed snacks light up dopamine pathways in the brain, similar to addictive drugs, driving us to crave more—even if the reward fades with each bite. Restoring a healthy relationship with food begins with honest, mindful choices. I've seen it firsthand; swapping out ultraprocessed snacks for whole foods, slowing down to appreciate each meal, and adding some daily movement can reignite your body's natural signals. It's a process that's as much about tuning into your own experience as it is about nutrition science. After all, reclaiming your appetite isn't just about food, but about finding satisfaction and control in the everyday moments at the table. Here are some examples of ultra-processed foods. Ready-to-eat meals and snacks: Frozen pizzas, instant noodles, ready-made pasta dishes, and packaged soups. Sweet and savory packaged snacks: Chips, chocolate, candy, biscuits, and pastries. Breakfast cereals and bars: Often sweetened with additives and preservatives. Processed meats: Cold cuts, ham, sausages, hotdogs,

chicken nuggets, and fish sticks. Mass-produced bread and baked goods: Including packaged breads, buns, and pastries. Carbonated drinks: Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks. Ice cream and frozen desserts: Often containing numerous additives. Sweetened and flavored dairy products: Such as fruit-flavored yogurts. Sauces and condiments: Ketchup, mayonnaise, and other packaged sauces.

What Ghost Poops Say About Your Digestion and Gut Health. Ghost poops, also known as "no wipers," are those rare, deeply satisfying bowel movements that leave no residue behind when you wipe and sink straight to the bottom of the toilet. To me, that's not some fluke of nature; it's a sign your gut is truly thriving. Experts like Dr. Ira Leeds and Julia Barten actually describe these as "nirvana poops"—the kind of thing we should all strive for, not dread. It's about what you don't see or feel after using the bathroom. No endless wiping. No evidence left on the bowl. Just a clear sign your digestive system is firing on all cylinders. It's not as simple as luck or genetics, though. Over the years, I've seen people struggle with their gut because of stress, dehydration, lack of movement, or a diet that doesn't quite suit their needs. These factors can all disrupt the gut microbiome, making the elusive ghost poop almost impossible to achieve. Gut health, I've learned, is about much more than just how often you go; it's about how well your body processes what you eat and drink. A surprising insight? Many people try to fix their digestion by piling on the fiber, but if your gut's already out of balance, that can make symptoms worse. From personal experience and plenty of research, I've found that increasing digestible carbohydrates (usually 200 to 350 grams per day) helps heal the gut more effectively. And don't underestimate the power of posture; using a footstool or leaning forward can open up the colon and lead to more complete, easy elimination. Signs like floating or sticky stools are red flags—that your body isn't absorbing fats properly or that there's gut inflammation. But hitting those regular ghost poops? That's the body's way of telling you everything is humming along just as it should. For anyone seeking a clear gauge of gut health, skip the fancy tests and look for what's not left behind.

As we've seen, our gut health has a huge impact on our overall well-being.

And while there are many factors that can affect it, maintaining regular and healthy bowel movements is one of the most important things we can do for our digestive system.

But beyond just physical health, having a happy gut also means feeling more energized, focused, and emotionally balanced. It's no coincidence that the phrase "gut feeling" exists – our gut is often referred to as our "second brain" because of the strong connection between the two. So next time you're experiencing bloating or discomfort in your stomach, remember that it's not just about finding temporary relief. It's about taking care of.

Allergy season is now longer and more intense due in part to our milder winter

weather. Warmer weather and higher carbon dioxide levels help plants produce more pollen for longer periods, which means spring allergies start earlier and last into fall. Pollen counts in North America have jumped more than 20% in the past 30 years, and the season itself is about two weeks longer than it was two decades ago.

Doctors recommend beginning allergy precautions like saline nasal sprays, before symptoms hit. Keeping your room pollen-free, shutting windows, and changing clothes after being outdoors can also help manage symptoms like sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion. Chiropractic care may offer notable benefits for individuals dealing with allergies. By focusing on the alignment of the spine and the functionality of the nervous system, chiropractic adjustments can help reduce stress on the body, which in turn may support a more robust immune response. Since the nervous system plays a key role in regulating the immune system and its reactions, enhancing its function through spinal adjustments may help the body respond more effectively to allergens. Additionally, chiropractic care can alleviate tension in the neck and upper back, where sinus drainage and nasal passages are often affected, potentially reducing symptoms like congestion and sinus pressure. While it's not a direct cure, chiropractic care can be a helpful part of a comprehensive strategy to manage allergy symptoms.

