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JANUARY 29, 2026

Volume 23 • Issue 1

Walk or Snowshoe by Candlelight at Nerstrand Big Woods State Park Sat., Feb. 14

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will host candlelight events across the state this winter, including at Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, which was rescheduled for Saturday, Feb. 14. Drop by from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Valentine's Day to hike or snowshoe as stars twinkle overhead and candles flicker in the snow.

(continued on page 6)



Township Election Filings 2026

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Township elections in Rice and Dakota counties are set for Tuesday, March 10, and, much like last year, write-in votes will determine who fills several open seats.

(continued on page 20)

Announcements

• St. John's UCC, 19086 Jacobs Ave., Faribault - February 8, 2026 from 11:45am-2:00pm: Pancakes, sausages, coffee & juice. Plus, a must see - silent auction. Come and bring your sweetheart. Free will donation.

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

(continued on page 2)

Medallion Hunt & Hot Dish Cookoff Part of Annual Flake Out Festival in Dennison

The Dennison Lions Club is planning the 2026 Flake Out Festival & Winter Parade for

2026 Precinct Caucuses

The 2026 precinct caucuses are scheduled to be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

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Saturday, February 7th.

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

A \$500 1st Prize, plus other cash and prizes

will be given away.

Winner will be announced around 9 PM Saturday night at The Sapphire Lounge & Event Room in Dennison. (Need Not Be Present To Win).



(continued on page 5)

Nerstrand Women's Club Donates \$800 to Nerstrand Fire & Rescue



Club members Pam Caron and Lue Kuntz presenting the clubs gift to the department treasurers Nate Bonde & Bret Showers. The club collected \$800 to go towards the department.

Every year at Christmas time, the Nerstrand Women's Club holds their holiday party for club members. The evening is spent playing games having snacks and exchanging secret pal gifts. Another annual tradition for the club is collecting money for the Nerstrand Fire & Rescue. Submitted by Lue Kuntz

Meyers Named 2025 Outstanding Conservationists for Rice County



Alan and Andrew Meyer are the 2025 Outstanding Conservationists for Rice County.

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District has selected Alan and Andrew Meyer as the 2025 Outstanding Conservationist for Rice County.

(continued on page 9)

Take a Short Drive
to Delicious



Call 507-645-9992 to Make Your Valentine's Weekend Reservations

37540 Goodhue Ave., Dennison, MN
Open Wednesday-Thursday 11:00am-8:30pm; Friday-Saturday 11:00am-9:30pm; Sunday 9:00am-8:00pm (Bar Open Later)
www.firesidelounge.net



HOPE CREAMERY BUTTER AVAILABLE AT PARKSIDE!

Local has become an important part of consumer's food choices. People like to know where their food is coming from and how it is produced.

Hope Creamery fits that profile very well.

Our butter is made using an age old process. Vat pasteurization, and small batch quantities are churned fresh every week.

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ATM AVAILABLE
Mon.-Fri. 6am-8pm; Sat.-Sun. 7am-7pm
WINTER HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 6am-7pm
Sat.-Sun. 7am-7pm
230 Main St., Nerstrand
507-332-8626
parksidenerstrand@gmail.com

Announcements

(continued from page 1)

• **The Little Free Food Pantry is open and needs your donations.** Weather resistant products would be appropriate for winter donations. The Little Free Food Pantry is located by Dennison City Hall behind the big sign. Paper products: paper towels, toilet paper, kleenex. Personal care items: soap, toothbrushes, pads/tampons, diapers/wipes, deodorant, chapstick, hats, gloves, scarves, handwarmers. Nonperishable foods: boxed/bagged grains/beans, rice, couscous, quinoa, red beans, white beans, dry pasta, bagged pasta meals, mac 'n cheese, hot and cold cereal, snack crackers, dried fruits, granola bars.

• **Wednesday Wear, Nerstrand United Methodist Church** hours are Wednesdays 1 - 5 and Saturdays 9 - 12. Women's, men's and children's clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, toys and books.

All things are free with donations accepted. Come and see what we have!

• **The Nerstrand City Council** meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7p.m. at the Nerstrand City Hall. Office hours are: Wednesdays 9:30-11:30a.m. and Thursdays 6:00-8:00p.m. Other times available per request, 507-332-8000.

• **Warsaw Township Meeting** is held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Warsaw Township Hall. Meeting time is 6:00p.m.

• **The Wheeling Township meeting** will be held on the second Monday of each month at 8:00p.m. at the Wheeling Township Hall. Contact Rebecca Vergin, Township Clerk.

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

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 missing 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.

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.

(continued on page 3)

St. John's UCC

19086 Jacobs Ave
Faribault, MN 55021

February 8, 2026

11:45am-2:00pm



• Pancakes

• Sausages

• Coffee & Juice

Plus

A MUST SEE -

SILENT AUCTION



Come and bring your Sweetheart

Free will donation

LUTHERAN

Dennison/Vang Lutheran Parish
P.O. Box 117, Dennison, MN
507-645-6042

Website: www.dennisonvang.org

Email: dennisonvangoffice@gmail.com

February 1st: Vang-9 am; Dennison-10:30 am
February 8th: Vang-9 am; Dennison -10:30 am
February 15th: Vang-9 am; Dennison -10:30 am
Ash Wednesday February 18th: Dennison-7 pm
February 22nd: Vang-9 am; Dennison -10:30 am
February 25th : Dennison Soup Super-6:00 pm;
Worship-7:00 pm

Gol Lutheran Joe Jorgensen, Pastor • 507-838-2100
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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



AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY 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.

METHODIST

Nerstrand United Methodist

Gary Liker, Pastor
507-330-0025

Worship 9:00a.m.

Stanton United Methodist

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

ST. JOHNS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Wheeling Township) 19086 Jacobs Ave., Faribault
Gary Liker, Pastor • 507-330-0025
www.stjohnsunitedchurchofchrist.info
Sunday School 9:30a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m.

NEW LIFE CHURCH

525 Beverly St., Wanamingo
9:00a.m. Sunday School for all ages;
10:00a.m. Worship Service
7:00p.m. Small Group Bible Studies - Sun.

HOLDEN AND DALE LUTHERAN CHURCHES, ELCA

Pastor Dustin Haider • 507-789-6677
holdendalesecretary@gmail.com
Holden: 6949 County 30 Blvd, Kenyon
Dale: 9210 County 12 Blvd, Kenyon
www.holdenlutheranchurch.org
Holden/Dale on Facebook
Worship Services
Feb 15: Holden 9:00, Dale 11:00
Feb 18 Ash Wednesday Holden 7pm
Feb 22: Dale 9:00, Holden 11:00
Feb 25 Lenten service Dale 7pm
Mar 1: Holden 9:00, Dale 11:00
Mar 4: Lenten service Holden 7pm
Mar 8: Dale 9:00, Holden 11:00

Email your church announcements, schedule, etc.
to the Mainstreet
Messenger at: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Mainstreet Messenger

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email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com
or call 507-649-3327



February events, happenings and goings on at WildWood!

315 Main Street | Nerstrand

Self-Love Release + Sound Bath

Friday, February 6 | 6:45-8pm | \$35 Early Bird | \$40 at the door

Hosted by Maria of MVR Healing

A heartfelt evening designed to help you release the heavy inner dialogue, old stories, and emotional tension that have been weighing you down.

Women in Business Networking Group

Tuesday, February 10 | 9am | no charge

Bring your own coffee and come mingle and learn about other women-owned/managed local businesses.

Soil Health 101 & Book-signing

Tuesday, February 10 | 6-8pm | \$25

Hosted by Briana of Blossom and Branch Farm

Dive into the principles of regenerative gardening; including building organic matter, protecting soil biology, reducing disturbance, and growing resilient plants without relying on synthetic inputs. Meet-and-greet and booksigning following the event.

