

KENYON • WANAMINGO Messenger

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JANUARY 15, 2026

Volume 19 • Issue 1

Goodhue County Republicans to Hold Precinct Caucuses on February 3, 2026



Goodhue County, MN — Goodhue County Republicans will hold their precinct caucuses on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m., at locations throughout the county. (continued on page 20)

Announcements

**REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR
VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTION**

*Keep The Messenger coming!
Thank you for your support!*

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

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

(continued on page 3)

The Emmanuel Lutheran Choir declares "Jesus, Love's Pure Light." *Local Epiphany Choir Concert was a blessed success*



By Jocelyn Aldrich

Song Quote: *"The light in the manger will pierce the darkest night.*

God sends us a Savior who is Love's Pure Light."

(Love's Pure Light by Herb Frombach and Ruth Elaine Schram).

On Sunday, January 4th, despite the blustery weather, many local individuals gathered at Aspelund Emmanuel Lutheran Church to enjoy a time of music, spoken Word, and fellowship.

The Emmanuel Lutheran Choir and Orchestra performed a selection of choral music that

incorporated traditional Christmas hymns with smooth harmonies and swinging tunes. The theme for this year's Epiphany concert was "Jesus. Love's Pure Light."

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Kenyon-Wanamingo's School Upcoming Fundraiser to Feature Local Talent



By Jocelyn Aldrich

If you are looking for a night out, look no further than the KW Talent Showcase. On Friday, January 16th, beginning at 7 pm, local performers will gather to raise money for the KW theatre.

(continued on page 6)

Changes for the Kenyon Wanamingo Messenger in 2026

The Kenyon Wanamingo Messenger is now recognized by the state of Minnesota as a legal newspaper in Goodhue County. Minnesota state statute requires a newspaper to publish at least twice monthly to be certified as a newspaper authorized to publish legal notices in the county.

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LEGION BINGO!

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 24
5:00-7:00PM**
Supporting K-W Legion Baseball

Legion Meeting Jan 20 & Feb 17 at 7:30
VFW Meeting Jan 27 & Feb 24 at 6:00
Color Guard Meeting Jan 28 & Feb 25 at 6:30
Auxiliary Meeting Jan 26 & Feb 23 5:30

Consider joining an organization,
the VFW needs you.

Conrad Osthum Post 141
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601 2nd Street, Kenyon, MN • 507-789-5691
PULL TABS AVAILABLE! Lic. #G-00019-004

THE BIG GAME WATCH PARTY
Sunday, Feb 8 • 3PM
Food served 4:30-7:30PM (free will)
Drawings during the game!
Profits to Kitchen repair fund.

Take a Short Drive
to Delicious

Treat Your Sweetheart to The Fireside!

**Call 507-645-9992 to Make Your Valentine's
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Open Wednesday-Thursday 11:00am-8:30pm; Friday-Saturday 11:00am-9:30pm; Sunday 9:00am-8:00pm (Bar Open Later)
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If You Are Sad...



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

If you are sad . . .

A shadow overbears.

You were good, but then crushed.

It gets dark so easy sometimes.

*People around you don't always understand.
Sometimes the tears flow, and other moments
they are locked inside.*

The soul sinks.

At times it's even hard to breathe.

If you feel any of the above, oh, how I want to reach through this article and give you a hug, as well as grab a cup of joe with you. You are not alone. You're not.

I can't tell you how many days, weeks, months, and even years it has been dark. And I mean midnight dark. I recently read a book called A Gift of Hope: Finding Faith Behind Barbed Wire, by John Hornbeck, which is a wonderful, compelling, and true story about his father-in law, who was a prisoner of war in Germany during WWII. There is a chapter

in it titled "A Different Flavor of Fear." Well, I think there are "different flavors of depression" too.

I used to hate that word—depression. I despised the word because my mother suffered with it horribly, and I did not want to associate myself with that kind of pain. However, I have come to realize that sometimes I just get hit with that storm cloud of emptiness that is so all-consuming. It can feel like a never-ending downward spiral.

We've just wrapped up the holidays, and if you, too, struggle with being sad, Christmas and New Year's can seem to magnify the sorrow. It does not help that it is as black as a raven when we arise, and before most of us get home from work, that darkness has returned, which can mirror how we feel on the inside.

The title of this article could have grabbed your attention for many different reasons. You could have lost a loved one and are miss-

ing them all so much. Perhaps you fell back into addiction, and the shame and guilt are more than knocking at your door. Possibly your spouse, significant other, children, or someone else said something very hurtful to you. Perchance trauma is resurfacing for some reason or another. Potentially you are feeling all so lonesome. Or, you are just down. Different flavors, but they all deserve love, attention, care, and mending.

(continued on page 3)

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

Letting Go of the Old

You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

— Ephesians 4:22-24

I remember a season where I kept rehearsing past failures, clinging to shame like a heavy coat in summer. I knew God was calling me to move forward, but it felt safer to stay in the familiar—even if it was painful.

Ephesians 4:22-24 hits home here. Paul reminds us that the old self—the habits, thought patterns, and lies we've believed—must be put off. Like clothing that doesn't fit anymore, we're meant to take it off so that we can live in the freedom God offers.

Letting go isn't always a dramatic moment. Sometimes it's just quiet and deliberate. It includes choosing not to respond the way we used to. It means surrendering a mindset that has held us captive. It involves refusing to let guilt define us when grace is freely offered. We can't fully embrace the new if we are still clinging to the old.

What is God inviting you to release today? Whatever it is, trust that his grace is enough to carry you forward.

Dear Jesus, help me to release what no longer serves your purpose in my life. Give me strength to let go of the old and to step into the new with you. Amen.

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You can join us for Worship online at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/167136242800>

January 18: Vang 9:00a.m.; Dennison 10:30a.m.

January 25: Vang 9:00a.m. (One Service)

Vang Annual Meeting Following Service

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

301 2nd Avenue, Wanamingo • 824-2155

WANAMINGO LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

130 West 3rd St., Wanamingo • 824-2457

www.TrinityWanamingo.org

ASPELUND EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Rob Edwards, Pastor

42957 County 1 Blvd, Kenyon • 507-824-2307

www.emmanuelaflc.org

8:30a.m. Prayer Time; 9:00a.m. Sunday School

10:00a.m. Coffee Time

10:30a.m. Worship Service

FIRST EV. LUTHERAN

D.J. Chatelaine, Pastor

309 Forest Street, Kenyon • 507-789-5261

website: flkenyon.org

Sunday Worship 9 a.m.;

Noon-1:00p.m. Open Prayer Time,

1st Tuesday each month

GOL LUTHERAN

Joe Jorgensen, Pastor • 507-838-2100

Sunday Worship 10:30a.m.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, NERSTRAND

Mike Ahrens S.A.M.

Service 9am. Coffee hour follows @ 10 am

Sunday School 10:15 am

GOSPEL OF LIFE FAMILY CHURCH

Pastor Steven G. Roberts

www.gospeloflifeflchurch.org

2010 Jefferson Rd, Northfield • Sunday 10:30a.m.

507-259-2644

Wanamingo • Wednesday 7:00p.m.

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Wheeling Twp) 19086 Jacob Avenue, Faribault

Gary Liker, Pastor • 507-330-0025

www.stjohnsunitedchurchofchrist.info

Sunday School 9:30a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m.



E-mail your church announcements, schedule, etc.
to the

Kenyon-Wanamingo Messenger at:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com

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

LANDS LUTHERAN CHURCH
P O Box 225/16640 Hwy 60 Blvd
Zumbrota, MN 55992-5105 • (507) 732-5482
Web Site: www.landslutheran.org
Facebook: Lands Lutheran Church
Pastor: David Krinke
Email: pastordavid@landslutheran.org
Pastor: Nikki Rockne
Email: pastornikki@landslutheran.org
Sunday services 8:30 am Contemporary Worship
10:30 am Traditional Worship

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

HOLDEN AND DALE LUTHERAN CHURCHES, ELCA

Pastor Dustin Haider 507-789-6677
holdendalsecretary@gmail.com
Holden: 6949 County 30 Blvd, Kenyon
Dale: 9210 County 12 Blvd, Kenyon
www.holdenlutheranchurch.org
Holden/Dale on Facebook
Holden Lutheran Church on Facebook
Worship Services
Jan 18: Holden 9:00, Dale 11:00
Jan 25: Dale 9:00, Holden 11:00
Feb 1: Holden 9:00, Dale 11:00
Feb 8: Dale 9:00, Holden 11:00

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

NERSTRAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Gary Liker, Pastor
12 Maple Street • 507-330-0025
Worship 9:00 a.m.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

KENYON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

651-283-5754
Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck
Sunday Worship 9:30a.m.
Live stream on Yahoo

ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Father Cory Rohlfing
Deacon Newell McOee
108 Bullis St., Kenyon
Sunday Mass 8:00a.m.; Wednesday Mass 5:00p.m.

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525 Beverly St., Wanamingo • 507-824-3019
office@nlcwanamingo.org
10am Worship Service
Website with online services which are live
at 10:00a.m. or can be viewed at anytime:
<https://nlcwanamingo.org/>



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Wallace (Wally) Francis Caron

Wallace (Wally) Francis Caron, 70, of Kenyon, died Thursday, December 25, 2025, at his home due to a farm accident.



He was born September 7, 1955, in Faribault, Minnesota, to Lawrence and Helen (Sanborn) Caron.

Wally attended school in Kenyon before joining the United States Army and completing his high school education. Serving in the Army from 1972 to 1975, Wally was a mechanic and helped with transferring supplies for military training. He met Rochelle Wille, and they were united in marriage on September 15, 1979, at St. John's United Church of Christ in Faribault. Wally worked at the

Kenyon and Owatonna Canning Company, and then ultimately started his own trucking business, Caron Enterprises. He and Rochelle would create lawn ornaments out of landscape timbers ranging from a semi, combine, skid steer for their daughter and even a school bus that is on display at Held Bus Service in Kenyon.

Wally cherished building lego sets and forts with his grandkids, one so big the girls said "We can't take it down, Grandpa made it!" Another big tradition for Wally was showing his granddaughters how to make his childhood donuts. He was always building or making something but loved to include his family in helping. A favorite pastime for Wally was riding snowmobiles; he even drove around Lake Superior for a total of 1,683 miles. He spent endless hours helping Kenyon Snowdrifters Club put up trails and groom them for all riders. He was a Snowmobile Safety Instructor and set up his own course for young riders to take the riding por-

tion of the exam. He would sit in his chair at night and admire the amount of riders coming over the hill not far away. When Wally had free mornings he spent them at the coffee shop, previously named Knowledge Bowl, to enjoy not only a cup of coffee but the local stories of the happenings around town.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Rochelle Caron; daughter, Jessica Caron (fiancé Troy Mattson), granddaughters, Taya and Jade Mattson; siblings Francis (Joan) Caron, Sharon Fleming, Nadine (Gary) Thielbar, Marlys Vierling, Linda Johnson, Larry (Rita) Caron, Michael Caron, Nita Kerl (special friend Dave), and Perry (Kathy) Caron; sister-in-law, Berdell Berquam; niece, Beth (Dale); brother-in-law Richard (Linda); nieces Shauna (Chad); Valerie (Chad); Michelle (Tim); brother-in-law, Steven Wille and countless nieces and nephews on both sides of the family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Helen and mother and father-in-law Lyle and Helen Wille; brothers-in-law Allen Berquam, and Harold Johnson; sister-in-law Mary Wille.

Services to be held at a later date.

Wayne Pierce Clark

Wayne Pierce Clark, age 91, of Kenyon, died on December 19, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family.



Funeral services were held at the Boldt Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Faribault on December 29, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. Reverend Dr. Daren Flinck, officiated.

Interment and military rites provided by the Kenyon Color Guard at the Kenyon Cemetery.

Visitation was held at the funeral home for one hour prior to the service on December 29.

Wayne Pierce, the son of Jesse and Elsie (Pierce) Clark was born on March 15, 1934, in Faribault. He married Norma Ersland on October 15, 1955, in Kenyon. Wayne served in the U. S. Army. Wayne farmed in the Kenyon Township area and enjoyed baseball, fishing and aviation.