COVID-19 Treatment News: J. Hatfill, a seasoned virologist with a history of advocating for hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) as an

early treatment for COVID-19, has stepped into a major public health role as the special adviser for pandemic prevention at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For those who followed his previous tenure as a White House adviser during the Trump administration, you might recall his controversial—but steadfast—defense of using HCQ based on thousands of peer-reviewed studies, some of which he personally referenced in a recent interview. Hatfill points to the fact that even President Trump took the drug under doctors' guidance, standing by its safety when administered appropriately.

Hatfill is now just beginning his work at the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), where he's eager to join forces with other experts. The agency operates several centers focused on tackling pandemics—including those on biomed research and our national stockpile. This new role, as he expressed, isn't just about COVID or influenza but encompasses preparedness for emerging global threats of all kinds. Throughout his career, Hatfill has advocated for thoroughness and awareness in pandemic science; it appears he's bringing that same mindset to HHS as he helps our country brace for whatever comes next. Dr. Mary Talley Bowden, an ear, nose and throat specialist in Houston, Texas, reported, "I treated over 6,000 COVID-19 patients during the pandemic, a large number of those patients took hydroxychloroquine."

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

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Brain Food



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

In The Wizard of Oz tale, the scarecrow laments that he does not have a brain. How could he think about not having a brain without having a brain to think? By the end of the tale, we see the scarecrow does have some “smarts” and he is capable of learning new things. Your brain is an amazing structure allowing you to read this article and remember old stories without having to think about monitoring heartbeat, breathing rates, and nutrient levels. One area we should think about more is the food we eat that supports a healthy brain.

Diseases of the brain are increasingly dis-

cussed as more individuals are diagnosed with these challenges. A 2025 article published in Nature Medicine predicts 42% of adults over 55 develop dementia by age 95. A 2023 article in the Alzheimer’s and Dementia Journal reported a 145% increase in deaths from Alzheimer’s between 2000 and 2019. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that 40 million Americans are affected by various anxiety disorders. With all the suggested advances in modern health care, why is this problem with brain health happening?

Brain health can be reviewed from three levels: the structure, the function, and the energy of the brain. Each of these levels requires specific nutrients which are available from specific types of foods. Brain health can be supported by choosing the right foods.

Your brain is seventy percent fat. The one hundred billion neurons within your brain are each made of millions of fatty acid molecules that make up the cell membrane and the myelin sheath. The myelin sheath is an extra insulation layer wrapped around each neuron to keep the electrical signal contained so that the energy flows in the right direction and does not get lost. Quality fat sources that enhance this insulation layer include coconut oil, butter, lard, olive oil, and flaxseed oil. These sources of fat contain the electrical charges of the neurons more effectively than

the vegetable oils common in the grocery store. Trans-fats and seed oils high in omega-6 easily breakdown in the cell membrane resulting in early cell death or dysfunction. A 2017 research paper from the Temple University Health System linked canola oil with worse memory. Canola oil is a seed oil high in omega-6 fatty acids. A 2024 paper in JAMA Network reported that consuming 7 grams of olive oil each day was related to a 28% decrease in dementia related death. To support the brain structure of neurons, consuming quality oils is essential.

The function of the nerve cell is to pass information on to the next nerve cell. The speed of this transfer of information has been recorded to be as fast as 250 miles per hour. Another evaluation has noted the brain performs one quintillion calculations each second. A quintillion is one million trillions. Information is passed from one nerve cell to another by a variety of chemicals called neurotransmitters. Adrenaline, dopamine, serotonin, and histamine are just a few of these neurotransmitters. A group of foods that can significantly improve nerve activity are fermented foods which contain health-promoting bacteria. Fermented foods like plain yogurt, fresh mozzarella cheese, and sauerkraut, in addition to fresh fruits and vegetables will promote a healthy bacteria community that produces butyrate, a short chain fatty acid related to brain health. Scientific Reports Journal published a 2023 article showing that butyrate producing bacteria are associated with a lower risk of Alzheimer’s. A June 2022 article from Frontiers in Immunology reported butyrate helps

fight against Parkinson’s disease. Improving the quality of the bacteria community in your gut has a direct result in healthy brain function.