Sourdough for Beginners - Friday, February 13 | 5pm | \$65 - Sunday, February 15 | SOLD OUT

Hosted by Ashley of Ten Acre Baker

Join us for a hands-on, beginner-friendly sourdough baking experience where you will learn a simple, foolproof method that anyone can master.

Meal Prep Class & Supper

Thursday, February 19 | 5:30-7pm | \$95

Hosted by Tina of Inspire Health & Wellness

Learn more about meal prepping as you enjoy a nutritious meal and take three family-sized meals home with you!

Love Yourself Loudly Retreat

Saturday, February 28 | 9am-3pm | Tickets start at \$127

Hosted by Maria of MVR Healing

A full-day immersion for the woman who is done playing small.

Tickets and more details available online at wildwoodofnerstrand.com/happenings



If You Are Sad...

(continued from page 2)

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. (continued on page 4)

Live Music

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

BRYAN ANDERSON

COME CHECK OUT RED NECK POOL DURING FLAKE OUT!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

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Monday - Tuesday - Thursday - Friday 3 PM - Close

Saturday - 11 AM - Close

Sunday - Noon - Close; Closed Wednesdays

Coming Soon

TAP SATURDAYS!

Flake Out Festival

..EUCHRE..

TOURNAMENT

Saturday, February 7, 2026

\$20⁰⁰ Team Entry

8:30 a.m.

100% Payout

at

Fireside on the Patio

Bring partner if possible, not required.

Questions? Contact Jen at 507-649-0602.

Richard Hanson

Richard A. Hanson, age 95, of Kenyon, died Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at Mill City Senior Living, Faribault.

Memorial services will be held at the Nerstrand United Methodist Church on February 10, 2026, at 2 p.m. The Reverend Gary Liker will officiate. Visitation will be for one hour before the service at the church. Interment will be at Meadow Ridge Memorial Park, Faribault, on February 11, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

Arrangements are being completed by Boldt Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Faribault.

Richard August, the son of Robert Leonard and Myrtle Ann (Leider) Hanson was born at the family home on April 23, 1930. He graduated from Kenyon High School in 1949. On September 5, 1953, Richard was united in marriage to Bonnie Belle Weber. Richard farmed with his father and later his brother, Gary, in Wheeling Township before continuing with his son, Craig, in Holden Township. He enjoyed woodworking, camping, tending to his yard, and spending winters in Florida with his wife. To many, Richard was known as Mr. Fix It, as his nephew, David, would say, "Richard Can Fix It!"

Survivors include his three children, Debbie (and Mike) Kerr, Vickie (and Mark R.) Schweisthal and Craig (and Jacki) Hanson; grandchildren, Peter Kerr, Krysie Kerr, Jon (and Heather) Kerr, Kori (and Ashley) Schweisthal, Kaela Schweisthal, Tony (and Laura) Hanson, and Jason Hanson; seven great-grandchildren, three step-great-grandchildren; sisters-in-law, Barbara Hanson

and Joan Weber; other relatives and friends.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Myrtle; wife, Bonnie; siblings, Gary (and Marilyn) Hanson, Rita (and Elmer) Covert, Paul L. Hanson and Judy (and Lowell) Broin; and nephews, David Hanson and Greg Covert.

Visit boldtfuneralhome.com for information and guestbook.

Sharon E Buchta

Sharon "Shari" Buchta, 82, of Dennison, passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, surrounded by her loving family.

She was born March 6, 1943, in Minneapolis, the daughter of Robert and Ethelwyn (Hussey) Kline. She was raised in Bloomington, Minnesota, quickly finding her love of the outdoors – spending countless hours swimming and fishing with her siblings, Charlie and Holly.

Shari was introduced to the love of her life, Larry Buchta, by her cousin. They were united in marriage on June 23, 1962, and together, were blessed with three daughters.

Shari moved to the farm shortly after marrying Larry and jumped right into the role of being a "farm partner". Her days were filled with the usual household chores and caring for her girls. As well as, picking rock, driving tractors, running coffee, lunch, and parts to Larry, and feeding the calves. She was happy to do any farming duties as long as she could be outdoors and in the sunshine. Many of her summers were spent working at Lorence's Berry Farm in Northfield with her family.

Known to many as a motherly figure and to

others as a dear friend, Shari had a remarkable way of making people feel welcomed and cared for, treating everyone as one of her own. She left lasting impressions wherever she went. In Shari's free time, she loved to play games such as Farkle, Yahtzee, Scrabble and many others. She also loved to listen to music, specifically, Elvis Presley. One of the biggest joys of her life was spending time with family, whether that was hosting holidays at the farm or enjoying time at Birch Lakes Resort in Wisconsin where they would have family trips for 20 years.

She is survived by her husband, Larry of Dennison, MN; daughters, Lisa (Todd) Bestul of Northfield, MN, Carrie (Rick) Pederson of Bloomington, and Brenda "Budda" Rose-Buchta of Faribault, MN; grandchildren;

great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Shari was reunited with her family and friends who have passed before her.

"God saw you getting tired, and a cure was not to be, so he put his arms around you and whispered, "Come With Me". With tearful eyes we watched you suffer and saw you fade away, although we loved you dearly, we could not make you stay. A golden heart stopped beating, you're now at peaceful rest, God broke our hearts to prove to us, he only takes the best."

A celebration of Shari's life will take place at a later date in the spring/summer. Michaelson Funeral Home in Kenyon has been entrusted with arrangements.

456 Class at Grace Lutheran Church



"Faithful Servent" is what comes to mind when talking with Anne Bonde. The 456 Class invited Anne as our SPECIAL guest at Grace Lutheran Church. We truly enjoyed our time with her. *Courtesy of Grace Lutheran Church*

If You Are Sad...

(continued from page 3)

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.

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.

Over \$16,000 Donation to Support Local Food Shelves



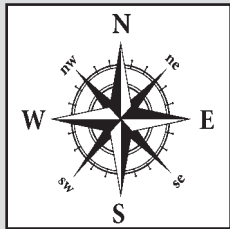
In 2025, Little Prairie United Methodist Church collaborated with the Masons of Social Lodge, # 48 in Northfield for our annual ham dinner which supports Community Action Center, CAC.

Drumroll...we raised over \$16,000 to support our local food shelves of Northfield and Faribault through CAC.

Thank you all who participated and made this happen! All of our hearts are grateful and full! *Courtesy of Little Prairie United Methodist Church, Dundas*

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 marketing 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 deceptive 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.

Medallion Hunt & Hot Dish Cookoff Part of Annual Flake Out Festival in Dennison

(continued from page 1)

Raffle tickets are available now, and can be purchased at Cattlemen's Saloon, Dennison Depot, Fireside Lounge, Heritage Bank, or any Lions Club Member. They Make a Great Gift too!

New this year is the Medallion Hunt. Those wishing to participate can meet at City Hall at 11 AM for Rules and map info, and the person that finds it receives a \$150.00 Prize

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

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

Returning this year, you can cook up your best HOT DISH recipe and bring it down to city hall for judging, with a cash prize for 1st and 2nd place.

Red Neck Pool is something new on the event list, and a chance to win prizes from local sponsors. That will run twice during the day at Cattlemen's Saloon. Live music from Bryan Anderson will be a part of the evening festivities at Cattlemens Saloon beginning at 7 PM

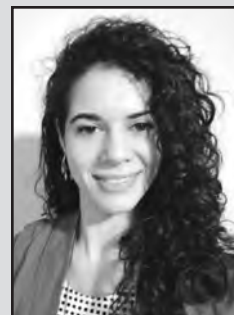
If you have any questions, contact Lion President Diane at 612-532-0268. Check out the full schedule in this issue of the Messenger.

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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.



Nerstrand Students Interview 2026 Community Celebration Honoree



Our Woodland (4/5) students had the privilege of interviewing our 2026 Community Celebration honoree, Penny Isaacson.