He is survived by his wife, Norma; five children, Steven (and Susan) Clark of Rifle, CO, Michael (and Jeanne) Clark of Springdale, AR, Timothy Clark of Kenyon, Daniel (and Tannis) Clark of Glenwood, IA, James (and Leighanne) Clark of West Concord; 17 grandchildren; 16 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Jerald Clark.

Visit boldtfuneralhome.com for more information and the guestbook

Mary L. Holmes

Mary L. Holmes, age 77, of Faribault, passed away on Sunday, December 14, 2025 at the Owatonna Hospital.

A private family gathering was held.

Mary Louise, the daughter of Emil and Mary (Bakeman) Kuchera, was born April 27, 1948 in Northfield. She graduated from Kenyon-Wanamingo High School. She was previously employed with Crown Cork and Seal, Faribault. Mary enjoyed painting, reading and spending time with her grandchildren.

She is survived by her two children, Curtis Schlusser (fiancée, Mariah Stanke) and Tabitha Kuperus; grandchildren, Quentin Schlusser, Thomas Kuperus and Stephanie Kuperus; great-grandchildren, Raelynn, Isabella and Fay Kuperus.

She was preceded in death by her parents. Boldtfuneralhome.com for information and guest book.

If You Are Sad...

(continued from page 2)

In my life, when the depression has rolled in, I instantly send a prayer up. Sometimes this is in my mind, or I journal to some degree or fashion. Other times the pain is so strong that it is hard to pray, let alone write. In those cases I will weep and just say the name Jesus.

After I have settled, I then sit with the Lord for a while and process my emotions. I express to Him all the various things going on in my mind and soul. Next, I crack open the good Word of God (the Bible). I will either pick up where I left off the day prior, read the Psalms, or honestly, just randomly open it and start reading.

The other night, around 10:30 p.m., I crawled into bed with brushed teeth, and I was feeling pretty good. I was careful to not do too much screen time on my phone and zoned into reading a little of the Bible before closing my eyes.

As I laid in bed, I started to toss and turn, and the all-familiar heaviness returned. Sometimes the sadness is manifested from disturbing memories overlaying in my mind, and other times the depression just appears. That is what happened last night; out of nowhere, the darkness just sprang up.

I could tell it was spiritual warfare, so I said, "Blood of Jesus. Blood of Jesus" (see Exodus 12:13). I partnered His blood with a couple of prayers that looked something like, "Lord, I am sad again. Ugh. You love me. You love me. I am safe. I am safe." I eventually fell asleep. I awoke, and the sadness was still lingering.

I made my way downstairs to let my sweet beagle, Caleb, out to go potty. Sleepy-eyed, I walked back up the stairs and made breakfast for both Caleb and me. She had dog food, and I had over-creamed coffee. I grabbed my journal and started to share my heart with the Lord. I then seized my Bible and read some of the New Testament. As I read the chapters and verses in front of me, the internal sun started to rise again. Revelation brewed that sent the depression out the window. I continued to talk to Him as I read the Scriptures. As I finished off the last page of my reading for that morning, I was back to "bubbly joy Ashley."

This happens almost EVERY TIME—the depression leaves after being in the Word. It can be all so heavy, but after spending time with Jesus I am renewed, rejuvenated, and restored. The days that it is extra heavy and I feel the enemy is attacking me, I will read Psalm 91 out loud until the darkness has fled.

I pray, in the name of Jesus, as you read this, that the sadness is already starting to lift. I will gently nudge you to go share your heart to Jesus. Just talk to Him like a friend. No fancy words are needed. Then I will encourage you to get in the Word. You do not have to read a lot in the Bible; sometimes I only read and meditate on a few verses. It does not matter, the Lord is not legalistic, but what does matter is that we let the Word of God wash us. Wash the conscience, the mind, the heart, and yes, that sadness that wants to creep in more than we would like to admit.

You will get through this. You will. The sun is going to come out for you. This season will teach you empathy, love, and care for others. This wave of sadness will draw you close to Jesus, and it will produce even a stronger bond with Him. So much spiritual muscle is getting produced in you.

If you think about it, this is a gift. Not one that you would expect or even at first desire, but as you start to unwrap the wounds of your soul and let Jesus and His words minister to you, you will indeed see the present. The present of His presence, unconditional love, and strength.

Late Merry Christmas and truly Happy New Year—you are loved. Blessings, Ashley
Some verses to lean into when you are sad: Psalm 6:6-9; Psalm 27:13-14; Psalm 34; Isaiah 54:10-17; and Isaiah 55.

Announcements

• **Three Rivers Community Action is currently accepting new Meals On Wheels clients in the communities of Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Goodhue, Pine Island, Kenyon and Wanamingo.** Receive a hot meal delivered to your home by a volunteer at lunch time up to 5 days per week. To qualify you must be 60 or older, live within city limits, have limited mobility and/or are unable to prepare nutritious meals. The suggested donation is \$5-\$10 per meal. For more information on how to sign up for meals or to be a volunteer driver, please contact Dana Bergner at 507-421-6067 or dbergner@threeriverscap.org

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

• **Save the date! 2026 Dennison Lions Flake Out Festival Saturday, February 7.**

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Share Your Good News!
Submit your engagement, wedding or birth announcement.

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com



Dorothy Alvina Ness

Dorothy Alvina Ness, 95, of Rochester, died Thursday, December 25, 2025 at the Pine Haven Care Center. She was born on February 13, 1930, in Wanamingo to Mr. and Mrs. Casper Syverson. She was baptized and confirmed at Lands Lutheran Church of Zumbrota. She attended elementary and high schools in Wanamingo. She was employed at the Kahler Corporation, St. Marys Hospital, Nolton's Department Store and Union National Bank of Rochester. She was also an employee at IBM for 24 years and retired from there in 1990. She was dedicated to her family and friends and was of service to many. She enjoyed working outdoors with flowers and gardening. She also enjoyed bowling, ceramics and music. She was a member of Bethel Lutheran Church of Rochester.

She is survived by four children, Dennis Ness, Cheryl (Brad) Nord, Kevin (Cheri) Ness and Brian (Sue) Ness and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Jewel Ness and siblings, Clifford Syverson, Patricia Dankers, Marion Stevens, Arlene Anderson and Lila Grose.

Burial was at the Lands Lutheran Church Cemetery in Zumbrota. Memorials are preferred to Lands Lutheran Church. Arrangements handled by Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel.

Do You Have an Announcement?

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Changes for the Kenyon Wanamingo Messenger in 2026

(continued from page 1)

We are now able to provide this service for the cities of Kenyon, Wanamingo, the Kenyon Wanamingo school district, surrounding townships as well as any legal notice required to be published in Goodhue County. We are uniquely positioned for this because we reach every address with a Kenyon and Wanamingo zip code. This allows the cities and school district to reach every home with their legal notices for total community awareness.

A little history, The Messenger Newspapers started over 20 years ago in the towns of Dennison and Nerstrand, as the Mainstreet Messenger. We were exploring a monthly community news publication for smaller communities in the area, when many of the weekly local papers began to shut down or were purchased and absorbed by larger papers, many times leaving the communities without dedicated local news coverage. We grew to include Wanamingo, Goodhue-Bellechester, Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls, Dundas, Randolph-Hampton-Castle Rock and Kenyon.

In 2017 we expanded to West Concord and Claremont when those papers discontinued publication, and then Dodge Center when the Dodge Center Star Record discontinued publication. We combined the three communities of Claremont, Dodge Center & West Concord into one paper a few years ago to better serve the Triton School district.

About three years ago, the city of Dodge Center asked if we would consider becoming a legal newspaper to serve as the city legal newspaper. The Triton School Board made the request shortly afterward and we began the process of qualifying as a legal newspaper in the Dodge County.

At this time, we have since become the legal newspaper for Dodge County, the City of Claremont, the City of West Concord, the City of Dodge Center, Triton School District, Concord Township and numerous attorneys in southern Minnesota.

Robert Duane Gudknecht

Robert Duane Gudknecht, 84, of Wanamingo, died Friday, December 5, 2025, at Mayo Health Systems - Red Wing Campus, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on September 14, 1941, in Red Wing to Herman and Gena (Thompson) Gudknecht. He graduated in 1960, from Wanamingo High School and then served in the US Army Reserve for several years. On October 11, 1969, he was united in marriage to Therine Youngkrantz. They were blessed with two children, Brian and Tricia. For many years Bob was self-employed as a carpenter. Following his retirement, he worked at Sema Equipment and then Midwest Machinery for 20 years on a part time basis in various roles. Bob was a member of Wanamingo Lutheran Church and a dedicated 56-year member of the Wanamingo Fire Department. Bob raised many horses over the years, which he enjoyed, whether it was riding, driving or showing them. He and his family enjoyed showing the Norwegian Fjord horses for over 30 years at the county fair in Blue Earth.

He is survived by his loving wife, Therine of 56 years; one son, Brian (Holli) Gudknecht of Wanamingo; one daughter, Tricia (Jason) Bauer of Wanamingo; six grandchildren, Kyle Simonson, Jami (Brian) Tix, Erin (Parker) Erickson, Riley Bauer, Brady Bauer and Hanna Gudknecht and one great granddaughter, Eleanor Erickson. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Memorial service was at 11 a.m. Friday, December 12, 2025, at Wanamingo Lutheran Church. Reverend David Sorenson officiated. Burial followed the service in the church cemetery. Visitation was from 4 p.m.

to 7 p.m. Thursday, December 11, 2025, at the Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel in Zumbrota. Memorials are preferred to Wanamingo Fire Relief Association.

Diane Marie Flom

Diane Marie Flom, age 77, of Faribault and formerly of Wanamingo, died on December 23, 2025, at Mill City Senior Living, Faribault.

Memorial Services were held at the Boldt Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Faribault, on Sunday, January 4,

2026, at 1:30 p.m. Interment will be held at Maple Lawn Cemetery, Faribault, in the spring.

A memorial visitation was held at Boldt Funeral Home & Cremation Services for one hour prior to the service on January 4, 2026.

Diane Marie, daughter of James and Gloria (Brandenburg) Burmeister, was born on February 25, 1948, in Faribault. Diane graduated from Faribault High School and went on to attend Mankato State University, where she earned a degree in elementary and special education. On July 25, 1970, she married John Flom, their enduring love lasting more than 53 years. She dedicated her career to teaching, serving as a first-grade and special edu-

cation teacher in Kenyon and later in Kenyon-Wanamingo, where she touched countless young lives with patience and care. Diane retired at the end of the 2010-2011 school year after forty years of service with Kenyon-Wanamingo Schools.

Outside of the classroom, she enjoyed quilting and sewing, sharing her talent generously with others. Her giving spirit was especially evident through the many quilts she lovingly made for family, friends, veterans and Ruth's House of Hope. She devoted many hours to volunteer work with the Rice County Historical Society, Meals on Wheels, and numerous food shelves in the area.

Diane enjoyed traveling with her husband, especially winters in the South, and exploring many national parks. These travels brought her great joy and reflected her love of learning, nature, and new experiences.

Diane is survived by her two daughters, Amy (Aaron) Hinz of Goodhue and Anne (Kevin) O'Banion of Faribault; five grandchildren, Emma and Hayden Hinz, Trigg (Callie) Sellers, Tyler (Slade) Benda and Olivia (fiancé, Jake Kiese) O'Banion; great-grandchildren, Colbie, Crew, and Clay Sellers, Hendrix and Hudson Benda, and Baby Benda on the way; siblings, David (Cynthia) Burmeister and Debbie Burmeister.

She is preceded in death by her parents; husband, John, in 2024; brother, Donald Burmeister.



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The Emmanuel Lutheran Choir declares "Jesus, Love's Pure Light."

(continued from page 1)

Songs were selected and organized to lead listeners through the gospel narrative of creation, redemption, and hope. Pastor Rob Edwards recited Scripture passages between



songs, highlighting the significance of the Epiphany season.