The energy for your entire body is produced within tiny structures called mitochondria. Your brain has a high energy requirement consuming twenty percent of all the energy your body produces each day. Just as fuel is needed at the energy plant to make electricity, so your mitochondria need the right fuel to create the energy your body needs. The most efficient source of fuel is sugar that comes from long-chain carbohydrates. Those long-chain carbohydrates are fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and whole grains. These carb sources do not create unbalanced blood sugar levels and do provide dietary fiber for the bacteria in the gut to produce butyrate, so you get an extra bonus when you eat these foods.

Adding quality fats, fermented foods, fresh vegetables and fruits can make a significant difference in your brain activity. According to the Brain Health and Alzheimer’s Prevention Program at Loma Linda University over ninety percent of Alzheimer’s cases can be prevented with simple changes in diet and lifestyle. 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.*

To the Editor

**Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of The Messenger*

To the Editor:


There are poker players and then there are poker players. What Minnesota Fats was to pocket pool Colossal Carl is to poker. He is the toughest and wildest card player in the country.

In his life Colossal Carl has had to live by some strict rules. He does not bet against two aces showing. He does not go against a hand that might be holding a king for a holoe card if he is not sure where the king is. He is careful to avoid a deck with a grainy feel.

If a community agrees to a major project it is betting the same as Colossal Carl in a game, hoping for a big payday. A data center in close contact with a town must answer some questions before the citizens bet on its success. Why is the company at the place is hopes to build? What kind of data will it produce and does it have long term contracts with companies for that data? Does it further plan to enlarge or contract? How much power will it need? Can a city trust a company like Tract is going to pay for utility use will they contract with the city for some time or will it be a series of renewable contracts? Can Excel guarantee that in supplying the data center it can hold current prices to city residents at current or near current prices? How do the rules of the state and county fit in with the Tract company and will they be harmonious with city rules? What kind of pressure does it place on the city’s infrastructure?

If Colossal Carl were negotiating for the city he would play his cards close to his vest. Can we expect less from city leaders?

Respectfully,
Phillip Hammes
Cannon Falls



FOR COMMUNITY RELEASE

Dakota County Sheriff's Office

Joe Leko, Sheriff

Bulletin #24-4
10/01/2024

REWARD OFFERED


ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON

Nicole “Nikki” Anderson

- 5' 10"
- 135 lbs
- Last seen wearing a long grey sweater and camouflage pants.


Nicole Anderson was last seen in Randolph Township in Dakota County the morning of Saturday, July 6, 2024.

She was on foot and does not have her cell phone, wallet, or medications.



*Last known image of Anderson ^
on 7/6/2024 at 08:54 hours.*

The Dakota County Sheriff's Office is offering a reward of \$5,000 for information regarding Nicole Anderson's whereabouts or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance. Private parties have pledged an additional \$40,000 reward to be distributed independently of the Sheriff's Office. Only tips received through the Dakota County Sheriff's Office or Crime Stoppers that lead to the location of Nicole Anderson or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance are eligible for the reward.



Anyone wishing to provide a **completely anonymous** tip may contact Crime Stoppers at, **1-800-222-TIPS**, or www.CrimeStoppersMN.org

Reference DCSO Case # 24-000819

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FOR COMMUNITY RELEASE

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: I read your last article about road construction and work zones. Can you talk about the zipper merge? It seems like a lot of people don't know what it is or can't figure it out. Thank you.

Answer: The "Late Merge - Zipper Merge" is a driving strategy that requires drivers to change their mindset about merging. Traditionally, drivers have been taught to merge early when a lane is ending. Early merging leads to longer backups, more crashes and road rage incidents.

Zipper Merge Procedure

- When you see the "lane closed ahead" sign and traffic is backing up, stay in your current lane until the point of merge.

- Take turns with other drivers to safely and smoothly merge into the remaining lane.

- When traffic is heavy and slow, it is safer to remain in your current lane until the point where traffic can take turns merging orderly.

Benefits of the Zipper Merge

- Reduces the difference in speeds between two lanes, making lane changes easier and safer.

- Reduces the overall length of traffic backups by up to 40 percent.

- Reduces congestion at freeway interchanges, especially in metropolitan areas.

- Creates a sense of fairness when all lanes are moving at the same speed.