Walk or Snowshoe by Candlelight at Nerstrand Big Woods State Park Sat., Feb. 14

(continued from page 1)

"Our candlelight event is a fantastic way to experience Nerstrand Big Woods State Park in winter," said Alexa Smith, park manager. "Spot a constellation, identify animal tracks in the snow, or simply spend time with friends and family around the bonfires."

The 2 miles of candlelit trail start at the visitor center and are suitable for snowshoers and hikers of all ages. Visitors can also warm up with a cup of hot cocoa or cider near a crackling bonfire.

Visitors can rent snowshoes at the state park. Call 507-384-6141 in advance to confirm the availability of equipment.

Save time: Get vehicle permits and ski passes online before you go

Visitors need a vehicle permit to enter Minnesota state parks and recreation areas. The DNR recommends buying permits in advance (\$7 per day or \$35 for a year-round permit) on the DNR permit webpage (mndnr.gov/permit). Permits are also available in person at the state park.

In the event of severe weather, call 507-384-6141 for updates or check visitor alerts on the park webpage (mndnr.gov/nerstrand).

Find more candlelight events online

For the complete schedule of candlelight events planned through the state, visit mndnr.gov/candlelight.

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River Bend Minnesota Visits Nerstrand School



In December, River Bend Minnesota came and visited the 2nd and 4th graders. They talked about the 3R's and the 2nd graders even made paper!



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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.

Applications Open for Century and Sesquicentennial Farm Recognition in Minnesota

Applications are now open for the Minnesota Farm Bureau Sesquicentennial Farm program, honoring Minnesota families that have owned their farms for at least 150 years. The deadline to apply is March 2, 2026.

To qualify, the farm must:

Be at least 150 years old this year (2026) according to the abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. Please do not send originals or copies of records.

Demonstrate ownership by the applying family for 150 years or more. “Family” is defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son-in-law).

Have continuous ownership. Continuous residence on farm is not required.

Consist of 50 or more acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.

A commemorative certificate signed by the governor of Minnesota, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the president of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign. Recipients will be announced in April.

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

Century Farm program applications are also open. Information is available online at mn-statefair.org or by calling 651-288-4417. Applications are due by March 2, 2026. Recipients will be announced in the spring. Previously recognized families should not reapply.

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Meyers Named 2025 Outstanding Conservationists for Rice County

By Rice SWCD

The Meyers were honored at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Convention this past December, along with other Outstanding Conservationist Award winners from across the state.

The Outstanding Conservationist Award recognizes individuals, conservation organi-

zations, or others for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources.

Alan and his son Andrew raise and milk dairy cattle on their farm, Richland Dairy, in the headwaters of the Zumbro River Watershed of southeastern Rice County. The farm has been in their family since 1946, when Alan's grandfather purchased the property.

Alan's dad began using conservation on the farm by installing terraces and grassed waterways. Alan and Andrew have continued implementing field conservation by maintaining these structures as well as installing additional sediment basins and reducing tillage on the farm.

The Meyer's crop rotation also contributes to healthy soils and conservation on the farm, as they grow corn, beans, cover crops, canning crops, and alfalfa. In 2013, the Meyers



Soybeans grow in cover crop stubble on the Alan and Andrew Meyer farm in rural Kenyon.

started planting cover crops and eventually realized that covers could provide excellent feed for their cattle. Each year they plant approximately 100 acres of cereal rye, which protects the soil from erosion after corn silage and canning crop harvesting. While they have utilized Rice SWCD cost share programs for some of the covers, most of the covers are planted on their own.

In 2018, tragedy struck when their farm was hit by a tornado. Through much work and resilience, they rebuilt their barns and continued the conservation plan for their

farm. Using the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, last year they built a new ag waste pit that will store their manure for an entire year. This has allowed them to stop spreading manure during the winter months, which is better for the environment. They also developed a nutrient management plan for their ag waste to efficiently utilize nutrients out in the field.

Finally, the Meyers have planted trees to establish a windbreak around their farm to reduce energy use and cost.

Rice County Historical Society Launches “Wish Wall” Project for America’s 250th Anniversary

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Rice County Historical Society has unveiled a unique community engagement initiative called the “Wish Wall,” inviting residents to share their hopes for the future of the United States as the nation marks its 250th anniversary.

The project, developed in partnership with Carleton College's History Beyond the Walls class, asks a simple but powerful question: What do you wish for America as it enters its 250th year? Participants can write their wishes—whether for peace, unity, innovation, or even lighthearted dreams—on cards and post them on designated boards.

RCHS Outreach and Education Director Kiran Lowenstein said the project is meant to hear from not just as many people as possible, but people from different age groups and walks of life.

“This is about connecting people with history in a meaningful way. We want to hear from everyone—youth, seniors, and all community members—about their vision for the country's future.”

Eight Wish Wall sites have been installed across Rice County, including Buckham Library, Buckham West, and Oasis 55021 in Faribault; Carleton College Library, 50 North Senior Center, the Key Youth Center, and Northfield Public Library in Northfield; and Lonsdale Public Library. The boards will remain up through the end of February.

The idea originated with Made by Us, a national organization encouraging younger generations to engage with history. RCHS Executive Director Dave Nichols said the project aligns perfectly with the society's mission and its own milestone:

“It's not just America's 250th—it's our 100th anniversary too. We're excited to preserve these wishes as part of a special collection for future generations.”

Students from Carleton will analyze the submissions to identify common themes, which will be shared on RCHS social media in March. Community members are encouraged to visit a Wish Wall, post their thoughts, and tag RCHS on Facebook or Instagram.

The next Wish Wall introduction will be on Thursday, January 29th at the Carleton College Library. The event is scheduled to begin at noon.



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How to Make Your Yard into a Winter Wonderland for Local Wildlife



By Al Henderson, Rice SWCD Resource Specialist

If you are looking for more ways to help wildlife that may be passing through your yard this winter, look no further! Here are some methods that you can use to contribute to a healthy wildlife population in your local community. There are many ways to benefit wildlife and provide habitat and food resources. In the winter, food and water are scarce, and our wildlife need our help at times, especially when our winters are more severe.

One way to promote beneficial wildlife habitat is to provide feeders for the local bird populations. While several species of birds travel south to warmer weather, there are still many species that stay in Minnesota for the winter. Unlike in summer, there is less nutri-

tionally abundant food available, so when choosing types of feed, it's important to pick out food sources that provide high energy. Sunflower seeds, peanuts, and safflower are great options for many species of birds, including cardinals, jays, chickadees, finches, and more. These seeds can be found in most common seed mixes, but be mindful of the amount of millet as a seed mix base filler. Millet is a great supplemental food source during the growing season, but in winter, it's best to choose more energy specific foods. Additionally, millet and corn can attract nuisance species such as starlings and house sparrows. Another option to choose from is suet – a fat-based food source, excellent for sustaining birds in the winter months (peanut butter can be used as an alternative to suet).

While it is unlikely for passerine (song) birds to contract the avian flu, it is important to regularly wash your bird feeders to avoid bacterial growth and disease spread. If you have chickens on your property, be mindful not to put the feeders close to the chickens as they have a significantly higher risk of contracting avian flu.

Water sources are also few and far between when Minnesota winter is in full force. Lakes and ponds have frozen over, and there isn't always flowing water within a close radius to local wildlife. One way to provide water resources for wildlife is to have a heated bird bath, so birds, squirrels, and other woodland critters have unfrozen water access when they need it. Another option, if you are adjacent to a body of water, is to break the ice regularly to provide open water as the winter progresses.

Lastly, providing habitat with trees and shrubs for cover and additional food resources during the winter are crucial steps to seeing wildlife thriving in your area. Selecting species that produce winter berries is another great way to provide food to many local wildlife types. Additionally, deer and other



local wildlife like to hunker down in densely covered areas, such as wooded areas with evergreens, native prairie patches, or brush piles and dead trees. This allows them to bed down and be protected from the elements as well as provide them with food and nutrients from the winterized seeds and plant stalks. Dead trees and brush piles are another form of habitat and cover for wildlife. Birds and squirrels will use dead trees to nest, squirrels can hide nuts for the winter, and the organic material from the dying trees provides nutrients to the forest floor below. Leaving the dead leaves, trees, branches, and nuts is another way to help your local wildlife populations stay shielded from the elements. Insects, smaller wildlife, and amphibians will use branches, fallen logs, dead plant stalks, leaves, and other plant matter left behind to hide and overwinter until spring.