The concert featured members from Emmanuel's congregation and musicians from other local churches. The Emmanuel Choir was directed by Jan Stand and accompanied by Sarah Tennesen and Ali Coulter. Strand has directed the Emmanuel Choir since 2014. The choir typically performs two concerts per year, one for Epiphany and one for Palm Sunday. Strand said her favorite part of leading the choir is working with "people who have the gifts [of music] and are willing to

use them." Strand commented that this concert was impactful for her personally because in a world full of darkness, she is comforted by the truth that "Jesus is the light." Strand said the goal of these concerts is to "create opportunities for people to get together and hear God's word." The Epiphany concert was a wonderful way to do just that.

Jeff Trost, an Emmanuel Choir member since 2014, was also impacted by the Epiphany theme. "In a dark world, it's nice knowing that He [Jesus] is the light." Trost greatly enjoys being a part of the Emmanuel

Choir because he gets to "sing with good guys." Trost greatly enjoys music and commented that when "you put music to something, [it] changes your whole day." Trost enjoys singing in the choir and welcomes the challenge to learn new music with theologically meaningful words.

The Emmanuel Lutheran Choir meets on Wednesday evenings during the school year from 6:30-7:30 pm. Individuals who love to sing are welcome to attend practices. Their next concert will take place on Palm Sunday, March 29th, at 3 pm.

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Kenyon-Wanamingo's School Upcoming Fundraiser to Feature Local Talent

(continued from page 1)

The entirety of the proceeds will be dedicated to purchasing costumes, props, and set pieces for the upcoming performances of The Little Mermaid.

Performers for this Talent Showcase will include both current KW students and KW alumni. Current students who will be performing include Elsie Braaten, Ben Dierks, Olivar Breyer, Shaun Hargarten, and Gunner Carlstrom. KW alumni who will be performing include Amber Olson, Sophia Doscher, Terra Haugen, Mary Gail Anderson, and Ashley Rectzigel. Talents will consist of various singing ensembles, including solos, a duet, and a trio. The talent show will also include a debut performance of "Twitch," which will be a one-act play performed by KW students. One-act performers will go on to compete in a contest after the debut of "Twitch."

Director Randy "Hock" Hockinson is looking forward to this talent show. He says that this showcase is "a chance for people to see local talent." The KW community has many talented individuals, and the showcase is an opportunity for these talents to be seen. The

talent show will be held in the KW auditorium. Run time will be approximately 80 minutes. General admission seating with a free-will offering at the door.

The fundraiser is ultimately a way to promote the upcoming performances of The Little Mermaid. Ashley Rectzigel, a KW graduate ('23), is excited for this play and encourages everyone to come see it. Olivar Breyer, a senior at KW, is also eager for The Little Mermaid. Breyer has been a dedicated actor on the KW stage since he was in fifth grade. He has enjoyed being involved in over 10 plays throughout his time at KW and said that "the magic of the first play just really hooked me." Breyer will be playing Chef Louis in The Little Mermaid. Adalee Geisinger, a KW senior, has also been a long-time performer on the KW stage. She is particularly excited about this performance because she knows many of the cast members and is eager to help out backstage. Geisinger will play Ursula in The Little Mermaid.

Opening night for The Little Mermaid will be on Thursday, March 5, at 7 pm.

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A Happy New Year Mystery

By Dee Kohrs

Here I sit on a beautiful glorious day. Happy New Year, so they say!

Is it really a New Year, or perhaps have we been fooled?

Let's back up the truck a bit and you decide.

Follow along with me as we journey into the unknown of the New Year Mystery.

The reasoning I have heard is because the official calendar was changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar which threw everything off.

Spring represents change and new life, signifying a new beginning. Everything that was dead comes to life again. Meanwhile, nothing changes in winter. Everything remains dead.

While January 1st is the globally recognized New Year in the Gregorian calendar used by most countries, the idea that April is the "real" New Year stems from older traditions, such as the Julian calendar starting the year in spring around March/April. Other cultures like Thailand and Laos celebrate in mid-April, aligning with the spring's renewal, nature, and harvest cycles.

Before the Gregorian calendar became standard (around the 17th – 18th centuries), many European regions started their year in the spring. Somewhere near March 25th or even April 1st is the best guess, leading to "April Fools Day" as a leftover tradition for those who did not switch to January 1st.

As we know, April marks the beginning of spring (vernal equinox, symbolizing rebirth, new life, and the end of winter.) Countries like Thailand and Laos celebrate their New Year mid-April, following the lunar (or lunisolar) calendars that align with the spring season and harvest.

Today January 1st is the international standard for New Year's Day celebrations. This brings us to April. April 1st used to be New Year' Day. And I have to wonder, why would they ever invent such a silly day? Making jokes and playing tricks on people. Putting garden snakes in teachers drawers and frogs in file cabinets. Hmmmmmmm.

The King of France, Charles IX, instituted the switch in 1564. This was the beginning of the New Year on January 1st instead of April 1st. The problem was that the 16th century communications were not what they are today. Given the state of the current Twittering world, back in the 16th century that may have been a good thing!

Changing the calendar took several months, even years, to spread throughout the land and beyond. Some resisted the change. Those who refused to honor January 1st as the beginning of the New Year and continued to use April 1st became known as April Fools for their obstinacy and resistance to change. As the lore goes, April 1st was dubbed as April Fool's Day for those who clung to their old ways.

Those poor fools, who refused to accept the new calendar were sent out on ridiculous errands and were made the butt of practical jokes, like sticking signs on their backs that said "Kick me". Such folly is how it came to be known as April Fools Day!

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JANUARY 16

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Menards and Lawyers



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.

I have always liked Menards. My favorite lumberyard. Through many remodel jobs and new construction projects, Menards has been my go-to place for just about everything I needed. We all know that if we shop there very often that "Save Big Money" jingle is stuck in our minds forever. Menards is almost a date for most couples. My wife finds things to put in the cart as well and then while I am in search of a few elusive items she will relax

on a sofa or recliner in the home goods section. When I am finished, I will find her there waiting for me.

There have been amusing times at Menards also. I recall when I was remodeling our house in 1999, my daughter Hayley and I witnessed one of the funniest sights of the year. A young boy of about ten years old was following his father into the store and while the dad walked through the gate the boy decided to make a dramatic entrance through the turn style. He planned to hit it at a fast pace and spin it when he went through. The plan went awry because he failed to notice it was intended for exit and not entry guests. When he hit the bar just about belt level, he folded in half and executed a perfect, yet unplanned gymnastic move. A complete summersault in mid-air, wrapped around the shiny chrome bar. Fortunately, he was not hurt because we were laughing to hard to help him in any way. We saw him and his dad a couple times in different parts of the store that night and every time we just looked at each other and began laughing again.

I have saved my store receipts from each visit and mailed them in for the 11% rebate for many years. I understood very well that I would receive a rebate by mail in the form of a post card and it would be clipped to the visor in my pickup truck to be used when I paid for my purchase on the next visit. I have not met anyone that doesn't understand that process. Imagine my dismay when I read this article last week.

Wisconsin-based Menards has agreed to pay a combined \$4.25 million to settle a lawsuit from 10 states related to deceptive mar-



keting for its 11% rebate. The states attorneys argued that the Eau Claire retailer misled consumers in some cases that the 11% rebate would be a discount that customers would receive at checkout instead of a rebate that needed to be mailed in and returned for a later store credit. The company agreed to make payments to Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio and South Dakota.

"Figuring out how much you'll have to pay to buy something should be straightforward," Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul said in a statement. "It shouldn't be an adventure. Menards' deceptive marketing left many customers believing they were getting a discount, when, in fact, the store was only offering an in-store credit for future purchases," Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said in a statement. "Customers deserve to know what they will be charged when they make a purchase, without decep-

tive deals and fine print. I'm pleased that this settlement requires Menards to end these practices, and I will continue to work to ensure Illinois consumers are treated fairly." Menards agreed to pay Wisconsin \$450,000 and Illinois nearly \$947,000, Iowa nearly \$447,000 while each of the 10 states will receive payments.

The shocking thing about this lawsuit is that no money was paid to the "phantom shoppers" who couldn't figure out the rebate was mailed to them and not deducted at the time of purchase. No, this money was paid directly to the state government, that cares so much about the shoppers. And these attorneys care so much about the deceptive practice that they want Menards to cease from offering savings to customers in the future. Just a shakedown of a business by a government with an insatiable appetite for funds. Pretty evident who the real criminal is.

Happy New Year everybody.

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A Minnesotan: New Years



By RosaLin Alcoser

And five, four, three, two, one... Happy New year's! As we close out 2025 and ring in 2026 I recall what for many of us is a shared childhood experience.

Which would be our parents lying about when midnight is on New Year's. For us the year that we found out about this was our second year in Minnesota. It was New Year's Eve 2001.

For years my parents had my older sister convinced that when the ball dropped in

New York City that it was New Year's. We, however, lived in the central time zone. So while it was the new year on the east coast it was only 11 PM where we were. Which yes is still late for a child, but it's so technically not midnight yet.

My parents kept this up for years. I was four years old the New Year's 2001, and I had learned to tell time and about clocks that year.

A new skill that I applied that New Year's Eve by looking at the clock and informing everyone that it was not midnight. It was 11 PM. My parents' ability to put us to bed, and therefore be there themselves, before midnight was gone. And my nine year old sister realized that she had been bamboozled into going to bed early on New Year's for years.

With that being said we did not get to stay up till midnight every year after that. We did some years, especially when we got to be older, but not every year.



Farm Girl Chatter Winter: The Season that Tests a Farmers Soul

By McKell Lemmerman

Winter arrives the way it always does—overnight, uninvited, and far too proud of itself. One minute the world was brown and sleepy; the next it was swallowed in white. It is like someone upstairs was so excited for a snow globe they had shaken it so hard it had burst and forgot to stop shaking it. The trees were dipped in powdered sugar, like cookies grandma makes for holiday greetings. The fields erased under thick drifts, and the sky was wearing its usual pale gray outfit. The sharp wind whispers “the season is just getting started”.

Most folks enjoy this time of year as it is the cozy season. Fireplace. Blankets. Soup on the stove. Hot cocoa loaded with more marshmallows than liquid. But what about the farmers? We look at fresh snow like work that shows up overnight calculating and questioning every life choice that led us here.

Still, for a moment before the day swallowed me whole; I paused. The snow-covered trees bow down like they were saying thank you to winter; and the barns have a new sparkle in their eye from the newly layered coat of ice. It brought an echo of childhood wonder that hadn’t quite burned out.

Back then, snow didn’t signal work for me; it signaled imagination. School cancellations were practically holy events. Dad would fire up the tractor, not only because he needed to plow and feed the animals, but because he knew us kids wanted giant snow piles. Snow Forts; those forts became entire kingdoms with tunnels. It brought out the rivalry in us too, to see who the king or queen of the hill was. Once we were satisfied with that, we

turned our attention to building sled jumps—massive, bone-rattling, sled jumps that launched us into the air like we were going to the moon.

But childhood fades, and adulthood arrives with its handouts of responsibilities.

Now winter means work.

The moment I stepped outside, winter slapped me across the face with a big ol’ “HELLO”. The wind howled around the barns—mocking, relentless—while the snow drifts were just high enough to make every step feel like a weighted workout I never agreed to.

The animals waited, their breath rising in impatient clouds. Frozen waterers greeted us like old enemies. There were days we had to chip away at the ice or clean out bunks with the enthusiasm of someone filing taxes. The cows complained in long, dramatic moos, as though they had trudged through thigh-high snow to make their food. And the horses—good grief—the horses stared with those judgmental eyes that screamed, “This seems like a you problem.”

Every farmer knows when winter hits chores take three times as long. Frozen latches become a full-contact wrestling match. A broken or frozen water line becomes a crisis of faith. And the moment something finally starts working, the wind kicks up again like winter itself was laughing at you.