- Reduces incidents of road rage.

Question: I drive truck for a living. Can you write about people that cut us off? These big rigs can't stop on a dime. It's frustrating because when they do that it can cause a wreck.

Answer: Changing lanes and cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous, but it's especially dangerous to cut off a commercial bus or truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you're likely to be in a blind spot, so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you're visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow down quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the time it takes to stop.

Commercial vehicles need more stopping distance than cars.

- **Stopping Distance:** An average passenger car traveling at 55 mph can stop within 130 to 140 feet. A fully loaded tractor-trailer may need more than 400 feet to stop completely.

- **Safe Following Distance:** Following a commercial vehicle too closely reduces your ability to see the road ahead. Maintain a safe following distance and position your vehicle so the driver can see you in their side mirrors. This will also give you time to react if the commercial vehicle stops suddenly.

- **Headlights at Night:** Commercial vehicles have large side mirrors that can reflect light. When following a commercial vehicle at night, always dim your headlights to avoid blinding the driver.

- **Merging:** When a commercial vehicle merges into traffic, it needs more time than a car to accelerate and reach normal speed. Be prepared to slow down or change lanes to allow the truck to merge safely.

- **Stopping on an Upgrade:** If you stop behind a commercial vehicle on an upgrade, allow space for the truck to roll back slightly when it starts to move. Position your vehicle on the left side of your lane so the driver can see you in the side mirror.

Question: I have been receiving text messages about an "E-Z Pass Final Reminder." It's something about having an outstanding toll and submitting payment. I was told it was a scam. Can you get me more information on this?

Answer: Here is information from the Minnesota Department of Transportation E-ZPass page. <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/ezpassmn/news.html>

Scammers are sending fake messages pretending to be MnDOT, E-ZPass or other tolling agencies. These messages claim you owe money and direct you to a payment link. This is a scam! We will never text or email you asking for payment or personal information. If you receive a suspicious text or email message, delete and do not respond. Don't set up an account due to a text or email scam.

Scam information:

- Minnesota E-ZPass (MnDOT) will never email or text you for payment or personal information.

- Text numbers and email addresses are chosen at random, and they are targeting everyone—not just E-ZPass users. There is no data breach.

- Delete and don't click on anything that seems off or suspicious. Report as "junk" or "spam" if your device has this option. This helps your device recognize spam.

- Do not set up a new or different E-ZPass account due to a text or email scam.

- If you clicked on a link or provided information, take efforts to secure your personal information and financial accounts.

- You can report fraud activity to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center or the Federal Trade Commission.

If you have questions or concerns, check your account through the secure customer portal, or contact us (MNDOT E-ZPass) directly.

Sometimes scam artists send what looks like an invoice in the mail. Scam letters will include a bogus or questionable URL link and will often have a sense of urgency. Minnesota E-ZPass, MnDOT, or other agencies may send a letter in the mail, but it will look official including agency letterhead, detailed information, and multiple methods for contacting and/or remitting payment to the agency. If you receive a letter in the mail, confirm it is legitimate and always verify information directly with the agency.

Question: I caught part of the news the other night and heard something about the 100 deadliest days. Can you get me more information on that?

Answer: I certainly can. Here is some in-

formation we shared on the Minnesota Department of Safety blog. The Minnesota State Patrol is urging drivers to make smart, safe decisions as the state enters what is known as the "100 deadliest days" on the road.

This stretch, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, is the most dangerous time of year to travel in Minnesota. It coincides with peak travel nationwide and a troubling spike in fatal crashes.

In 2024, Minnesota saw 151 traffic deaths during this period. By year's end, at least 479 people had died on the state's roads.

"Our troopers work hard every year to keep fatalities down, but last summer was especially hard," said Minnesota State Patrol Col. Christina Bogojevic. "These are not just statistics — they are lives, families and communities forever changed."

The four main contributors to fatal crashes remain consistent: speed, alcohol, lack of seat belt use and distraction. Last year, each played a major role in Minnesota's traffic deaths:

- Speed: 138 fatalities
- Alcohol: 124 fatalities
- Unbelted: 108 fatalities
- Distraction: 29 fatalities

"These are the leading killers on our roads," Bogojevic said. "And we see the consequences play out every day — in the Twin Cities and rural counties across Minnesota."