Planting trees, shrubs, and native vegetation with the intention of providing habitat and food for wildlife is something to start considering now for next winter! Rice Soil and Water Conservation District has a native tree and shrub sale happening right now into early spring. We provide evergreen species and tree and shrub species that provide berries through the winter – including American Cranberrybush, Red Splendor Crabapple, and Mackenzie's Black Chokecherry. We will also have a native plant sale – open in early January so start planning your native areas now! For more information about our tree



and native plant sale, visit our website at www.riceswcd.org.

Allison "Al" Henderson is a Resource Specialist with the Rice Soil & Water Conservation District. She assists landowners the Wetland Conservation Act and buffer strip implementation in Rice County. Contact Al with your wetland and buffer questions at 507-332-5408.

The MDA Updates Fall Nitrogen Fertilizer Restrictions Map

Map helps farmers prepare for 2026 groundwater protection requirements

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

The MDA has made updates to the Fall Nitrogen Fertilizer Application Restrictions Map, available on the MDA website. One Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) was removed from the map, and one was added. The Pine River municipal DWSMA was removed because its high-nitrate well will no longer be used as a primary source. The Belle Plaine DWSMA in Scott County was added after the Minnesota Department of Health identified elevated nitrate levels. It will be listed as Delayed for Good Cause under the Groundwater Protection Rule. Additional information on fall application restrictions and exceptions is available on the MDA's website.

Two Mitigation Level changes also were made, although they do not affect the map. The Goodhue municipal DWSMA moved from Delayed for Good Cause to Mitigation Level 1. The Valley Mobile Home Park non-municipal DWSMA was removed from mitigation because it has not recorded nitrate concentrations at or above 5.4 mg/L in the past 10 years. More information is available on the MDA's Mitigation Level Determination page.

Restrictions on fall nitrogen fertilizer application in affected areas will take effect on Sept. 1. Farmers are encouraged to review the updated map to determine whether their fields fall under these requirements.

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

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Get Your Wild On!

By Cheri Roshon

Well, it's officially winter in Minnesota! This year, we can even boast a bit of snow to go along with the subzero temperatures. And along with the fall and winter seasons comes the hunting season. And if it is hunting season, then the Minnesota tradition of wild game feeds is not far behind!

What is a wild game feed? Many non-profit organizations like Pheasants Forever, for example, use this tradition to raise money for their causes and activities that aren't covered by annual membership dues. In Minnesota, only non-profit organizations can hold wild game dinners. Meats can include Deer, elk, bear and wild boar. Wild game also consists of pheasant, duck, goose and wild turkey. Fishermen contribute salmon and trout. Only pure game can be received, not sausage or ground venison. The game must obviously be legally hunted or fished.

Other legalities include the donations that must be accompanied by a receipt with the names and addresses of the donor and the re-

cipient. Other pertinent information includes the license plate number of the vehicle used in the hunt and a description of the gift, including numbers and species.

Now, to the sportsman this is a big event, and takes a lot of organizing. The planning begins months in advance. Of the greatest importance is storing the meat properly until the event takes place. Since the wild game will not all be donated at the same time, it is important to know how and where the meat was held until donation. Wild game must always be cooked to a temperature of at least 165 degrees. Often, volunteers will cook up the wild game and incorporate it into traditional family recipes. Maybe it's Granny's Venison Stew, or a pheasant and creamy wild rice casserole.

Some people ask about chronic wasting disease in wild game. Here is what I found to address that question. Deer and elk can contract CWD, which is a fatal disease that affects the brain and nervous system of the animals. Abnormally shaped proteins called prions are the cause. Prions have never been found in muscle meat. There is no evidence that CWD can be transferred to humans. Nonetheless, for safety reasons, only boneless cuts of venison can be prepared. When the venison is processed, the backbone should never be split. Finally, it is important to keep wild game separate from other foods during preparation. The Minnesota Department of Health



requires a written statement of sanitation procedures being used at the event. When all these rules and regulations are in place, the ones preparing the food can get their Minnesota Food Certification by completing an exam so they can safely prepare a luscious meal for you to enjoy.

Now that you know just how much goes into the planning for a Minnesota Wild Game Feed, the Wanamingo Sportsmen's Club would like to invite you to enjoy an evening of food and fun on February 7th. It is being

held at the Zumbro Valley Landscape Building in the Industrial Park in Wanamingo. Admission is \$20.00. There will be activities, a raffle, and I'm sure a lot of tall tales being told! For more information, please call the Sportsman's club at (507) 272-7564. This year's raffle includes 20 prizes, from guns to grills, coolers to pizza ovens and more cool stuff! Raffle tickets are available for \$20.00 each, and you need not be present to win. The doors open at 5 pm, and dinner will be served at 6 pm. Come on down for some winter fun!

Local Choir Established for Those with Dementia and Their Caretakers

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

A local choir is being established in Northfield for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Lifting Voices comes from the vision of a Twin Cities non-profit organization called Giving Voice, that works to help people with dementia find joy through music. Kristin Kivel, a public school choir director with more than 20 years of experience who lives in Northfield, was contacted through Giving Voice and asked if she would be interested in the initiative last year, and they are now preparing for their first rehearsal on January 29th.

The point of a dementia friendly choir, she said, is to give both the patients and the caregivers something every week that is positive, inclusive, community building, and safe. Music has been known to bring joy to most people, and it can be a powerful tool to help dementia patients to remember.

Gail Almen is a volunteer with the choir, whose mother and two sisters have all experienced dementia in the past twenty years. She said, even though there is a lack of clinical data that shows music to be helpful for dementia patients, she has seen it work first hand.

"I knew the love that the people with dementia had for singing. And sometimes it would just kind of spark little things in their head. And even though they didn't know who their companions were, their families were, they knew the words to the songs. And it brought them joy, and it brought them a connection to the person with whom they came."

Kivel said the rehearsals will include singing and body movement, both of which have been shown to help dementia patients. She said the rehearsals will begin with a greeting, then a voice warm up, some time specifically for body movement, and a community time after the rehearsal for the people within the choir to interact.

Rehearsals are scheduled at FiftyNorth for Mondays from 1-3pm. FiftyNorth, Kivel said, has been an instrumental part of getting the choir up off the ground, both by donating space and by helping with some marketing.

And while, she said, a love of music is always helpful, prior musical experience – or even talent – is not required to be a part of Lifting Voices. All it takes is the magic that can come from singing.

"If you have a love for singing, if music touches parts of your life and brings back memories from things from when you were younger, if it causes you to have emotional reactions, I think it's for you."

Kivel said the program does have a performance component, the date of which has not been set, but will be sometime in the spring. No special registration is necessary, nor must one be a member of FiftyNorth to participate

giving
voice

Library Services for People Who Are Hard of Hearing

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News



The Northfield Public Library is taking significant steps to improve accessibility for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Director of Library Services Natalie Draper recently shared details about new initiatives aimed at breaking down communication barriers.

One of the most exciting developments is the introduction of AI-powered captioning tools at service desks and library programs. Inspired by a similar setup Draper saw at a conference in Denver, the system uses a tablet to provide real-time captions for conversations. "It's not perfect, but it's pretty darn good," Draper said, noting that the tool works in multiple languages, including Spanish. Importantly, the device operates offline, deletes data automatically within 24 hours, and prioritizes privacy.

The captioning system is just the beginning. The library is also installing hearing loop technology throughout its spaces, starting with service desks and the Bundy Room. These loops work with T-coil-enabled hearing aids, allowing users to tune into a clear audio signal during conversations or events. For those without hearing aids, headsets will be available. "There's a lot of ambient noise in the library," Draper explained. "This will make it easier for people to hear clearly."