But even in chaos, winter has a sense of humor. It is the time of year mice like to host a rave party inside the equipment engines, leaving behind enough chewed wiring to make a grown adult cry. Winter also seems to always have a personal vendetta for sabotaging machinery. You go to turn the key only to hear a pathetic cough followed by metal groaning like the tractor was reconsidering its career path. Cold and rodents—nature’s least helpful duo.

But as the sky softens every evening, something tends to shift. The animals settle into their fresh bedding, and their stomachs are full making not even a sound. The wind—wild and vicious all day—turns gentle. The sky paints a pastel wash of blue, pink, and grey. The fields sparkling like a blanket of diamonds. The trees shimmer in silver. Even the cold feels less cruel in that kind of moment.

That’s the thing about winter farming. It’s



brutal. It’s exhausting. It’s sometimes downright ridiculous. It tests your patience, your sanity, your humor, your balance on ice, and your tolerance for frostbitten fingertips.

But it also roots you.

It strips everything down to what matters. It reminds you that you are part of something bigger—tougher than the storms, stronger than the frost, and braver than the winds that scream across the fields. Farmers endure what most people never see: frozen water, cracked hands, stubborn gates, sick animals, machinery that refuses to cooperate, and weather that seems personally offended by our existence.

Yet we push on because the animals depend on us. Because the land demands us. Because, beneath all the layers of struggle, this

life is woven into who we are. Winter tries to break us. But every time the sun rises over the snowy fields and turns the world into a glowing lace, we remember why we stay. Why we fight. Why we love this life. Year after year, storm after storm, we rise with the snow, push through the cold, laugh at the chaos, and carry on—stubborn, frozen, determined, and proud.

Layer after layer, till springtime shows.

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

To the Editor:

A Lie of Biblical Proportion: The Islamic Movement

Let me begin with a given: one can be intellectually gifted and, yet, ignorant of the truth. In this particular case, one went by the name of Voltaire; one goes by the name of Tucker Carlson. One was an atheist; one claims to have read the Bible. One ended up like the

rich man in Luke 16; one is playing with fire. It makes one wonder what kind of Bible Tucker and his followers have been reading.

According to the Book of Genesis, Ishmael would not only become the father of a great nation (Islam), but he "Will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren" (Genesis 16:12). This 3500 year movement can be found in a book dedicated to Christians by Dr. Peter Hammond entitled: Slavery, Terrorism, and Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat. Ladies and gentlemen, the Muslim faith, with all of its vitriol and contempt for our way of life, has now found its way to Minnesota and across America. It is time to hold them and their accomplices accountable for this godless way of life.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to begin with what Tucker Carlson was reported to have said by the American Conservative. Beginning with the comment that "It's Israel's fault that radical Islam is seen as a main street threat to Americans," he would go on to say that "Radical Islam is the biggest threat in America due to psychological Israeli influence." Moreover, he would blame "Benjamin Netanyahu of mass murder," and then blame "Israel for what is happening in

Gaza." Not only are these the kinds of comments dangerous to America, but he seems to ignore the fact that the land in dispute is part of a lasting Covenant that God initiated with the Jewish people. Today, the land in dispute (there has never been a Palestinian people) once belonged to one of the tribes of Israel (Joshua 13:8-19:49). Anyone who says otherwise is part of the "great" lie.

Let me begin with Palestine. After all, this is where the "great" lie that Tucker Carlson and his many fans are trying to spin would find its origin. Beginning when the Arab Nations rejected the Palestinian Muslims the right to pick their own homeland, the "so called" Palestinians decided to claim a piece of God's Covenant with Israel as their new homeland. In other words, the Palestinian Muslims (a mix of many Arab nations and races) claimed a piece of land that does not belong to them. And anyone who would dare to argue otherwise...is labeled a racist or some kind of phobic. If you do not believe me, just ask someone who supports the Democrat Party.

This takes me back to Minnesota and the Somalian Muslims. While I have watched the negative impact of this community on public education for a number of years, what they have done in the Twin Cities with their outright theft of billions of dollars, only reinforces what Hammond found to be true in his research: "Muslims are relentless in their anti-Christian behavior with a goal to rewrite History!" The only difference between Israel and Minnesota is what they came for.

In Israel, it is the land they are after; in Minnesota it is the money and the mayhem that they can both steal and create. And anyone who would dare to argue otherwise...is labeled a racist or some kind of phobic. You can thank the Governor, the AG, and the Democrat Party for this kind of misguided rhetoric.

Finally, let there be no mistake when it comes to what is taking place in Israel, Minnesota and across the World. Like an invading force right out of hell, this has been coming our way ever since Ishmael established the twelve tribes of Islam. It is what happens to towns, cities, and nations that have ignored all the signs that have been coming their way for millennium after millennium. It's Biblical!

In conclusion, it is my prayer that we will finally come to realize that what is happening in Minnesota is by design. Once a state at the forefront of Christian values, quality education, and a strong central government, there should be little doubt that it will not get any better until we hold the Somalian community and our dishonest leaders accountable for their actions. To this end, let it start in our churches with pastors and church leaders who promote the infallible word of God. If done correctly, it will find its way back into our homes, our schools, and the kind of government that we have somehow lost along the way. It's long overdue!

Dr. James Russell Lehman
Kenyon MN

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Community Health Needs Assessment Names Top 10 Issues Mental Health, Chronic Health, and Drug & Alcohol Use Top the List

By Josh Smith

The health of all people in Goodhue County is the subject of a newly released report. The 2025 Goodhue County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identifies top health issues and offers a starting point to identify health inequities.

The report is an effort to take stock of the health of all people in Goodhue County. In the past, local public health conducted a community health assessment every five years, and Mayo Clinic Health System every three years. Since 2022, the Goodhue County Community Health Needs Assessment is a joint effort and will continue on a three-year cycle. As part of the process, members of the Community Health Assessment committee reviewed responses and comments from a 2024 random sample survey, a 2024 convenience sample survey, key informant interviews, an online health topic survey, a community partner as-

essment, and community engagement events. Additionally, data from state and national sources were reviewed.

"Hospitals and health departments are both required to assess the health needs of the people we serve. It makes total sense to work together so we don't ask the community the same questions twice" said Stephanie Olson, Mayo Clinic Health System Community Relations Manager.

"We look at health problems like diabetes and the things that contribute to health, such as our behaviors, access to care, and income. Every three years, we ask community leaders across the county to choose the most important health issues. We compare their choices with survey results and with what people tell us at community events. From that, we create a list of top 10 health issues, and again in 2025 the top issue was mental health" said Ruth Greenslade, Public Health Supervisor for Goodhue County Health and Human Services.

While mental health was also a top 10 issue in the 2017 Community Health Assessment, it rose to the number one spot in 2022 and has remained there in this assessment. Chronic health conditions and nutrition & healthy eating also showed up in the top 10 issues for the first time since 2017.

"Many of our top issues are connected, and we have seen some positive progress since our last assessment when the pandemic exacerbated many health issues," said Josh Smith, Community Engagement Specialist at Goodhue County Health and Human Services. "We have seen a reduction in drug over-

dose deaths since 2021 and the 2025 student survey showed a decrease in students who reported seriously considering suicide."

The assessment is available to everyone in the community. Nonprofits, healthcare providers, schools, and the health department can all use the data to apply for grants and guide their work. As an example, a local Mayo physician is working with young people to develop podcast episodes for teens. "Teens told us they want to learn more about their physical health. This connects to chronic disease, which is one of the top health issues, because the daily habits that keep you physically healthy also prevent illnesses. Youth will be using the assessment to help create outlines for the podcast episodes," the physician said.

"We are so thankful for all the community members and partners that have taken the time to work on this important report," said Nina Arneson, Goodhue County Health and Human Services Director. "A special thank you goes to our core group for their strong leadership, partnership and commitment to improving health for all." The core group includes Greenslade, Smith, Olson, Jenny Larson, Three Rivers Community Action Executive Director, and Nicolle Mechelke, United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha and Pierce Counties Executive Director.

Smith said, "Doing an assessment report together every three years has allowed Goodhue County and Mayo Clinic Health System to advance our partnership. Community Action agencies are also required to do needs assessments every three years, so now we are working more closely with Three Rivers to

coordinate future assessments."

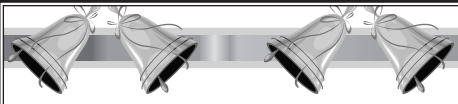
The CHNA report sets the stage for the Goodhue County Community Health Improvement Plan 2026-2028, which will describe long-term, collective efforts to improve the health of everyone in the county.

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment, as well as many of the data sources used, are available on the Goodhue County website at goodhuecountymn.gov/chna/.

Top 10 Health Issues:

- Mental Health & Mental Disorders
- Chronic Health Conditions
- Drug & Alcohol Use
- Housing & Homes
- Health Care Access & Quality
- Violence Prevention
- Nutrition & Healthy Eating
- Education Access & Quality
- Economic Stability
- Social Isolation & Discrimination

The mission of the Goodhue County Community Health Assessment Committee is to identify health disparities and top health issues for Goodhue County and implement and evaluate strategies, policies, and programs.



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MEATS			
FRESH Boneless Beef Chuck Roast Product of USA \$5.99 Lb. 	FRESH Boneless Beef New York Strip Steak Product of USA \$12.99 Lb. 	Oscar Mayer Basic Lunchables 2.25-4.4 Oz., Selected Varieties 2/\$4 	El Monterey Beef & Cheese 1.5 Lb. Bag, Selected Varieties \$2.99 Ea. 
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Healthy Weight



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist



With the New Year starting, many will take this time to set some goals for the year ahead. A frequently mentioned goal is to improve health, reduce weight, and make better lifestyle choices. Current records at the Center for Disease Control state that more than 70% of the adult population is overweight or obese. So what is a healthy weight and what are the best principles for maintaining or achieving a healthy weight?

A healthy weight may be evaluated by body

mass index (BMI) or by waist to height ratio.

A person's BMI is a calculation based on current weight and height. This is a common measure used by insurance companies and medical professionals. A person with a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered to have a healthy weight. The overweight category is BMI between 25 and 29.9, while the obese category begins at a BMI over 30. Higher BMI values are associated with greater health risks, but do not specifically identify a health condition. The waist to height ratio is a simple calculation taking your waist measurement from around your bellybutton and dividing that measure by your height. An individual with a 40 inch waist and a height of 6 feet would have a weight to height ratio of 0.55. ($40 / 72 = 0.55$) A ratio greater than 0.49 is defined as overweight, and a ratio greater than 0.59 is defined as obese in a report from the JAMA Network Open issue October 15, 2025. The waist to height ratio may be a more accurate measure because it measures fat stores that can increase around the midsection of the body. A healthy weight would be defined as a BMI below 24.9 with a waist to height ratio less than 0.49.

In order to achieve that healthy weight in the coming year, there are some key principles that should be practiced consistently. Some of these principles may be common sense to you. When these principles are applied together there can be great advances in your health. These key principles include:

- 1) Eat three meals each day. Each meal should include a protein source.
- 2) Keep a 5-hour break between meals.

No snacks. Allow the digestion to complete from one meal before another meal is consumed.

3) No meal should be longer than 60 minutes.

4) Begin each meal with one or two bites of protein. Start with protein to help initiate the satisfaction signals that will help to limit overeating.

5) Eat only one protein with each meal, and do not repeat that protein the rest of the day. Select a different protein with each meal to avoid repetition, improve variety, and reduce inflammation from repeated proteins.

6) No eating after 9 pm. If you can stop earlier in the day, it's even better.

7) Drink the quantity of water calculated for you. (Half your body weight in fluid ounces.) Your body is dependent on quality water. Make sure you get enough each day.

8) Eat an apple each day. One medium sized, tart, non-sweet apple each day with one of your meals.

Perhaps applying these principles seems like too much of a change, but let's make this more fun with a challenge. You can receive support and direction establishing these practices in your own life by taking on the

Healthy Weight Challenge, a 60-day challenge from January 17 – March 17 to improve lifestyle habits and see real change. Local businesses are sponsoring the challenge with gift certificates, educational videos, and on-line support. You can find out more information about the Healthy Weight Challenge by scanning the QR code or contacting me by email.

Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. Nutrition is designed for healing. I can help you reach greater health freedom in 2026. Contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

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

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Migraines and Immunity



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

Why do women get more migraine headaches than men? LOL, the answer is NOT that men are the cause of the headaches. Migraines are far more than just headaches; they're a full-body storm that disrupts your senses, drains your energy, and derails your day. For women, who experience migraines three to four times more often than men, these episodes are particularly life-altering, affecting work, relationships, and daily routines. The pain, often piercing or throbbing, is just one part of the story. Migraines also hijack your thinking, mood, and ability to function, with even ordinary stimuli like light or sound becoming unbearable. Researchers are uncov-

ering that migraines are deeply tied to how the brain handles energy and hormones, offering new insights into prevention and healing.

Hormonal fluctuations are a key reason why women are disproportionately affected by migraines. Estrogen, in particular, plays a dual role: high levels heighten sensitivity to pain, while sudden drops—such as those before menstruation or after childbirth—trigger the electrical instability that sparks migraines. Natural progesterone, on the other hand, helps counteract estrogen's pro-inflammatory effects, calming nerve excitability and reducing migraine frequency. These hormonal shifts explain why migraines often cluster around life stages like puberty, pregnancy, and perimenopause. Stability in hormone levels, as seen in later menopause, often brings relief, highlighting the importance of hormonal balance in managing migraines.

Beyond hormones, mitochondrial dysfunction is a major driver of migraines. Mitochondria, the energy powerhouses of cells, are inherited from mothers, which explains why migraines often run in maternal family lines. People with migraines tend to have less efficient mitochondria, leaving their brains in a constant state of energy deficit. Stress, poor sleep, and hormonal swings further deplete this energy supply, triggering migraines. Addressing this requires a holistic approach: reducing linoleic acid from seed oils, restoring nutrients like magnesium and B vitamins, and supporting melatonin through morning sunlight and minimizing blue light exposure at night can strengthen the brain's energy resilience and lower in-

flammation.

Women's unique brain structure and stress patterns also contribute to their higher migraine burden. Female brains are more responsive to sensory and emotional stimuli, making stress, light, and noise more likely to trigger migraines. Workplace factors like irregular sleep schedules, bright lights, and poor air quality further compound the risk. Women also experience longer, more disabling attacks compared to men, with migraines ranking as the fourth leading cause of disability for women globally. However, women are more proactive in adopting preventive measures which offer hope for better management and relief.

Chiropractic care supports the immune system by improving nerve function, reducing stress hormones (like cortisol), and enhancing circulation, all thanks to its focus on spinal alignment which optimizes communication between the nervous and immune systems, potentially leading to fewer illnesses and faster recovery, though more extensive research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms. Adjustments help clear spinal misalignments (subluxations) that can interfere with nerve signals, allowing immune cells and nutrients to flow better, boosting the body's defenses. How it works: Nervous System Connection: Your spine houses the central nervous system, which directly talks to your immune system; spinal issues can disrupt this communication, weakening your immune response. Increased Immune Cell Activity: Studies suggest chiropractic adjustments can boost the activity of immune cells, like lymphocytes and natural killer cells, helping fight pathogens. Reduced Stress: Chiropractic care can lower cortisol



(stress hormone) levels, which typically suppress immunity, allowing your body to respond better to threats. Better Circulation & Lymph Flow: By restoring spinal alignment, adjustments improve blood flow and lymphatic drainage, delivering immune cells and removing toxins more effectively. Potential Benefits: Fewer infections and quicker recovery from respiratory issues. Reduced inflammation, a key factor in many chronic conditions. Overall enhanced ability to fight off viruses and bacteria. Key Research: Studies show increased immunoglobulin production and better outcomes for respiratory infections in patients receiving chiropractic care. Historical data from the 1918 flu pandemic suggested much lower death rates for chiropractic patients compared to conventional care, highlighting strong innate healing. In essence, by keeping the spine aligned, chiropractic care aims to optimize the body's communication network, creating an environment where the immune system can work at its best.

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

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: I'm pregnant and I've seen seat belt attachments that clip under the seat and say they make belts safer for pregnant people. Are these safe to use?

Answer: I contacted the expert who is the Community Programs and Occupant Protection Manager for the Minnesota Safety Council and here is what I was advised.

Seat belt adjusters, also called seat belt positioners, are devices that try to move the lap belt so it doesn't rest across a pregnant person's belly. Manufacturers claim this reduces pressure and keeps the baby safe in a crash. These devices are not safe and should not be used.

What Crash Tests Showed:

- Experts tested these devices using crash test dummies designed to represent pregnant drivers.

- Plastic hooks broke completely in crashes.

- Metal hooks or extra straps pressed on the dummy's belly or groin.

- All adjusters allowed the dummy to move too far forward, increasing the risk of injury.

- Hard plastic or metal parts in the adjusters can cause extra harm in a crash.

Why They Don't Work:

- The main danger to a baby in a crash is from internal forces on the uterus, called placental abruption. Seat belt adjusters do not prevent these forces.

- Using an adjuster can actually make these forces worse by letting the pregnant driver move too far forward.

How to Wear a Seat Belt Safely During Pregnancy:

- Use the normal three-point seat belt (lap + shoulder belt).

- Lap belt: Low on the hips, under the belly.

- Shoulder belt: Across the chest and off the neck.

- Worn this way, the seat belt protects both mother and baby.

Other Safety Notes:

- Manufacturers of seat belt adjusters do not have to meet safety standards.

- Materials and designs vary, and many are not crash-tested.

- Claims of "certified" or "crash tested" are not verified by independent sources.

Bottom line: Do not use seat belt adjusters. Wearing the seat belt correctly is the safest way for pregnant drivers and their babies.



Trusted Resources:

- Buckle Up MN: Seat Belt Use for Pregnant People

- NHTSA: Pregnancy Seat Belt Use

- Hudson Center for Prenatal Vehicle Safety

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)

Keith Allen Announces Bid for Re-Election for Minnesota House District 19A with his Top Priorities.

Kenyon, MN- Keith Allen, the incumbent representative from Minnesota's House District 19A, officially announced his candidacy for re-election in the communities of Faribault, Janesville, Kenyon, Morristown, Nerstrand, Warsaw and Wanamingo.

"It has truly been a honor to serve as the representative for the House District 19A and work on behalf of the people in our communities," Allen said. "This fall, while door-knocking across the District, I heard the same concerns over and over: skyrocketing property taxes, billions lost to fraud, and families, retirees, and businesses leaving Minnesota because they can't afford to stay," Allen added. "The affordability issues we're seeing in taxation are a direct result of rushed legislation under one-party control—and it's only going to get more expensive as more of their policies go into effect. I fought hard for fiscal responsibility, fraud cleanup, and tax relief in my first term—and we made progress. But there is still work to be done that puts Minnesotans first. That is why I am running."

Central to Allen's campaign is the following top priorities shaped directly by those doorstep conversations—three priority reforms he will champion in his second term:

1. Fight for transparency of the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in State Programs like pushing for the statewide "independent" Office of the Inspector General and push for better oversight of government agencies.

2. Cut Taxes and Stop the Exodus of Families, Retirees, and Businesses

I'll continue pushing to end the unfunded mandates that drive up local taxes, deliver real relief for seniors on fixed incomes, and cut burdensome regulations that drive jobs, farms, and families out of state.

3. Balance the Budget with Commonsense Spending Controls

I'll keep fighting for a responsible, well-thought-out state budget that prioritizes roads, schools, and public safety while slashing wasteful spending. Common sense isn't radical—having a balanced budget benefits everybody in our state, not just a few, and ensures our children inherit opportunity instead of debt.

"These priorities come straight from the doors I knocked this fall," Allen added. "I fought for these issues before, and when re-elected will keep fighting so Minnesotans are put first. Together, we will make our great state of Minnesota affordable, accountable, and prosperous once again."

Keith Allen is a lifelong resident of Minnesota, passionate about serving the district of 19A. A graduate of the University of Minnesota, small business owner, farmer, husband and father, he understands the importance of creating an environment where future generations can thrive.

For more information about Keith Allen's campaign please visit [www.votekeithallen.com]



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**Kenyon City Council Meeting
December 9, 2025**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a City Council Meeting was duly held in the City Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. on the 9th day of December 2025. The meeting was called to order by Acting Mayor Mary Bailey

The following members were present: Council Members Lee Sjolander, Mary Bailey, Elana Brunner, and Kim Helgeson

Absent: Mayor Donald Kirchmann
Also, present: City Administrator Scott Lehner, Administrative Assistant Holli Gudknecht, Attorney Scott Riggs, John Lee, Doug Henke, Police Chief Jeff Sjoblom, Engineer Derek Olinger, Josh Johnson, John Mortensen, Brady Fischer

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITIZEN COMMENT
ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion by Brunner seconded by Helgeson to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Sjolander second by Helgeson to approve the Consent Agenda, which includes:

Resolution 2025-28: Accepting Kenyon Fire Relief Association Donations to the City of Kenyon

City of Kenyon and Township 2026 Fire Contract

Jacobsen Law - Request for Increase to Fees for 2026 Criminal Prosecution Contract

Financials and Payment of check numbers, 77665 through 77730; 7062E through 7099E Council Minutes of November 12, 2025

Council Special Minutes of December 2, 2025

Motion carried 4-0-0.

**PRESENTATIONS/
PUBLIC HEARINGS/
RECOGNITIONS/PROLAMATIONS
ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE
ENGINEERING**

2025 Street and Utility Improvements

Engineer Olinger reported that Fitzgerald has completed work for this year. The project will be finished in 2026. Pay application No. 4 includes work from November 1 to November 28 in the amount of \$220,801.37.

**Fitzgerald Excavating and Trucking
Change Order No. 1**

Engineer Olinger stated that a change order was being done to clean up some administrative changes. It was not quite ready yet, so it was tabled.

**2025 Street and Utility Improvements –
Fitzgerald Excavating & Trucking -Pay
Application No. 4**

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Bailey to approve pay application #4 to Fitzgerald Excavating in the amount of \$220,801.37. Motion carried 4-0-0.

LEGAL

**Ordinance No. 113: Regulating the
Discharge of Firearms, Bows, and Hunting
Within City Limits**

Attorney Riggs reviewed Ordinance No. 113, which adds a section to the city code regulating the discharge of firearms, bows, and hunting within city limits. The revised ordinance incorporates changes discussed at the previous meeting.

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Sjolander to adopt Ordinance No. 113. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Resolution 2025-25:
Approving Publication of Ordinance
No. 113 by Title and Summary**

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Brunner to adopt Resolution 2025-25. Motion Carried 4-0-0.

MN Paid Leave Policy

Attorney Riggs reviewed a draft Minnesota Paid Leave Policy based on the League of Minnesota Cities model. The City is required to have a policy in place for the new state paid leave program.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve the MN Paid Leave Policy, with staff authorized to make necessary changes. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Firebird LLC Contract

Attorney Riggs stated that the EDA approved a purchase and development agreement with Firebird, LLC for a lot in the Kenyon Industrial Park and recommended Council approval.

Motion by Sjolander, seconded by Bailey, to approve the purchase and development agreement with Firebird, LLC. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Power Sales Agreement

Attorney Riggs reported that the KMU Commission recommended approval of a power agreement with CMPAS to purchase one-half megawatt of wind energy, with the option to purchase an additional one-half megawatt if available.

**Resolution 2025-31 Authorizing the
Execution of Bingham Lakes Facility
Wholesale Power Agreement**

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Brunner to adopt Resolution 2025-31. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**FINANCIAL
OLD BUSINESS**

2026 Budget and Levy

**Resolution 2025-29: Adopting the 2026
Budget and Establishing the Tax Levy
for Payable 2026**

Administrator Lehner reported that the Truth in Taxation hearing was held on December 2. The final budget reflects a maximum proposed levy increase of 9.18 percent for 2026.