She said troopers continue to encounter drivers making dangerous choices — speeding down highways, texting behind the wheel, not buckling up and driving impaired.

The state patrol and more than 300 agencies across Minnesota plan to increase enforcement over the summer. Expect more patrols,



targeted campaigns and greater coordination with local agencies.

"If you're speeding, driving impaired, unbelted or distracted, expect to see us," Bogojevic said.

But law enforcement says it can't turn the tide alone. They are asking all Minnesotans to do their part.

- Slow down and give yourself time to get where you're going
- Stay off your phone

- Buckle up — everyone, every time
- Never drive impaired, by alcohol or drugs

"If every driver made those choices, we could flip the script," Bogojevic said. "This summer doesn't have to be deadly. It can be the safest."

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)

Buckle Up: A Simple Click Can Save a Life

A seat belt is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect yourself in a crash — and it only takes a second to click.

In 2024, 106 traffic fatalities involved unbelted drivers or passengers in Minnesota. These deaths were 100% preventable. If you won't buckle up for yourself, do it for the people who count on you.

Child passenger safety is equally critical. From 2019 to 2024, only 68% of children ages 0 to 9 involved in crashes were properly secured. Of those who were, most (87%) were not injured, and the rest had only minor injuries. Morgan's Story is a powerful reminder of why properly securing a child in a car seat matters. On June 3, 2024, she buckled her three young daughters in before leaving her mom's house in Lamberton. Just 12 minutes later, a crash took Morgan's life. Her daughters survived without a scratch — thanks to her care in securing them properly.

Minnesota's updated child restraint law includes these key points:

- **Rear-Facing:** Keep your child rear-facing for as long as possible, at least until age two, AND until they've outgrown the seat by weight or height according to the manufacturer. This is the safest position for your child's head, neck, and spine.

- **Forward-Facing:** Once your child has outgrown their rear-facing seat and is at least two years old, they can transition to a forward-facing seat with a 5-point harness. They should stay in this seat until at least age four AND until outgrown by height or weight.

- **Booster Seat:** Children must use a booster until at least age nine or until they've outgrown the booster AND can pass the 5-Step Test.

- **Back Seat:** Kids under 13 must ride in the back seat whenever possible.

- **Restraint Requirement:** All children under 18 must be properly restrained in a car seat, booster, or seat belt, depending on their size and age.

For more info and safety tips, visit:

- BuckleUpMN.org
- BuckleUpKids.dps.mn.gov

Let's work together to keep ourselves and each other safe — one click can save a life. Buckle up — every trip, every ride, front seat and back seat. Together, we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.



Hampton City Council Meeting Minutes April 8, 2025

The Hampton City Council met on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at Hampton City Hall for the regularly scheduled meeting. Present were Mayor John Knetter and Council Members Jerry Huddleston, David Luhring, Anthony Verch, and Nick Russell. Also present were Cory Bienfang of Bolten & Menk, Chris Meyer Treasurer, Erik Porten, Viviane Vang, and various residents in attendance.

Regular Meeting Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Disclosure of Interest – None

Approval of March 11, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes – Motion by Luhring, seconded by Verch, to approve the March 11, 2025 regular meeting minutes, with Mayor Knetter’s amendments. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Disbursements - Motion by Verch, seconded by Russell, to approve the April disbursements. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Comments: Erik Porten addressed the city council by acknowledging that, while there may be political differences among members, most likely share common values—truth, honesty, and a desire for good governance. He questioned why these values, which both sides of the aisle claim to uphold, seem difficult to consistently practice within the council itself.

He pointed to language in the meeting minutes up for approval, which suggest the public should reach out directly to the council with questions rather than submitting what the city describes as excessive or redundant data requests. Porten argued that he had done just that by emailing the council last month with findings and questions focused on truth and transparency. He said his email challenged the mayor’s earlier claim that the city had incurred over \$10,000 in costs from data requests—something Porten said didn’t line up with the actual figures from Bolton & Menk, the firm handling the city’s data work through February. He thanked the council for amending that claim in the current meeting materials.

Porten also raised concerns about changes to the city’s data practices policy. He reminded the council that under Minnesota law, inspection of public data must be free. While cities can charge fees for copies, they cannot charge for viewing information—regardless of how the data is stored or any costs the city might face in retrieving it. He said the city’s recent handling of this issue may have been based on inaccurate advice, and encouraged councilmembers to verify legal guidance for themselves before making decisions.