Signage featuring the international hearing access symbol will alert visitors to these features, and staff are being trained to assist patrons. Draper emphasized that these tools complement, rather than replace, services like ASL interpretation, which remains available upon request.

Draper also made a point to say that they are taking extra steps to ensure the privacy of their patrons.

"We went the extra step of making sure that none of these conversations are being captured. So everything is deleted. That's good. Immediately. We can clear it immediately and it automatically deletes every 24 hours. And it's not online. So there's no data privacy concerns from our end on this."

With hearing loss affecting a large portion of Minnesotans—and likely to impact more as they age—Draper hopes these improvements will make the library a more welcoming space. "If we can provide something that lowers the barrier a bit more, that's a win," she said.

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2:30 PM Hot Dish Winner Announced (1st & 2nd Place Payout)
Hosted by Dennison Lions Club

2:45 PM **Red Neck Pool "Round One"** at Cattlemen's Saloon

4:00 PM **Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall**
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6:30 PM **12th Annual Denni Dazzle Parade \$200.00 Prize for Best Float!**
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7:00 PM **LIVE MUSIC Bryan Anderson at Cattlemen's Saloon**

9:30 PM **Raffle Winners Announced at Sapphire Cocktail Lounge & Event Center**

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Migraines and Immunity



By Shauna Burslem, 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 uncovering 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.

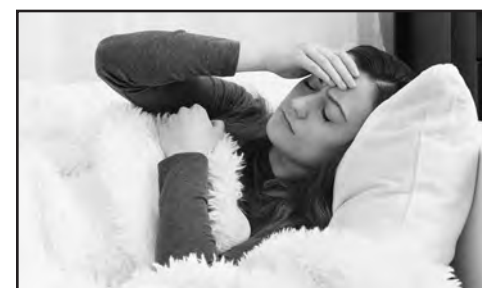
Natural progesterone, on the other hand, helps counteract estrogen's pro-inflammatory effects, calming nerve excitability and reducing migraine frequency. These hormonal shifts explain why migraines often cluster around life stages like puberty, pregnancy, and perimenopause. Stability in hormone levels, 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 inflammation.

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 ir-

regular 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 re-



spond 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.*

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 online 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

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The Savvy Senior Chair Yoga: Safe, Simple, and Beneficial for Older Adults



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

I've been hearing a lot about chair yoga lately. My New Year's resolution is to improve my health and get moving again, but I have trouble getting down on the floor. What

can you tell me about this type of yoga?

-Arthritic Abby

Dear Abby,

If you're looking for a safe way to get active again but find traditional exercise routines difficult, chair yoga may be the perfect fit.

Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga that's done either sitting on a chair or using the chair for support while standing. It adapts traditional yoga poses so they're accessible to people who may have limited mobility, balance issues, or difficulty getting down on the floor.

This practice helps improve flexibility, strength, and balance, boosts circulation and mobility, and promotes relaxation while reducing stress. This makes it an effective and safe way to stay active and support overall well-being at any age.

A typical chair yoga session begins with simple seated postures, such as gentle twists, stretches for the arms and legs, or movements that open the hips and shoulders. These exercises loosen stiff joints, improve posture, and increase flexibility in areas of the body that often become tight with age.

It can also include standing poses like modified lunges or gentle balance work,

with the chair always nearby for stability. Breathing exercises are often incorporated throughout the practice, encouraging participants to slow down, deepen their breath, and cultivate a sense of calm. Sessions usually end with a short period of guided relaxation or meditation, leaving participants refreshed and grounded.

How to Get Started

To get started, you just need a sturdy chair without wheels and preferably without arms, and some comfortable clothes. The goal with chair yoga is to stretch, not cause pain. So go only as far as feels comfortable and don't push beyond your limits.

If possible, consider joining a local chair yoga class. Many local senior centers, YMCAs, and community recreation centers offer chair yoga as part of their wellness or fitness programs. Some yoga studios and gyms may offer gentle yoga or chair yoga too. And if you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, you may be able to access classes for free through SilverSneakers.com.

If attending an in-person class isn't an option, you can also practice chair yoga at home. There are chair yoga apps and many videos you can access on YouTube to guide you through a routine.

Chair Exercise Options

As an alternative to chair yoga, there are chair exercises you can add to your routine that can help improve strength and balance, reduce joint pain and prevent falls.

To execute some of these exercises, you'll need some resistance equipment like light dumbbells, water bottles, soup cans or resistance bands.



Sit-to-stand: For this exercise, sit at the edge of the chair, feet hip-width apart. Stand up without using your hands, then slowly sit back down. Use hands lightly on the chair or use a walker or cane if needed for support.

Seated marches: Sit tall and alternate lifting one knee at a time toward your chest.

Seated bicep curls: With elbows tucked in, curl weights towards shoulders, then lower with control.

Seated overhead press: Press weights overhead from shoulder height, then slowly lower.

Seated leg extensions: Extend one leg straight out and hold for 2-3 seconds, then lower and repeat.

Heel raises: Lift heels off the floor, pause, and lower back down.

For noticeable benefits, these exercises should be performed at least three days a week, doing three sets of 8 to 12 repetitions.

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Honoring the Past, Building the Future



By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern
Minnesota Initiative
Foundation

Our state is going through a lot right now. Crisis after crisis has put Minnesota in the national spotlight. What feels even more fraught is the way these crises seem to be tearing apart much of the social fabric that has knitted us together as Minnesotans for decades: a state that has led the nation in civic engagement, a people whose warmth binds us together through the sub-zero months, a team spirit that never gives up on the Vikings, no matter how many times we enter a Super Bowl play-

off without them.

In times of crisis, we can choose to fan the fire, to respond with such force that one crisis begets another, to sow suspicion and blame in our neighbor. Or we can choose cooperation. To respond with measured reason, to hold multiple truths at the same time and believe that the solution is better when we work at it together.

And as Minnesotans, we've seen and chosen both paths in our history.

This year, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation — which is also 40 years since the farm crisis of the 1980s. I remember my uncle Paul driving me around our farm in the four wheeler near Waseca when I was a teenager, pointing out which plots of land used to be owned by which family. As the farm crisis unfolded, many of those families were forced to sell off land that generations of their ancestors stewarded. Some of those families were lost to suicide. All this was unfolding within the backdrop of the Cold War, where children had learned to practice hiding under desks for fear of nuclear attacks.

The farm crisis of the '80s had the potential to pit neighbor against neighbor, the urban metro benefitting from the gains of globalization while rural communities were shut out of financial markets. Yet, amidst the devastation — a group of Minnesotans came together across urban and rural communities to form the Minnesota Initiative Foundations. With the leadership and financial investment of the Minneapolis-based McKnight Foundation, an endowment fund was set up in each of the six regions of Greater Minnesota

as a way to keep as much wealth retained in our rural communities as possible. Residents of each region governed the fund that would impact where they lived, and in those 40 years since, generations of local donors and volunteers chose to invest in a fund where the returns would be distributed to future generations of entrepreneurs, child care providers and community leaders with big ideas to grow their small towns.

Forty years ago in a time of crisis, Minnesota chose cooperation and focused on meeting local need. They made immediate sacrifices in service of future generations they would never meet.

I find myself reflecting on this history now as we prepare to celebrate SMIF's 40th anniversary on April 23, and as my husband and I prepare to welcome our first child in the coming month. The theme of SMIF's anniversary event is "Honoring the Past, Building the Future" — which feels a lot like the weight of impending parenthood as well. As we think through names for our future child, we keep turning to the legacy of our grandparents as inspiration. Do we hope for our child to be strong in faith like Granny Jean and resilient like Khun Yai Somjit? Or perhaps humble like Grandpa Powell and selflessly headstrong like Grandpa Jim? We know the next generation will leave their own distinctive mark on the world in ways we will never be able to predict or control. Yet, how they handle crisis, the responsibility they will hold for their neighbor and community, is not forged in isolation. By looking to our past, to the lives of service that our ancestors led, we can choose to extend their

legacy into the futures we build today.