Motion by Bailey second by Helgeson to adopt Resolution 2025-29 adopting the 2026 budget and establishing the tax levy of \$1,528,541 payable in 2026. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Approve posting the Line Worker/Water
Operator Position**

Administrator Lehner stated that the KMU Commission recommended posting the Line Worker/Water Operator position to replace Austin Fitch, who resigned in May.

Motion by Sjolander, seconded by Brunner, to approve posting the Line Worker/Water Operator position. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**NEW BUSINESS
CEDA 2025 Contract**

Administrator Lehner reported that the City's contract with CEDA is up for renewal. The EDA recommended approving the CEDA contract for contracted services totaling \$55,053 annually for two days per week.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Brunner to approve the 2026 CEDA contracted services. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Resolution 2025-30: A Resolution
Committing Capital Fund Balance**
Administrator Lehner explained that Gov-

ernmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB 54) requires public entities to commit year-end capital fund balances prior to year end, contingent upon audited final figures. Final capital fund balances will be determined following completion of the 2025 audit.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Bailey to adopt Resolution 2025-30 committing capital fund balances.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

2026 Tobacco License Renewals

Kenyon Market, River Country Co-Op (Circle K), Kenyon Municipal Liquor Store, Dollar General, Kenyon Tobacco and Vape

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Brunner to approve the 2026 tobacco license renewals.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

Governance in Action Conference

Administrator Lehner reported that MMUA is offering a Governance in Action training conference for utility commissioners and local leaders. He recommended attendance by KMU Commissioners but did not see it as beneficial for the council members to attend. Estimated cost is approximately \$600 per attendee.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve the KMU Commissioners attend this conference.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Administrative Policy #39: Paid Time
Off Cash-Out**

Administrator Lehner stated that the proposed policy would allow employees to cash out PTO balances exceeding 80 hours at year end.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Helgeson to adopt Administrative Policy #39: Paid Time Off Cash-Out. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Auditing Services RFP

Administrator Lehner reported that two proposals were received for auditing services. The City's current auditor, ABDO, is no longer able to perform the audit due to its role in providing finance services. BerganKDV proposed fees of \$27,540 for the first year, increasing to a maximum of \$29,500 by the third year. CliftonLarson-Allen proposed fees of \$97,640 for the first year, increasing to \$70,940 by the third year.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Brunner to accept the proposal from BerganKDV with the option to reevaluate the contract after one year. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Holiday Office Closings

Administrator Lehner requested approval for City Offices and Library to be closed Wednesday, December 24 and Friday, December 26.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Helgeson to close the City Office and Library on Wednesday, December 24 and Friday, December 26. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Schedule for Upcoming Meetings

KMU Meeting: Tuesday, December 16th @ 3:00 p.m.

EDA Meeting: Tuesday, December 16th @ 8 a.m.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 13th @ 7 p.m.

**COUNCIL AND STAFF GENERAL
COMMENTS**

Council member Brunner thanked all staff for their work.

Council Member Sjoblom appreciated

Public Works for keeping the street clean and the Police for patrolling the city. He was glad that KMU was approved to hire additional staff.

Council Member Helgeson reminded everyone of Christmas in Kenyon on Saturday, December 13.

Administrator Lehner noted that he had received an email informing the city that Hiawatha Transit would be cancelling service in Kenyon as of January 1.

Police Chief Sjoblom thanked the public for their local donations.

Brady Fischer questioned what was going on with police officer Homeier. Lehner stated that Homeier is currently on administrative leave.

Fischer also asked where his utility money goes. Council member Sjolander offered to get a list from him and find answers. The KMU staff also talked with Fischer after the meeting.

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Brunner to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Holli Gudknecht, Deputy City Clerk
Mary Bailey, Acting Mayor

**City of Wanamingo
Regular EDA Meeting
Monday December 8, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

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

PRESENT: Annette Fritz, Brian Gudknecht, Rebecca Haugen, Ryan Holmes, Amy McDonald, and Josh Schaefer

ABSENT: Jim Kittelson

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Boulton and Laurie Musselman

Brian Gudknecht called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance followed.

ADOPT AGENDA: Fritz motioned, seconded by Schaefer to adopt. Approved 6-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA: Fritz motioned, seconded by Haugen to approve. Approved 6-0-0.

PRESENTERS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Wanamingo was awarded a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development in October – 2025 Minnesota Small Cities Program Grant (SCDP) for \$345,000. This will go toward rehabbing roughly twelve low-income homes.

Goodhue County brought back the fee reimbursement program for building permit and/or WAC/SAC. The program was initially funded through COVID/Stimulus related grants that were expended. The County received a grant for employment and tax base diversification. The County was eligible for the grant due to having a nuclear plant located within the County. The grant is for residential, commercial, and industrial projects. This is for new construction, additions to existing buildings, and industrial equipment installation. Residential limits are \$5,000 per unit or \$10,000 per project. Commercial/Industrial has a 10,000 per project limit. There is an application process for reimbursement once the project is completed.

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WANAMINGO EDA MEETING

(continued from page 17)

OLD BUSINESS:

Administrator Boulton provided a 2024 Economic Development for the City. 2025 saw the best growth in both volume and valuation of building permits in the past five years. The growth is seen in both residential and commercial sectors. There is continued concern with inflation continue to hurt the local economy. Inflation, coupled with elevated Fed's rates seem to keep growth slower than what the market can handle in the residential housing market. The commercial work, new homes, and valuation increases will increase the City of Wanamingo tax base.

Dollar General (\$956,000) was a new major commercial building expansion in 2025. There were a couple of commercial small renovation projects such as Core824 (Former Kenyon-Wanamingo School Building), Jake's Hometown Liquor (Bar), the Mead Johnson locker room (\$273,000) and new affluent building project (\$400,000), and four other projects. The Core824 project includes the formation of TIF 3-2. TIF 3-2 is a redevelopment project that will pay out a business subsidy on future property tax increment of no more than \$525,000 over the next twenty-five (25) years.

In the residential side we have seen eight (8) new home building permits issued in 2025. The eight homes have a collective building permit valuation of \$1,569,000. The eight (8) units are considered above average year of residential growth in Wanamingo. There have also been a number of new garages, decks, mechanical work, new windows/doors, re-roofing's, and other home improvement building permits in 2025.

The 2022 Utility Improvements Project was finished up in 2025. The new well house punch list items were completed in 2025. The total cost of the project was \$2.8 million (including new water tower). The City continues to work on reducing ground water inflow and infiltration. The City completed smoke testing all the manholes to check for leaks and cross connections in 2024. The program discovered two (2) broken manhole collars, nine (9) open pick holes on manhole covers, six (6) broken cleanouts, and one (1) open valve from equalization basin. City staff repaired six (6) damaged sewer line cleanouts that showed up in the smoke testing. The City completed the sump pump inspection program. The program helped to ensure that there are no illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system. The program discovered thirty-eight (38) failures, including eight (8) beaver systems to the sanitary, fourteen (14) flex hoses, nine (9) sump pumps into sanitary, and seven (7) pits with no sump pump. Corrections have made to nearly all of the failures. There are currently four (4) properties that either did not schedule an inspection or failed the initial inspection that are being charged a \$100 monthly fee on the utility bill. The City completed a water service line shut-off valve GPS locating and material identification program required by the MPCA. The material identification program's goal is to eventually replace all lead and galvanized piping. The mapping of water service valve locations helps to find easily shut-offs in case of emergencies. The City spent roughly \$57,500 on repairing leaking water valves, re-

placing sewer services, installing a water service, asphalt patching, site restoration, and concrete replacement work in 2025. The City obtained a \$3,000 grant for a new basketball hoop that was installed at Prairie Ridge Estates park in 2025. The City completed the street shop building rehab project in 2025. The rehab work included roofing, siding, service doors, windows, overhead doors, gutters/downspouts, ventilation system, spot concrete work, and electrical work.

The total cost of the project was roughly \$196,000.

2026 looks to have additional planned private and public work. Jessup DeCook will be completing Prairie Ridge Estates 5th Addition. Prairie Ridge 5th Addition is an eleven (11) lot residential development within the center of a previously unplatted portion of Prairie Ridge Estates. The City Council approved petition and waiver agreements with the property owners looking to move forward with public improvements to the Emerald Valley Phase II. The City will pay for the upfront cost while the benefitting property owners will either directly reimburse the City or be special assessed their share of the project costs. The City approved professional service agreements with WHKS for replatting along with engineering and inspection for Emerald Valley Phase II. Emerald Valley Phase II has conceptual plans for sixteen (16) lot residential development. The plans will be presented to the City Council in late winter with competitive bidding process taking place after plan approval. The tentative plan is to move forward with construction in summer 2026 for the public improvements (water/sewer service installations, stormwater improvements, and roadway improvements). The City Council has tentative plans for Riverside Park parking lot reconstruction project in 2026. This depends on the total carrying costs for Emerald Valley Phase II and any potential to shift to utilizing the funds for the planned pickleball/ice hockey project. Both the parking lot reconstruction and pickleball/ice hockey projects depend on timing of other work and budget constraints, but should both be completed by the end of 2027. Jason Grant Trucking is still looking at a cold storage warehouse in the industrial park. Jason Grant is held up by current high construction and interest rates. Reckitt/Mead Johnson has conceptual plans for building expansion along with traffic, parking lot, building expansion, and other outside esthetic improvements. There continues to be interest in residential single-family dwellings. City Staff anticipates continued residential construction in 2026 especially if the Federal Reserve cuts interest rates. The City has been working with Zumbrota, Pine Island, Goodhue regarding a regional wastewater treatment facility. The City received \$10 million from the State for predesign and land acquisition for the facility. The Cities have hired Winthrop & Weinstein lobbyist firm to help obtain State dollars for the next phase of construction. Having capacity and reliability in the water and wastewater treatment are keys to allowing for future growth and current sustainability of the community. The North Zumbro Sanitary Sewer District hinges on State funding through the bonding bill and Point Source Implementation grant in order to be finan-

cially feasible. Schaefer stated that it was nice to hear a recap of the busy year in Wanamingo.

Administrator Boulton went over the 2026 proposed EDA portion of the Wanamingo budget. Administrator Boulton went over Funds 251 EDA, 331 Cenex 4th Addition, and 604 Medical Center. Boulton stated that 306 Cenex 3rd Addition fund was closed out after the bond was paid off in 2025.

EDA Fund 251 Levy is set to increase from \$47,000 in 2025 to \$48,000 in 2026. This will help offset small additional costs to keep the fund in a positive balance. 2024 expenses were \$39,364 while 2025 to date expenses are roughly \$33,191.46, to date.

Debt Service 331 – There continues to be no levy in 2026. The Cenex 4th Addition phase was separated from account 306 in 2018. The proceeds from the sale of property in 2018 to Comcast will support the bond payments for the next seven years. The yearly bond payments will be roughly \$45,000 (payment is \$40,425 in 2025) running through 2031. The fund had a \$254,931 balance at the end of 2024.

Medical Center Account 604 – There have been concerns with fund falling behind due to past vacant suites and utility reimbursements. The Medical Center suites are all full as of October 2022. The facility is projected to cash flow and have a \$5,000-\$8,000 cash surplus at the end of each year (depending on building capital needs). The Medical Center Fund owes the General Fund \$43,372 at the end of 2024. The Council should consider a future levy of \$10,000/year for 2-3 years or a transfer from other fund(s) of \$25,000 to make the fund solvent (This would include \$5,000-\$8,000 yearly cash generated from current rent).

There being no further business Fritz made a motion seconded by McDonald to adjourn the EDA meeting at 6:20 p.m. Approved 6-0-0.

Brian Gudknecht, President
Michael Boulton, Director

CITY OF WANAMINGO

City Council Regular Meeting Monday, December 8, 2025 7:00 P.M.

Wanamingo City Council Chambers – 401 Main Street Wanamingo, MN

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Holmes.

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

City Administrator: Michael Boulton

Deputy Clerk: Laurie Musselman

ABSENT: Council: Eric Dierks

ALSO PRESENT: Brad Kennedy, Barney Nesselth, Julie Steberg, Donna Strommen, Jacob Vrenenberg, Hunter Harvell, Beth Haas – Zumbrota News Record, and Goodhue County Deputy John Becklund.