To underscore his point, Porten shared a recent experience: a data request of his had been marked complete around March 12, but he was told he couldn’t view it until the mayor had reviewed it first. On March 24, city staff informed him the mayor had signed off, but access was still delayed due to an unresolved fee schedule. He ended by asking whether that fee schedule is now available, and whether the council intends to formally adopt or recommend it.

His allotted three minutes expired, and the council thanked him for his comments.

Viviane Vang spoke to the council about plans to convert the old Black Stallion building into a welcoming and inclusive funeral home that serves the diverse local community. She emphasized transparency and community involvement, promising an upcoming open house for neighbors to learn more, ask questions, and share feedback. She expressed excitement about becoming part of the neighborhood. The council thanked her for her presentation.

The Deputy gave a brief update, warning about ongoing mail and storage unit thefts. He advised not to mail checks or leave them in mailboxes and to check storage units regularly. Residents should report any suspicious activity. He also mentioned the availability of four speed trailers and asked for suggestions on where to place them.

Mayor Knetter requested placing a speed trailer on Belmont again, noting its positive impact on slowing traffic, especially with small children nearby. The Deputy agreed to add it to the list.

Councilman Luhring thanked the Deputy for effective speed enforcement near Highway 47 and 52. The Mayor and Council expressed their appreciation for the Deputy’s service.

Petitions, Requests, and Communications: Cory Bienfang of Bolton & Menk, standing in for Angie Smith, provided an update on the status of the Alternative Urban Area-wide Review (AUAR) process. He explained that Angie Smith was unable to attend due to a prior commitment and that his update would focus on the final AUAR plan presented at the March meeting.

The council had previously approved the submission of the final AUAR plan to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), starting a 10-day public comment period. This comment period has now closed, and the only feedback received was a letter from the Metropolitan Council. The letter confirmed that the AUAR was complete from a regional perspective and offered additional considerations for future steps, such as potential amendments to the comprehensive plan and MUSA changes. Bienfang noted that these comments were in line with the information already included in the AUAR.

Bienfang then introduced Resolution 2025-03, which calls for the adoption of the AUAR by the City of Hampton. He reviewed the various steps that have been taken up to this point, including voluntary public engagement through open houses. The adoption of the AUAR is the final step in the process, and if the resolution passes tonight, the AUAR will be published in the EQB.

Councilman Huddleston asked why there were separate motions for approval and adoption. Mayor Knetter explained that approval was required to submit the final plan for review, while adoption formalizes the council’s recognition that the AUAR is complete and ready for final action. Bienfang added that adoption is a technical term used in this process, and that it signals the AUAR is in its final form.

Regarding the 10-day comment period, Huddleston inquired if there had been any objections or feedback from state agencies. Bienfang confirmed that the Metropolitan Council’s letter was the only feedback re-

ceived.

The council also discussed concerns about water appropriation, with Huddleston asking when the city would know if there would be any issues with water use, especially regarding well impacts. Mayor Knetter clarified that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) handles water permitting, and that any potential issues would not be clear until a development proposal is submitted for review. He noted that the city has no authority over DNR decisions, referencing a past experience where a well was approved by the DNR despite local concerns.

Councilman Verch added that the AUAR is a planning study, and the specifics of water usage and impact would only be known once actual development proposals are made. He praised the AUAR for its thoroughness and comprehensive data. The council acknowledged that while the AUAR provides scenarios for water and sewer needs, the final decision on water use would rest with the DNR.

Ordinances and Resolutions:

Resolution 2025__03 – Resolution Adopting the Final Hampton Industrial Area Alternative Urban Area-wide Review (AUAR) Motion made by Luhring seconded by Verch to adopt the Final AUAR and Mitigation plan. All voted in favor. Motion passes. 5-0.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees:

Engineer Report – Cory Bienfang from Bolton & Menk provided an update on the water tower project. Construction preparation is underway, with the official start scheduled for Monday, April 14th. The first phase involves extending utility lines (water and sanitary) from the frontage road to the tower site, and this work is on track to begin as planned. However, Bienfang noted that, as with any large construction project, there are variables like weather and contractor schedules that could affect the timeline.