As our state continues to navigate the intensity of today's crises, I hope you will join us in finding new pathways forward beyond today's cultural standstill. We may just find that looking at the past and honoring what it's taught us is the best way we can build a new future together, and for our children.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at benyak@smif-foundation.org or 507-455-3215.

About Benya Kraus

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

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Rice County Tax Levy up 8.5%

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

In December, the Rice County Board of Commissioners approved the county's 2026 budget and property tax levy, which increased by 8.5% over 2025. That's slightly less than the preliminary figure the board had approved in September.

While the \$103 million budget is about \$12 million lower than the current budget, the levy increase is largely due to cost shifts from the state, reductions in state grants and county program aid, the 2026 elections and higher personnel costs laid out in negotiated collective bargaining agreements.

While Human Services costs have increased by about 7.5%, county staff has made significant reductions in those areas, anticipating additional cost shifts set to begin in the fourth

quarter of 2026. Changes laid out in the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act will increase Minnesota counties' administrative costs for several programs including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

County Administrator Sara Folsted estimated the impact to the county from that legislation will be an additional \$300,000 in 2027.

The 2026 budget includes the use of \$2.2 million in reserves that had been set aside for special projects, notably road and bridge improvements, to update scheduling software for the Rice County Sheriff's Office and for an additional drone to assist deputies with search and rescue operations.

It also includes almost \$869,000 in funding for outside agencies including the county's three public libraries and its senior centers. The only increases in this area were for insurance for the Rice County Historical Society and the Rice Soil & Water Conservation District.

The 2026 property tax levy for the county's Housing & Redevelopment Authority was also approved Tuesday. That levy will not increase, staying at \$232,467 for 2026.

New River Patrol Boat for Rice County

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Last month, the Rice County Board of Directors approved a new river patrol boat for the County Sheriff's Water Patrol Division. The current river boat is about 15 years old, and will be replaced by a modern, purpose built model designed for the county's diverse river and lake conditions. The Water Patrol Division has relied on its current boat for roughly 15 years, using it for rescue operations, routine patrols, and public safety support. After years of heavy use and exposure to challenging river environments, the vessel is nearing the end of its practical service life, prompting the county to move forward with a full replacement.

The new patrol boat, which along with its trailer will cost just under \$44,000, will be a 20 foot shallow water craft built specifically for maneuvering through debris filled rivers, rocky channels, and tight bends where traditional boats struggle. The motor with which it is outfitted is designed for torque and durability rather than speed, giving deputies the ability to navigate safely through areas with submerged obstacles, shifting currents, and variable depths.

The vessel will arrive fully outfitted for law enforcement and rescue work. Its configuration includes hydraulic steering, a center console, enhanced lighting and safety features, upgraded fuel system components, and secure storage and battery compartments. These additions are intended to improve reliability during long patrol shifts and ensure deputies have the equipment they need during emergencies on the water.

Once the new vessel is delivered and placed into service, the Sheriff's Office plans to make the outgoing boat available for purchase by local public safety agencies or, if not claimed, list it for public sale.

With the new boat, the Water Patrol Division expects improved performance, greater safety, and a more dependable platform for serving residents who rely on Rice County's rivers and lakes for recreation and transportation.

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Plenty of winter left. Use caution when out on the roads.

Summertime is the deadliest on Minnesota roads, although the highest number of crashes occur during the winter, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety.



While many of the same issues that plague drivers in warmer months – speeding, distracted and/or impaired driving and failing to wear seat belts – are present during the winter, adding snow, ice and hazardous road conditions to the mix only increases the likelihood of a crash.

There are several precautions motorists can take to help stay safe while on the roads this winter:

- Prepare your vehicle (check tires, antifreeze, windshield washer fluid, emergency kit)
- Practice caution (Increase following distance behind car ahead, avoid sudden braking & steering movements)
- Watch for black ice (common on bridges, overpasses and shaded areas, if you encounter black ice ease off the accelerator and steer gently)
- Use headlights wisely (keep them clear of snow and make sure they're on during low visibility)
- Stay alert (watch for plows, be cautious of pedestrians and other vehicles)
- Plan ahead (Check weather and road conditions before leaving, allow extra travel time)

As a part of the Rice County Safe Roads Coalition, the Fatal Review Committee meets quarterly. Its membership includes the Southeast Minnesota and Rice County TZD coordinators; representatives from law enforcement; emergency medical services; fire service; the County Attorney's office; city, county and district highway engineers; Public Health and highway maintenance.

These reviews help the committee establish crash trends, make recommendations to improve roadway safety and educate motorists to further reduce crashes and the injuries they cause, supporting the Minnesota TZD mission: "to create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical and trauma services. These efforts will be driven by data, best practices and research."

In 2025, there were four fatalities and 23 individuals seriously injured on Rice County roads, significantly less than in 2000 when there were 20 fatalities.

Recent educational efforts have been directly toward teen and older drivers – both which have a higher incidence of traffic crashes.

"It's not just about numbers," said Rice County Public Health Director Deb Purfeerst, "Any fatal crash is tragic and Coalition members' thoughts are always with families and loved ones, with the goal of reducing fatal crashes to zero."

**For more information about the Rice County Safe Roads Coalition,
contact Grace Pint, Rice County Safe Roads Coalition Coordinator.
Grace Pint, Rice County TZD Coordinator, Grace.Pint@RiceCountyMN.gov
507-384-6453**

Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: *Is it illegal for a vehicle pulling a trailer to have a ladder or ramp hanging from the side of the trailer?*

Answer: You are able to have ladders or ramps secured to the side of an enclosed trailer as long as you do not exceed the width of 8 feet 6 inches. This is the maximum dimension that may be operated on Minnesota roadways without a special permit. The maximum height is 13 feet 6 inches. If you exceed the height or width, then you would have to apply for an oversize permit.

A few trailer safety tips:

- Make sure the pulling unit of the trailer has the towing capacity to pull the trailer safely.
- Check the trailer tires for proper tire pressure and the conditions of the tires. If the trailer has not been used recently, check the tread and for any cracking on the side walls.
- Make sure you have the proper ball size required for the trailer.
- Be sure the safety chains are connected and all the lights are working properly.
- Adjust your mirrors so you can see behind the trailer when towing it.
- Adjust your trailer brakes according to the load. For example, if you're towing a heavy boat you would need to increase the brake pressure compared to pulling an empty boat trailer.

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

Question: *I've seen the traffic safety information you share on your X account when it comes to dealing with winter weather and slippery roads. Can you write about winter driving safety here for all of us? I'd like for*

you to share some basic winter driving tips. Thank you and be safe.

Answer: While summer months are the deadliest on Minnesota roads for fatal crashes, wintertime leads to the most crashes and poses its own safety risks and hazards. Stay safe while on the road in the winter:

- Avoid unnecessary travel if conditions are too poor.

- Buckle up and make sure child restraints are secured tightly. We recommend you use bulky clothes and blankets on top of the child restraint harness, not beneath, to ensure harness restraints fit properly.

- Drive at speeds that are safe for the road conditions and provide for plenty of travel time.

- Leave plenty of space to stop between vehicles.

- Use extra precautions when driving around snowplows by keeping at least 10 car-lengths behind plows.

- If you start to skid, remain calm, ease foot off the gas and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go.

- If vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply a steady firm pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump ABS brakes.

- Clear snow and ice from vehicle windows, hood, headlights, brake lights and directional signals.

- You must turn on your headlights when it is snowing or sleeting.

- Do not use cruise control on snow, icy or wet roads.

- Equip vehicles with a scraper/brush, small



shovel, jumper cables, tow chain, and a bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction. Blankets, heavy boots, warm clothing and flashlights are also important, as are storing high-energy foods such as chocolate or energy bars.