ADOPT AGENDA: Haugen motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Ohr. Passed 5-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA: Dierks motioned, seconded by Haugen. Passed 5-0-0.

PRESENTERS:

Brad Kennedy reported on:

Winterized various buildings and equipment. Street Sweeper has been gone through, fully serviced and should be ready

for next spring. Welded iron plates over holes in hopper, replaced curb broom, and installed two main rubber runners. The machine has been fully washed and greased. Leaf vacuum service and put away for season.

Changed out Main Street banners from City logo to holiday theme

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

Put away Main Street Park benches and garbage cans

Plowed snow and salt/sanded streets after snow events

Burned tree brush pile for the first time since July. Worked with Mead Johnson to burn when plant production was shut down.

Started working on creating ice for ice rink.

Barney Nesselth reported on:

Requested that the City rescind Wanamingo Code of Ordinances 111.05(B) – Seller/Server training requirement as part of Liquor Licensing.

Training was originally free with grants offered through SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Partnership) funding when the ordinance was approved in 2007. The cost is now \$34.95/employee plus having to pay the employee for two hours of work.

What does the required training do? If the liquor establishment overserves someone or serves to a minor the liability is on the establishment and not the City. It is in the best interest of the establishment to train staff. However, the required training to obtain certificates costs money. This training could be completed in-house by the establishment. Staff turnover has occurred regularly over the past five years. Every time I hire new staff, the new staff are required to complete the training.

New government costs for 2026 are overwhelming all business. Liquor/restaurant businesses face significantly higher insurance, restaurant licensing fee increases, liability insurance increase, safe/sick time, higher property taxes, minimum wage increase, Paid Family & Medical Leave. Total new costs from 2025 to 2026 - \$5,105.

Holmes asked of the seller/server training is required or provided a premium reduction by certifying completion. Nesselth said no. Nesselth stated that bartenders/owners are required to take the training and provide certificates of completion. Wanamingo Fire Relief Association completes training once per year. Could piggyback on training but does not help when new staff are hired mid-year. Flotterud asked for the item to be placed on the January City Council and that Boulton and David Jacobsen review the ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing - Mayor Holmes opened the 2026 Budget & Levy Public Hearing at 7:12PM. Administrator Boulton provided a written memo of the Proposed Final 2026 Budget, budgeting and levy process. The overall levy is set to increase 5.13% from \$1,170,000 to \$1,230,000. There are concerns from staff that a proposed 5.13% levy increase along with other revenues may not be enough to cover expenses due to additional inflation, capital needs, or upcoming unknown expenses. The Caseys remodel increased its taxable value by an estimated \$15,000 in 2024.

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WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 18)

This would bring in roughly \$615 (slightly less than half City portion) in property taxes (0.041). New construction within the community over the last year (3 new taxable homes in 2024) should aid with the increase to the taxable market value increase. The new construction should offset roughly 1/10 of the proposed levy increase (0.5% of the proposed 5.13% increase). In 2027, Dollar General new commercial building (\$956,000 valuation), Jake's Hometown Liquor renovation, potential commercial (Jason Grant's proposed warehouse), Reckitt-Mead Johnson expansion, and other discussed commercial expansions projects, and additional residential growth (8 new homes as of December 2nd) will continue to expand the tax base. Goodhue County calculated the 2026 tax capacity numbers based on the proposed levy and new valuation figured into tax capacity and taxable market values. Wanamingo tax capacity will go from \$1,568,304 (includes TIF) to \$1,601,013 (Includes TIF) a 2.08% increase. Wanamingo Market Value will go from \$140,211,100 to \$144,035,925 or a 2.72% increase. The tax pool (what the levy gets divided out by) will go from \$1,556,728 to \$1,601,013 or a 2.84% increase. The tax rate is proposed to go from 75.044 to 76.826 or an increase of 1.782%. The Wanamingo City Council proposed levy increase to \$1,230,000 will have a net increase on tax rates. Administrator Boulton received additional data to show potential changes to homeowners' property taxes with the proposed levy (roughly an increase of \$12.79 for \$100,000 value, an increase of \$22.50 for \$150,000 value, an increase of \$32.21 for \$200,000 value, an increase of \$41.92 for \$250,000, and an increase of \$51.64 for \$300,000 value City portion of a property tax increase per year). This depends on home valuation changes from the past year. Most homes saw a 3%-4% increase in valuations from 2024 to 2025. This would show changes on the low end of value increases to roughly \$40 for \$100,000 home, \$60 for a \$150,000 valued home, \$75 for a \$200,000 value home, \$90 increase for \$250,00, and \$105 for a \$300,000 value home. It would show increases of \$45 for \$100,000, \$65 for \$150,000 value, an increase of \$80 for \$200,000 value, an increase of \$95 for \$250,000, and an increase of \$110 for a \$300,000 value City portion of a property tax increase per year) on the high end. The new commercial and residential growth in 2024 helps offset the levy increase from going onto existing property owners. Boulton stated that LGA is proposed to increase from \$302,415 in 2025 to \$302,649 in 2026. Boulton stated that 59% of the general fund revenue comes from the property tax levy. The other areas of the general fund revenue do either increase or decrease slightly. This means that the levy shares a higher percentage of the burden each year. Boulton stated that inflation continues to make general fund budgeting difficult in 2026, like the last five years. Boulton stated that increases to ambulance contract, policing contract, fire, salaries, changing deputy clerk position from ¾ to full time, health insurance, elections in 2026, street maintenance, and future capital needs are putting pressure on the general fund. Boulton stated that basic City

operation costs continue to rise. Boulton stated that in addition, infrastructure and equipment needs over the next few years put the City in a tough position in attempting to keep levy increases low. The Riverside Park curb and parking lot rehab work is estimated to cost \$200,000. \$150,000 is planned to be spent out of the 336 Fund while the remainder of \$50,000 will come out of the Street Capital budget (out of \$80,000 in 2026). A portion of Emerald Valley II Addition is planned to be completed by the developer. The City will be upfronting the cost with reimbursement from the developer and while a special assessment will be levied onto a separate parcel(s) owner. The City is projected to have \$16,153.99 in direct costs on the project. These direct costs will come from the of General Fund. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$416,500. The City will be carrying out these costs until these are either reimbursed or paid for through special assessments by the property owners. These financing funds have not been budgeted and are expected to come from existing funds such as General Fund. Boulton stated that the City needs additional growth to help offset these levy increases moving forward. Boulton stated that the City general fund yearly expenditures have increased from roughly \$730,000 in 2020 to \$1,050,000 in 2026 (roughly 5% increase per year). The fund balance policy is 35%-65% or \$650,000, whichever is higher. A general fund reserve balance of \$500,000 is 47.57% while \$650,000 is 61.84%. The general fund had \$592,529 balance with the 12/31/2024 financials which was 58% reserve. Holmes stated that public safety is the largest increase in the general fund spending from 2025 to 2026. Flotterud stated that the County is holding the City hostage on policing contract with minimum number of hours required. Flotterud disagrees with the concept of budgeting a surplus. Boulton stated as the general fund expenses grow, the percentage of fund balance reserve decreases. Best budgeting practices are to keep up with the reserve balance percentage of 35%-65%, or \$650,000, whichever is higher. Flotterud suggested transferring the \$62,570 out of the Revolving Fund Loan fund. Boulton suggested a conversation with the EDA on the Revolving Fund Loan fund as this is one of their tools for development. Holmes agreed that any discussions on the revolving fund loan should involve the EDA. Flotterud asked what spending had and would occur out of Fund 216 and Fund 336. Boulton stated that the City spent roughly \$196,000 in 2025 on the Street Shop Rehab project and \$90,000 on the mini front-end loader. Boulton stated that Fund 216 will be down to \$0 while Fund 336 will have small balance (\$25,000) at the end of 2025. Boulton stated that the plan is to utilize the \$175,000 in 2026 and \$150,000 in 2027 from the 336 Fund on the Riverside Park parking lot (estimated at \$200,000) and pickleball court (estimated at \$125,000) projects were discussed for 2026/2027 out of the 336 Fund. Boulton stated that a street reconstruction project could take place in 2027/2028. The 336 Fund \$150,000 would cover the yearly bond project on a \$1.5 million project. Boulton stated that Wanamingo's proposed property tax increase is lower than the State average

for cities (8.7%). Boulton stated that Wanamingo's current and proposed tax rate is lower than Pine Island and Kenyon, and similar to Red Wing, but higher than Cannon Falls, Goodhue, and Zumbrota. Boulton stated that 39% of the City tax levy is for debt service to pay back past bonds. The City's debt is higher than most communities. Boulton stated that Emerald Valley Phase II engineering will take place this winter along with re-plating. The project would go to bids in the spring. If the bids are favorable construction will occur in summer/fall 2026. The City will be leading the projects while special assessing the benefiting property owners the cost. The benefiting property owners have signed petition and waiver agreements, pending consultation on the bid cost. Boulton stated that this was not budgeted and would need to come from cash reserves. Flotterud stated that the City financial position was better than a few years ago and that the equipment is in good shape. Ohr stated that there are several pieces of equipment and building needs coming. Ohr stated that the older pay loader repairs and snowplow replacement are very large expenses. Ohe stated that the pay loader repairs could run more than \$50,000. Kennedy stated that the older pay loader snowplow may not be able to be repaired in the future and will need to be replaced (\$50,000). Ohr stated that the swimming pool repairs keep adding up to keep the facility working. The repairs to the broken line were minimal. Flotterud stated that once the pool can no longer be repaired the City would more than likely never build another one. Flotterud stated that the operation costs could be shifted to park improvements at that time. Kennedy stated that equipment such as the leaf vacuum, sewer jetter, Ford tractor, future mini payload/skid loader replacement, 2000 Chevrolet one ton, and street sweeper are in similar positions to the snowplow. Kennedy stated that staff will keep equipment running as long as possible. Kennedy stated that the council should be ready to replace as they fail, which include budgeting/planning. Boulton projected the 2027 levy to be around 7%, with today's snapshot projections. Holmes thanked everyone for the input on the 2026 budget, which in turn affects the levy. Mayor Holmes closed the public hearing at 7:36PM.

RESOLUTION:

25-087 = Adopting Final 2026 Budget: Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Dierks. Passed 5-0-0.

25-088 = Certifying Final Tax Levy for 2026: Haugen moved to approve, Seconded by Dierks. Flotterud suggest dropping the increase by \$20,000m, to \$1,210,000. Ohr stated that the Council had already reduced the increase from 7% to 5% in July. Ohr stated that reducing the proposed 2026 levy delays future capital projects. The 2025 levy would go from \$1,170,000 to \$1,230,000 (\$60,000 increase or 5.13%). Passed 4-1-0 (Flotterud No).

25-089 = Approving Fire Department Budget & Township Budget Contract Allocation Formula for 2026:

Ohr moved to approve, Seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

25-090 = Approving Licenses (Tobacco & Liquor) for 2026: Dierks moved to approve, Seconded by Ohr. Passed 5-0-0.

25-091 = Adopting 2026 1st Quarter Maintenance Work Plan: Ohr moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. Passed 5-0-0.

25-092 = Approving Smith Schafer Engagement Letter for 2025 Audit: Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Ohr. Passed 5-0-0.

25-093 = To Not Waive the Monetary Limits on Tort Liability Established by Minnesota Statutes 466.04:

Flotterud moved to approve, seconded by Ohr. Passed 5-0-0.

25-094 = Approving a Land Lease Agreement with Kenyon-Wanamingo School District, No. 2172, for the Operation of an Ice Rink and Warming House: Haugen moved to approve, seconded by Dierks. Passed 5-0-0.

25-095 = Approving a Proposed Billing Change to the City/EDA Civil Attorney Services From Jacobsen Law Firm, P.A.: Haugen moved to approve, seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

25-096 = Accepting Wanamingo Fire Relief Association Charitable Gambling Donation and Designating the Funds to the 333 Equipment Fund: Ohr moved to approve, seconded by Haugen. Boulton stated that the Fire Relief Association has indicated that they plan to donate at least \$45,000 to the City from 2025 charitable gambling. Passed 5-0-0.