The project is expected to take longer than typical utility projects due to its complexity, with construction phases including utility work, foundational work, and the tower’s erection. Bienfang explained that the project is anticipated to span the rest of this year and into the next, with a final completion timeline of approximately 12 to 16 months, as Mayor Knetter mentioned. Councilman Verch asked if work would continue through the winter, and Bienfang confirmed that work would depend on weather conditions, but the project’s phases would continue throughout the year. Bienfang emphasized that this project is different from typical street or utility projects, as it involves multiple contractors and phases, which may lead to a less consistent construction timeline.

The council thanked Cory for the update, and there were no further questions.

Water / Sewer Report – The city is addressing maintenance needs in the sewer system. Replacement rods are needed for the control structure, with a proposed switch to stainless steel to prevent future corrosion. One of the four air pumps used for pond aeration recently malfunctioned but was temporarily restored. A new pump is estimated at \$2,200, and the recommendation is to purchase one and rebuild the others as needed.

Discharge is not expected until mid to late May, per Mayor Knetter, as the system currently has ample capacity.

Park Report – No major updates since last month

Street Report – The city is awaiting the spring street sweeping schedule, which is especially important since the fall cleaning was missed and streets are in urgent need of attention. Drive-arounds have begun to assess maintenance needs, and overall, the streets have held up well so far.

Councilman Huddleston raised a question about whether to mention the new .gov domain now or wait until next month. Mayor Knetter responded that only one bid has been submitted so far, and a possible second is still pending, so a full update will be provided next month. Councilman Huddleston asked for more information on the bids. The Clerk explained that On-Site submitted one bid and is still waiting to hear back from two other vendors. Mayor Knetter noted the existing bid was around \$2,500, though he’s not familiar with typical website costs. Huddleston added that he has another potential contact and is open to On-Site if they have government website experience.

During the meeting, a resident inquired about street sweeping costs and asked why the city no longer provides water to the county for sweeping, as it once did. Mayor Knetter explained that arrangement is no longer in place and, although the city has tried to restore it, it hasn’t been successful.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Adjournment - Motion by Russell, seconded by Huddleston, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Roan

Hampton City Council Meeting Minutes May 13, 2025

The Hampton City Council met on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at Hampton City Hall for the regularly scheduled meeting. Present were Mayor John Knetter and Council Members Jerry Huddleston, David Luhring, and Nick Russell. Also present were Brad Fisher of Bolten & Menk and Chris Meyer Treasurer. Anthony Verch showed up a few minutes after the meeting had started.

Regular Meeting Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Disclosure of Interest – None

Approval of March 11, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes – Motion by Luhring, seconded by Huddleston, to approve the April 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Disbursements - Motion by Russell, seconded by Luhring, to approve the May disbursements. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Comments: None

Petitions, Requests, and Communications: None

Ordinances and Resolutions: None

(continued on page 20)

Hampton City Council Meeting

(continued from page 19)

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees:

Engineer Report – Brad Fisher of Bolton & Menk provided an update on the water tower improvement project. The project began on April 14 and has progressed steadily. The installation of sanitary and water main utilities along Lincoln Street has been completed, and the street has been built up to a gravel section. The water main has also been extended to the new water tower site. Foundation subcontractors have delivered their equipment, with groundbreaking for the foundation scheduled for May 29. Fisher noted that he communicated with nearby property users about the upcoming work. To avoid damaging new concrete, the street paving work will pause during foundation construction, expected to take about two to three weeks. Paving and concrete work, including curb and driveway installation, is anticipated in early June. The main construction for the tower is expected to be completed by fall, with the old tower being removed around the same time, though some work may extend into next spring depending on weather and steel availability.

Fisher also provided an update on the phosphorus management plan, noting that while progress had slowed due to other priorities, efforts are resuming. A staff member assigned to lead the plan will meet with Fisher in the coming week, with a draft report expected within the next two months. Mayor Knetter requested a preliminary conference call to review and discuss options before anything is submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The initial engineering report is due in January or February 2026, with implementation to follow within one to two years. The MPCA requires that the city have the capability to manage phosphorus levels, even if treatment is not immediately necessary. Potential solutions range from simple systems such as chemical dosing units to more complex infrastructure, and the choice will depend on final phosphorus levels and funding opportunities. Fisher emphasized the importance of being prepared with a plan, as the MPCA expects readiness rather than reactive measures.