- Be sure cell phones are charged for long trips, and inform your family or friends of your travel plan and schedule.

- If you get stranded, stay in the vehicle.

- Parents of teen drivers should make sure they experience snow and ice driving in a safe environment, such as an empty parking lot.

- For weather-related road condition information, call 511 or visit www.511mn.org

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)

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CITY OF NERSTRAND, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR
MEETING MINUTES
Dec 9th, 2026
7:00p.m.
221 Main Street, Nerstrand

1. Call to Order/Pledge Allegiance
2. Roll Call: Todd Evavold, Pam Caron and Betty Voge were present, and John Harris and Karla Ingersoll were absent.
3. Approval of Last Month’s Agenda
4. Consent Agenda

(All items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and have been made available to the City Council in advance of the meeting. The items will be enacted in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a council member or citizen requests, in which event the item will be removed from this agenda and considered in normal sequence.)

- Regular Meeting Minutes of Nov 12th, 2025
 - Ordinance Committee- Updates provided by Karla
 - Payment of Claims
- Motion to accept by Betty and seconded by Pam and All approved.

5. Clerk’s Report
- PFML and PERA- During the time an individual is on PFML PERA is not being into. Because of this gap PERA will either give the employee the option of paying in the gap or allow the employee to take the loss. If the employee takes the loss their “portfolio” will lose strength. (This is just summarized and broken down into a very basic description.)
 - Additionally, if a person makes \$3990.00 in the state if Mn no matter how many jobs

- they have, they qualify for this benefit.
- Water Billing Update: We had to send three past due notices out to residents.
 - What are the terms of the lawn mowing contract?
 - Also, I was able to meet up with Karla and show her how to use the website. For increased visibility with residents, she is going to start taking some of the wonderful graphs and figures and start adding them to the website.
 - Karla wants to revamp our bank rec process and our budgeting process. We will work with her to complete this process.
6. New Business
- A. PFML/Leave Policy for the City of Nerstrand- The City of Nerstrand created a leave policy that was reviewed and accepted. A motion to accept this was made by Pam and seconded by Betty and All approved.
- B. Lawn Mowing Contract-Reviewed and identified a few changes but it is ready to send to the paper for posting. Deadline for bids will Feb 1st and reviewed in the February meeting.
- C. Karla’s Budget Visuals for distribution - Karla had submitted visuals to be used to show how the budget is used. Council finds these acceptable and they will be used on the webpage and in communications with residents.
- D. Meetings and Work sessions for 2026- Reviewed by council and no changes to be made.
- E. Review Fee Schedule for 2026- No changes to the current fees and a motion was made by Todd and seconded by Betty and All voted to approve.
- F. Flom increases garbage per contract-

- Final year of contract
7. Old Business
- Doors for City Hall- Proving rather challenging to get a second bid. Received one from one contractor but seeking another and waiting for them to return the proposal.
 - Resolution to use incumbent funds to balance the budget-Reviewed and signed
 - Discussion regarding cannabis ordinance- Tabled
 - Discussion regarding liquor ordinance and permitting- Tabled
8. Reports of Officers
- Public Works Director-MDH letters were sent to residents. Council did have questions in regards to this. The tree grant was unsuccessful but there is still a need for these trees to be removed and a plan will be made to complete this. Winterization has occurred. And Steve is working on an additional grant for chlorine storage.
 - The PW department was SUCCESSFUL in fighting the violation by the Department of Health. They sent a letter announcing the Revocation of the Violation.
- Mayor
 - Fire Department – Joe Johnson
 - Signed the resolution for the increase in the Fire fighters pay.
 - Council Members
 - Zoning Committee-Meeting Minutes Provided by Lu
9. Other Business
10. Adjourn
- Motioned to adjourn by Betty seconded by Pam and All approved.
- Next City Council Meeting is scheduled for January 13th, at Nerstrand City Hall.
Todd Evalvold, City Mayor
LeAnna Anderson-Speiker, City Clerk

City of Dennison
Meeting Minutes
December 4th, 2025

The December Dennison City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Jeff Flaten on Thursday, December 4th, 2025 at 7:00 pm. Present were Councilors Caleb Voight, Heidi Cooke, and Nichole Schloesser, and clerk Jessica Page.

Councilor Schloesser moved to approve the meeting minutes from the November City Council meeting as corrected. Councilor Voight second. Motion passed 4:0.

Councilor Schloesser moved to approve the Treasurer’s report. Councilor Cooke second. Motion passed 4:0.

Sheriff: Deputy Beck: nothing new that he is aware of for the City.

Todd Greseth, County Commissioner, will be arriving later in meeting. *

Old Business/Committee Reports/Building Permits: Sign permit for Gobin Seeds. Councilor Schloesser move to approve the sign permit for Gobin Seeds. Councilor Voight second. Motion passed 4:0.

Councilor Cooke was wondering if other business’ in the City needed sign permit for when they updated the signs on their buildings. Short discussion on whether one was needed. The difference between Gobin Seed putting up all brand new signage where there were not signs there before, vs updating or replacing a sign already in place. Need to review the ordinance further so will review it

next month.’

Under old business, Councilor Schloesser reviewed complaints. Pohl is on schedule to get the last item (tabs) done. Sparrow has everything, just needs to send pictures.

Administrative Issues:

1. Mayor Flaten asked for comments from the folks in attendance if there were any questions on the final levy amount for the City. There were none. Councilor Schloesser move to approve Resolution 12-2025-02, setting the Levy amount at \$200,000. Councilor Voight second. Motion passed 4:0.

2. Councilor Schloesser move to approve the LG220 Application for Exempt Permit for gambling for the Ducks Unlimited event at the Sapphire Event Center and Cocktail Lounge for January 24, 2026. Councilor Cooke second. Motion passed 4:0

3. Councilor Cooke move to approve the LG214 Premises Permit Application for the Dennison Lions Club and the Sapphire Event Room and Cocktail Lounge located at 37592 Goodhue Ave. in Dennison MN. (AGE returned the application from the Lions Club saying it was more than 90 days since it was previously approved so needed to be re-approved.) Councilor Voight second. Motion passed 4:0.

4. Update from the Nerstrand Fire Department by fire chief, Joe Johnson. They are doing a study on the intersection of 9 and 56 as there have been 8-9 calls there this last year. The Fire Department budget is good. The new rescue truck has been delivered. There is a possible SUV donation that could be used 1st out for every medical call from the Dennison location. Mayor Flaten asked about the Grant/fundraising that they had been looking for previously. The funds that had been needed last year have been obtained, but it would be appreciated if the City would like to donate some towards the new vehicle that will be in Dennison. Joe will keep the City appraised of the potential donation and what would be needed for that vehicle. The Department had a donation of radios from a Fire Department in Indianapolis who was getting new radios. Joe stated that it was a donation worth almost \$100,000 (estimated value), and it will greatly help the fire department.

5. Councilor Schloesser move to approve liquor licenses for Cattlemen’s Saloon and Fireside Lounge, providing final requirements are met (insurance and payment). Councilor Voight second. Motion passed 4:0.

6. Councilor Schloesser move to approve the Cigarette Licenses for Dennison Depot and Fireside Lounge for 2026. Mayor Flaten second. Motion passed 4:0.

7. City Cannabis Ordinance and Event Application: Results of public hearing. No one in attendance and no other comments submitted. Councilor Schloesser move to adopt Ordinance 89 “An Ordinance of the City of Dennison to Regulate Cannabis Business” and approve Resolution 12-2025-01, the approval to publish a Summary of Ordinance 89. Councilor Cooke second. Motion passes 4:0.

8. Data Center Forum Event review. Water usage and new hyper scale facilities. Water is filled once and reused. Electricity usage is the bigger issue. Noise is an issue for many folks, but newer facilities have about the same noise level as a refrigerator.