Ordinance #214 - 2026 Fee Schedule – 1st Reading – Mayor Holmes went over the recommended changes from 2025 Fee Schedule for the proposed 2026 fee schedule including increasing Deputy Clerk labor from \$45/hour to \$47/hour, increasing Public Works Labor from \$45/hour to \$47/hour, increasing City Administrator Labor from \$60/hour to \$62/hour, increasing dump truck from \$65/hour to \$85/hour, removing grader from the list, removing skid loader from list, adding compact wheel loader at \$90/hour, increasing the sewer hook-up from \$750 to \$800, increasing water meter cost from \$370 to \$380, increasing the MN Water User Fee from \$0.82/month to \$1.30/month, increasing the sewer debt service/base fee from \$32.00/month to \$34.00/month, increasing the monthly garbage fee from \$19.11/month to \$20.06/month, and increasing the monthly recycling fee from \$7.35/month to \$7.64/month. The increase to the water meter fee helps to cover increases to the actual costs of the water meters and readers. Boulton stated that the proposed monthly sewer base rate/debt service fee increase of \$2.00/month to each hook-up would bring in roughly \$14,000 in new revenue in 2026. The monthly garbage and recycling increase reflects the yearly new contract with Highland Sanitation. Throughout the year, including the budgeting process, the Council has discussed and has recommended the above changes. The City Auditors recommend that the Council review sewer/water rates and make small adjustments regularly to capture revenue as opposed to large jumps. The wastewater treatment plant will need upgrades soon which could cost millions of dollars. Mayor Holmes asked if the Council wished to see changes made to the proposed fee schedule before the January City Council. No changes were requested.

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WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 19)

OLD BUSINESS:

Administrator Boulton provided a 2025 Economic Development for the City. 2025 saw the best growth in both volume and valuation of building permits in the past five years. The growth is seen in both residential and commercial sectors. There is continued concern with inflation continuing to hurt the local economy. Inflation, coupled with elevated Fed's rates seem to keep growth slower than what the market can handle in the residential housing market. The commercial work, new homes, and valuation increases will increase the City of Wanamingo tax base.

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flex hoses, nine (9) sump pumps into sanitary, and seven (7) pits with no sump pump. Corrections have been made to nearly all of the failures. There are currently four (4) properties that either did not schedule an inspection or failed the initial inspection that are being charged a \$100 monthly fee on the utility bill. The City completed a water service line shut-off valve GPS locating and material identification program required by the MPCA. The material identification program's goal is to eventually replace all lead and galvanized piping. The mapping of water service valve locations helps to find easily shut-offs in case of emergencies. The City spent roughly \$57,500 on repairing leaking water valves, replacing sewer services, installing a water service, asphalt patching, site restoration, and concrete replacement work in 2025. The City obtained a \$3,000 grant for a new basketball hoop that was installed at Prairie Ridge Estates Park in 2025. The City completed the street shop building rehab project in 2025. The rehab work included roofing, siding, service doors, windows, overhead doors, gutters/downspouts, ventilation system, spot concrete work, and electrical work. The total cost of the project was roughly \$196,000.

2026 looks to have additional planned private and public work. Jessup DeCook will be completing Prairie Ridge Estates 5th Addition. Prairie Ridge 5th Addition is an eleven (11) lot residential development within the center of a previously unplatted portion of Prairie Ridge Estates. The City Council approved petition and waiver agreements with the property owners looking to move forward with public improvements to the Emerald Valley Phase II. The City will pay the upfront cost while the benefiting property owners will either directly reimburse the City or be special assessed their share of the project costs. The City approved professional service agreements with WHKS for replatting along with engineering and inspection for Emerald Valley Phase II. Emerald Valley Phase II has conceptual plans for sixteen (16) lot residential development. The plans will be presented to the City Council in late winter with competitive bidding process taking place after the plans are approved. The tentative plan is to move forward with construction in summer 2026 for the public improvements (water/sewer service installations, stormwater improvements, and roadway improvements). The City Council has tentative plans for Riverside Park parking lot reconstruction project in 2026. This depends on the total carrying costs for Emerald Valley Phase II and any potential to shift to utilizing the funds for the planned

pickleball/ice hockey project. Both the parking lot reconstruction and pickleball/ice hockey projects depend on timing of other work and budget constraints, but should both be completed by the end of 2027. Jason Grant Trucking is still looking at a cold storage warehouse in the industrial park. Jason Grant is held up by current high construction and interest rates. Reckitt/Mead Johnson has conceptual plans for building expansion along with traffic, parking lot, building expansion, and other outside esthetic improvements. There continues to be interest in residential single-family dwellings. City Staff anticipate continued residential construction in 2026 especially if the Federal Reserve cuts interest rates. The City has been working with Zumbrota, Pine Island, Goodhue regarding a regional wastewater treatment facility. The City received \$10 million from the State for pre-design and land acquisition for the facility. The Cities have hired Winthrop & Weinstine lobbyist firm to help obtain State dollars for the next phase of construction. Having capacity and reliability in the water and wastewater treatment are keys

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

Mayor Holmes wished to send condolences to Bob Gudknecht's family on his passing. Bob was an important part of the community, serving 56 years on the Wanamingo Fire Department.

*Next City Council meeting on 1/12/2026

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

*Fire Department/Township/City Annual Meeting is on 2/2/2026 at 6:30pm

Adjourn: At 8:38 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Ohr and seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

Signed: Ryan Holmes, Mayor

Attest: Michael Boulton, City Administrator

Goodhue County Republicans to Hold Precinct Caucuses on February 3, 2026

(continued from page 1)

All Republican voters are encouraged to attend and participate. A governor straw poll will be conducted at the beginning of the caucus.

The Republican caucus is a vital part of the grassroots political process, allowing citizens to help shape party priorities and elect delegates who will represent Goodhue County Republicans at higher levels of party leadership and endorsement conventions. for more info go to <https://caucusfinder.sos.mn.gov/>

Republican caucuses will be held at the following locations:

Cannon Falls

Cannon Falls High School – Cafeteria

820 East Minnesota Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Precincts: City of Cannon Falls, Cannon Falls TWP, Leon TWP, Welch TWP, Stanton TWP, Warsaw TWP, Dennison

Florence Township / Lake City (North)

Florence Town Hall – Main Room

33915 Highway 61 Blvd, Frontenac, MN

Precincts: Lake City W4–P4, Florence TWP

Goodhue

Goodhue School – Cafeteria

510 3rd Ave, Goodhue, MN 55027

Precincts: Goodhue, Goodhue TWP, Bellechester, Belvidere TWP, Belle Creek TWP

Kenyon

Kenyon High School – Cafeteria (Room E113)

400 Sixth Street, Kenyon, MN

Precincts: Holden TWP, Kenyon, Kenyon TWP

Red Wing

Red Wing High School – Cafeteria

2451 Eagle Ridge Drive, Red Wing, MN 55066

Precincts: City of Red Wing, Wacouta TWP, Featherstone TWP, Hay Creek TWP, Vasa TWP

Wanamingo

Wanamingo Community Room

401 Main St, Wanamingo, MN 55983

Precincts: Wanamingo, Wanamingo TWP, Cherry Grove TWP

Zumbrota / Pine Island

Zumbrota High School – Cafeteria (Door #1)

705 Mill Street, Zumbrota, MN 55992

Precincts: City of Zumbrota, Zumbrota TWP, Minneola TWP, Pine Island, Pine Island TWP, Roscoe TWP



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- THEME: ON THE FARM
- ACROSS
1. Laura Ingalls' notebook

6. Boozer

9. Biblical pronoun

13. Sacred text, to some

14. "Fat chance!"

15. Afrikaners' ancestors

16. Cake spread

17. Chowd down

18. Clear the blackboard

19. *Barn chore

21. *John Deere, e.g.

23. Nirvana's "Come as You ____"

24. Spasm of pain

25. Broadband access overseer, acr.

28. Mark for omission

30. Recessed space

35. "____ and the Real Girl," movie

37. "Shoot!"

39. E in baseball box score

40. Oil org.

41. Intelligent

43. A mixture or medley

44. Children's respiratory disease

46. Foggy view?

47. Politicians, for short

48. In a sympathetic manner

50. Ski hill ride

52. Maiden name indicator

53. Bald eagle's nest

55. Repeated Latin dance step

57. *a.k.a. harvester

61. *Opposite of pasture

65. *Common varieties are yellow, red and white

66. Tall tale

68. Smooth, in manner

69. Audience's approval

70. "____ at ease"

71. Stomach sore

72. Caribou or moose

73. Soldier's bed

74. Harsh
- DOWN
1. *Separate cream from milk

2. Locus, pl.

3. Seed coat

4. Form of Japanese poetry

5. Encircle

6. Deep pile carpet

7. *Cereal grass

8. Sorority letter

9. Cleopatra's necklace

10. Thermostat option

11. Guesstimate phrase (2 words)

12. Olympic cast-out, e.g.

15. Charles Darwin's vessel

20. Must-haves

22. Ribonucleic acid, acr.

24. Fine

25. *Group of chickens

26. Birthplace of Caprese

27. Oedipus' successor

29. *Baby sheep

31. *____ rotation

32. Acrylic fiber

33. Bridal veil fabric

34. With a jagged margin

36. Gulf War missile

38. *Pasture-raised chicken's morsel

42. Vanish without this?

45. Lamentation

49. Japanese capital

51. Rh in Rh disease

54. Indiana Jones' find, e.g.

56. Not a minor

57. For boys and girls

58. Popular fairy-tale beginning

59. Stephen King's "The Green ____"

60. *Male pig

61. Abe Lincoln's hat material

62. Tatted cloth

63. Done

64. Seaside bird

67. UN labor grp.

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Introducing our Chief Credit Officer: Rob Alberts

Security State Bank of Wanamingo is pleased to announce the appointment of Robert Alberts as Chief Credit Officer, effective January 5, 2026. Rob brings decades of experience in credit risk management, commercial lending, and banking operations, strengthening the bank's continued growth and commitment to high-quality service.

Rob previously served as Chief Credit Officer at First National Bank of Moose Lake, Moose Lake MN and as Associate Vice President of Consumer and Mortgage Lending at Reliance Bank, Faribault MN. With a banking career beginning in 1999, Rob has extensive experience in commercial lending, consumer and mortgage lending, credit risk management, portfolio oversight, and bank operations. Alberts also brings deep expertise in staff development and training, holding a master's degree in management. This addition allows the bank to strengthen its risk management framework and reinforce its long-term stability.

"What stood out most about Rob was his deep commitment to community banking and developing people," said Scott Peterson, President/CEO. "His leadership will help us maintain the strong credit standards our customers rely on while supporting the bank's growth. We are pleased to welcome Rob to our team and excited about the contributions he will make."

On joining Security State Bank of Wanamingo Alberts stated, "I am very excited to join the team at Security State Bank of Wanamingo and to be part of a true community bank that puts customers first. I was impressed by the Bank's deep commitment to local organizations and its dedication to building lasting customer relationships. As Chief Credit Officer, I look forward to strengthening our credit culture, supporting responsible growth, and ensuring we continue to be a trusted financial partner for our customers and community."

This appointment supports the bank's mission and long-term strategy. Security State Bank of Wanamingo is a growing, single-location community bank with a focus on agricultural and small business customers. The bank is committed to delivering tailored financial products that meet the unique needs of local farms, businesses, and families. By prioritizing long-term relationships and disciplined credit practices, the bank continues to strengthen its position as a trusted financial partner in the region.



About Security State Bank of Wanamingo

With over 100 years of providing financial services, Security State Bank of Wanamingo is a full-service commercial bank providing its expertise to the communities of Southeastern Minnesota. Security State Bank of Wanamingo has a long history of supporting local communities and continues to provide creative financial solutions to clients. The company has 12 employees and an asset size of \$104 million in 2025. Please visit <https://www.ssbwanamingo.com/> for more information.



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