Water / Sewer Report – Mayor Knetter reported that there were no updates on the water system. He noted that recent sewer report samples look very good and that discharge is currently underway. The city is meeting phosphorus compliance levels at this time. There were no further updates for water and sewer.

Park Report – Councilman Russell reported that he has a meeting scheduled with Reese Farms to look at wood chips they are currently grinding. While not certified for playgrounds, the chips are sub-one-inch and may be suitable for park use. Pricing appears favorable, and he plans to assess the material in person.

He also addressed a sprinkler system issue at the park, where a line broke at the pump house near the ball field. A shut-off valve, which feeds the drinking fountain behind the dugout, is stuck and likely needs replacement. He authorized Marlin to contact a contractor to make the necessary repairs.

Councilman Verch thanked Adam Siebe-

naler for noticing and reporting water running late at night, helping to prevent further water loss. Councilman Russell added that the water had been running for approximately two and a half hours. He concluded by noting that he anticipates needing approximately 90 yards of wood chips for both parks.

Street Report – Councilman Luhning reported that street sweeping has been completed and noted that the streets are in good condition. He had no further updates.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business - Mayor Knetter informed the Council that the City's current building official, SAFEbuilt (formerly MNSpect), has provided written notice that they will no longer be servicing the City of Hampton as of June 28, 2025. In anticipation of this, the Mayor reached out to multiple agencies, including Spectron, Goodhue County Land Use Management, and others. Of those contacted, only Goodhue County responded with a proposal and fee schedule.

Mayor Knetter shared feedback he received from area contractors and residents in nearby communities, such as Cannon Falls and Zumbrota, who described Goodhue County's inspectors as firm but fair. Councilman Verch supported this assessment, based on his past experiences working with Goodhue on building permits, describing them as professional, responsive, and efficient. He noted that while some permit submissions previously required travel to Red Wing, the agency has improved its online application process in recent years.

The Council discussed the need to have a replacement in place prior to the June 28 deadline to ensure a smooth transition and to allow time for the new official to review city ordinances and become familiar with ongoing and upcoming projects, including inspections related to the water tower. There was general agreement on the importance of early onboarding.

Councilman Russell asked whether the contract would be short-term or for the full year. Mayor Knetter clarified that Goodhue

County's proposal covers services through December 31, 2025. While the Council may re-evaluate service options at year's end, members agreed that Goodhue is the most viable option at this time. No other agencies had responded to inquiries, and previous efforts to solicit broader interest had yielded limited responses.

Motion: Councilman Verch made a motion to appoint Goodhue County Land Use Management as the City's new building official.

Second: Councilman Russell seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

The Council noted that the transition process will begin immediately to allow for adequate preparation and continued code compliance oversight.

Mayor Knetter reported that only one website development bid was received, with a low estimate of \$2,500. While it's preferable to have multiple bids, the company was recommended by On-Site, the city's technical advisor for computer systems and billing software.

Councilman Huddleston noted he had reviewed the proposal and found no concerns but requested the opportunity to speak with the vendor directly before moving forward. He emphasized the need for a basic, functional website with features such as agendas, permits, contact information, and reliable hosting. He also mentioned that WordPress may be an appropriate platform and expressed interest in confirming the scope of services offered.

Councilman Verch supported the need for a city website as a central point for residents

to access city information. Councilmembers agreed the website should be simple, informative, and easy to navigate.

There was discussion about the potential value of search engine optimization (SEO), particularly at launch. Councilman Luhning proposed a three-month trial to increase visibility. Councilmembers discussed tracking metrics to determine effectiveness. While ongoing SEO may not be necessary, initial efforts could help establish online presence.

The council also considered the role of social media, with general agreement that platforms like Facebook could be used to direct users to the city website, rather than serve as a primary information source.

Councilman Huddleston volunteered to contact the vendor for further discussion and will report back at a future meeting.

Mayor Knetter introduced the Election Equipment Cost-Sharing Agreement with Dakota County, noting it is a standard arrangement in which the county covers a significant portion of the costs. Councilmembers briefly discussed the cost split, clarifying that the county will cover approximately 65–70%.

Councilman Huddleston made a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilman Verch. Motion passed unanimously (5–0).

Adjournment - Motion by Russell, seconded by Luhning, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Roan

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**We Would Like to Extend Our Pride and Support
to Our Area Dairy Farmers during June Dairy Month**

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