(continued on page 20)

2026 Precinct Caucuses

(continued from page 1)

Precinct caucuses are meetings run by Minnesota’s political parties. They are the first in a series of meetings where parties may endorse candidates, select delegates, and set goals and values (called party platforms). Statewide precinct caucuses take place on a specific date in even years as described above. Contact parties for information about other meetings, including those in odd years.

Each political party runs their caucus meetings a little differently. Check with your political party if you have specific questions. Generally, there are three main activities at a caucus:

- Choose volunteers who will organize political activities in the precinct. This could include maintaining contact lists, holding political meetings, and helping with campaign efforts.
- Discuss issues and ideas for the party to support. You can present an issue or idea for the party to support, called a resolution. If you convince other attendees to support your resolution, it will be taken to the next political convention. Eventually, your resolution could become part of the official party platform.
- Choose delegates who will endorse candidates at future conventions. At future conventions, party delegates will endorse state and federal candidates, including for Governor. Political parties have different ways of choosing delegates at the precinct level caucus—contact your party for more information.

Five state executive offices are up for election in Minnesota in 2026: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Auditor and one United State Senate seat. District 1 United States Congressional representative seat as well as District 19A, 20A and 58A Minnesota state representative seats will be elected on November 3, 2026.

02/03/2026 Dennison & Nerstrand locations

Republican Party
Faribault High School
330 9th Ave SW
Faribault MN 55021

Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party
Faribault Middle School - Cafeteria
704 17th Street SW
Faribault MN 55021

City of Dennison Meeting Minutes December 4th, 2025

(continued from page 19)

Todd Greseth explained that some companies are using NDA's, mostly for land prices.

*Todd Greseth, Goodhue County Commissioner, said the County ended up with 6.5% levy increase. They tried to cut it down, but weren't able to. One good thing to note is that Goodhue County is almost debt free (2% of budget goes to debt). Some of the biggest upcoming needs are for renovating the Government C, and especially the Law Enforcement Center.

9. Discuss Neal Wilson's utility billing for his Rice County Property. The City will resume billing on his Rice County account. Opus has also stopped billing his home without the City asking, so we will need to figure out what was missed for his home. Mayor Flaten move to restore the Rice County property billing. Councilor Schloesser second. Motion passed 4:0.

10. New Zoning Map discussion. Email sent out to the council back in September regarding an inquiry to Goodhue County about this matter. Goodhue County GIS can help with creating a current City of Dennison Zoning Map. Estimated cost of the map request, \$50.00 per hour, would be \$100.00 then. A printed map and a pdf map is part of a completed map request. Councilor Cooke is going to take the lead on that project.

11. Continuing discussion regarding the Sapphire Event Room and Cocktail Lounge about prorating the liquor license for 2026. Motion was passed at the previous monthly meeting to prorate the liquor license for six months until the July meeting. After the city council meeting, Councilor Cooke emailed the city attorney with her questions regarding the City Liquor Ordinance and asked for her interpretation and guidance. Emails from the city attorney forwarded to the council before the December meeting.

There was a bit of discussion regarding this topic. Joe Amy, stated that an onsale liquor license is needed for the charitable gambling for the Lions. Mayor Flaten would like to know if there are instances of event centers, or multiple licenses, are there reduced costs for a license. Joe Amy, of the Sapphire and Fireside, noted that this is a unique situation with common ownership. Other questions in-

cluded how many licenses can be issued in Dennison? If Joe has a half license, does someone else get a half license?

Councilor Cooke move that Sapphire Event Lounge pay the full amount of the liquor license, and to rescind the motion from the previous meeting that "approved the liquor license for 2026 for Fireside DBA The Sapphire Event Center at a 50% rate to have it reviewed at the July meeting". Councilor Schloesser second. Motion passed 4:0.

12.Towing. Updated charges when Raider Automotive/Valley Autohaus is used:

* \$3.50 per mile unloaded, first 5 miles are free.

* \$5.00 per mile loaded, first 5 miles on the way back are free.

* Hook and tow fee is \$100.00

* Daily storage rate is \$75.00 per day, impounded.

* GOA fee (Gone on Arrival). On the scene but Raider Automotive hasn't hooked up to the vehicle or moved it yet. For example, the owner of the vehicle/car comes outside before being towed and moves it. A \$25.00 fee is still charged. Homeowner is responsible.

* Drop fee is \$75.00. Raider Automotive drives to town and actually starts to hook up to the vehicle/car, then the car owner is charged the drop fee.

13.The mayor wanted to thank John Miner for his help this fall in trimming tree limbs and grinding up stumps. At no charge to the city, he cleaned the horse shoe pits and filled in areas affected by the street construction this summer with black dirt and grass seed. He also helped the mayor replace the rope for the flagpole at the city shop/fire station on 11-14-25. The mayor appreciates John going above and beyond for the taxpayers of Dennison.

14.Discussion regarding CDs at the Heritage Bank. Do we continue to roll over the CDs? Clerk and mayor are recommending putting another \$100,000 to \$150,000 into CDs. (For comparison, the saving accounts are at 0.20% interest rate.) Councilor Voight

move to renew the existing CDs, and add three new ones, 2 at three months, 1 at 6 months, for \$50,000 each. Councilor Cooke second. Motion passed 4:0.

15.Street sweeping was completed on 11/20/25 by Charlie Terpstra.

Citizens Issues:

Mayors Issues:

Utilities:

Update from Nate: Well is up and running. Will be doing a discharge soon to finish out the season.

a.Outfall ditch and dredging. The mayor received quotes from Bill Deutsch Excavating to dredge the outfall ditch. For the east and west side of the ditch, going south of the north culvert, approximately 500 feet each side = \$5,700, lump sum. To dredge one side would be \$3,200. Mayor forwarded pictures of the outfall ditch prior to the monthly meeting. The mayor and Bill Deutsch also looked at the culvert which passes under the sewer pond road next to the gated entrance of the sewer ponds. We observed about 2 feet of standing water in the ditch and couldn't view the east side of that culvert opening because of the water. In order to see if there is a problem with the culvert by the gate, the mayor recommends we fix the high water point in the ditch or dredge the entire outfall ditch and get several bids to do that next year or the following year. The mayor notes that future infrastructure improvements to the ponds won't include any grant dollars/loans

to dredge the outfall ditch, so it's our responsibility to maintain that city infrastructure/property.

b.McCarthy Well in town to reinstall the pump, motor and new shaft for the well house on 11/24 and 11/25.

c.Dan Storlie and the mayor flushed the sewer main in the back alley behind City Hall and the Fireside Restaurant on 11/22/25. No issues reported.

d.Arvid Larson home sewer line inspection. Will need to contact them to try to get that done.

Councilor Schloesser moved to pay the bills. Councilor Cooke second. Motion passed 4:0.

Mayor Flaten moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Voight second. Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Next meeting: Regular meeting is Thursday, January 8th at 7:00.

Public Hearing on Ordinance 89 An Ordinance of the City of Dennison to Regulate Cannabis Business

Mayor Jeff Flaten called the Public Hearing to order on December 4th, 2025 at 6:45 pm.

Council members Nichole Schloesser, Heidi Cooke, and Caleb Voight were in attendance, as was clerk Jessica Page. There were no other people present for the public hearing. There were no questions asked, or concerns brought forward. Mayor Flaten adjourned the meeting at 6:59pm.

Township Election Filings 2026

(continued from page 1)

No affidavits of candidacy were filed for supervisor positions in Wells and Wheatland Townships, leaving those races entirely to write-ins.

Every Rice County township except Bridgewater—the only Rice County Township with a five-member board—has one supervisor's seat up for election. Bridgewater and Forest Township each have two openings, though Forest's ballot includes one full term and one partial term. Bridgewater (Seats C and E) and neighboring Webster Township will feature contested supervisor races.

Poll hours vary by township. Check with your local township for voting hours.



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DOWN

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.

1. Separate cream from milk
2. Locust, pl.
3. Seed coat
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