



Dundas Messenger™

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #2
Dennison, MN 55018

Postal Customer
ECRWSS

JANUARY 29, 2026

Volume 20 • Issue 1

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.

(continued on page 16)

2026 Precinct Caucuses

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

Precinct caucuses are meetings run by Minnesota's political parties.

(continued on page 16)

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 sweet-heart. Free will donation.

• **Reminder to clear sidewalks;** Public sidewalks must be clear 24 hours after snowfall, and snow cannot be deposited into the streets.

• **Winter Parking Ban:** The winter parking ban is in effect from October 31st through April 15th, between 2 am and 6:30 am. Parking is not allowed on any city street. Vehicles in violation will be ticketed. Ordinance §71.06.

Do you have an announcement?

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

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

The Dennison Lions Club is planning the

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 16)

2026 Flake Out Festival & Winter Parade for Saturday, February 7th.

The club is holding a raffle in conjunction

Serving Our Hometowns Thanks To Your Support!

We want to Thank You for your continued support of the Dundas Messenger.

(continued on page 8)



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.

(continued on page 3)



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

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 4)

Take a Short Drive
to Delicious



Treat Your
Sweetheart to
The
Fireside!

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.

Parkside General Store
~ Gas & Groceries ~

"The Little Store with More!"



The Hope Creamery
makes butter the old
fashioned way and you
can tell the difference.

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

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.

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."

(continued on page 3)

Area Church Directory

Letting Go of the Old

You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. — Ephesians 4:22-24

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

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

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

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

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

CANVAS CHURCH

404 Schilling Drive, Dundas

Lead Pastor: Jed McGuire • www.canvaschurchmn.com

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

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

LITTLE PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST 2980 130th St. E.

Pastor Penny Bonsell • pastor@littleprairieumc.org

507-663-6150 church phone • 651-503-4279 Cell

9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship; Sunday School & Nursery; Adult Group 8a.m.

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

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

LIFE21 CHURCH 2100 Jefferson Road (just north of Target)

Pastor Brent Bielenberg • 645-7730 life21church.com

10:00a.m. Worship Experience

NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

Pastor Dan Runke • 663-0133 • northfieldefc.org

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

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

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

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

Fellowship time with refreshments between services.

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

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

MAIN STREET MORAVIAN CHURCH 713 Division St., Northfield

Tel: 507-645-7566 • Worship Services at 10:30a.m.

GOSPEL OF LIFE FAMILY CHURCH

"PREACHING JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED"

2010 Jefferson Road, Suite A, Heritage Square

on Hwy. 3, Northfield

admin@gospeloflifechurch.org

www.gospeloflifechurch.org

Sunday 10:30a.m.; Wednesday 6:00p.m.

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



Dundas Messenger

Business & Subscription Renewal: P.O. Box 125, Dennison, MN 55018

PHONE OR TEXT: 507-649-3327 FAX: 507-645-9878

WEBSITE: www.dundasmn.com

For advertising information

e-mail: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

or call 507-649-3327

Published in cooperation with Mainstreet Publishing Minnesota, Inc.
©2026 DundasMessenger. All rights reserved.

THANKS

FOR SHOPPING & DINING

Locally!

If You Are Sad...

(continued from page 2)

I eventually fell asleep. I awoke, and the sadness was still lingering.

I made my way downstairs to let my sweet beagle, Caleb, out to go potty. Sleepy-eyed, I walked back up the stairs and made breakfast for both Caleb and me. She had dog food, and I had over-creamed coffee. I grabbed my journal and started to share my heart with the Lord. I then seized my Bible and read some of the New Testament. As I read the chapters and verses in front of me, the internal sun started to rise again. Revelation brewed that sent the depression out the window. I contin-

ued 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.

OBITUARY

Gary Falkenberg

Gary Falkenberg, 86 of Northfield, passed away on January 11, 2026, at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis.



Gary was born on May 2, 1939, in Northfield to Edward and Evelyn (Floren) Falkenberg. He was raised on the family farm, where he developed a lifelong love for the land and agriculture. He graduated from Northfield High School and joined the Army where he served starting July 17, 1957 and was honorably discharged on July 3, 1959. Gary then went on to answer his first calling in life as a farmer. Gary took great pride in his work raising pigs and dedicated many years to caring for the land and livestock.

In his free time, Gary enjoyed the outdoors. He found great pleasure in hunting and fishing, pursuits that reflected his appreciation for nature and the simple joys of rural life. Gary would find happiness visiting and drinking coffee with his friends in Dundas.

A visitation was held from 4-6 PM, Thursday, January 22, 2026, at Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home. Military honors were held outside the funeral home at 4:30 PM.

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

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

(continued from page 1)

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

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.

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



Do you
need help
with your
toenails?



Registered nurse and certified
foot care nurse will trim your nails
in your home.

Joyful Feet Footcare

Phone: 507-475-1434 (okay to text)

Email: joyfulfeet@yahoo.com

Meyers Named 2025 Outstanding Conservationists for Rice County

(continued from page 1)

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 organizations, 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 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



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

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.

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.



Take the Short Drive to the
Area's Newest Cocktail Lounge

THE
SAPPHIRE
Event Room & Cocktail Lounge

Powered
By
The
Fireside

(Cocktail Lounge Open Friday & Saturday at 4:30 PM)

Enjoy a cocktail before or after dinner in the
area's newest Classic Cocktail Lounge.

- Centrally Located • Holiday Parties • Weddings
- Grooms Dinners • Company Meetings
- Celebrations of Life • Birthday & Anniversary Parties

Spaces for
10-150+ Guests
Private Dining
Cocktail Lounge
Off Site
Catering



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 507-645-9992

Main Street, Dennison • www.firesidelounge.net • firesideloungedennison@gmail.com

Nerstrand Meats & Catering Specialty Meats & Food

Over 100 Years in Business Providing
Homesmoked Bologna, Wieners, Jerky, Homemade Beef Sticks, etc.

NERSTRAND MINNESOTA
1890
MEATS

www.nerstrandmeatsandcatering.com

231 Main Street, Nerstrand, MN • 507-334-5396

Kenrick Ave., Lakeville, MN • 952-236-0600



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 nutritionally 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 popula-



tions 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 Cranberry-bush, 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.

RIVER COUNTRY COOPERATIVE



"Established 1935"

**Fertilizer • Seed
Soil Sampling • Chemicals
Custom Application
Field Scouting
Bulk, LP,
Gas and Diesel Fuel**

Kenyon
507-789-6201

Hastings
800-349-5743

Randolph
800-657-3285

Hampton
800-225-4316

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.fbmn.org. For more information, contact Pam Debele at pam.debele@fbmn.org or 651-768-2111.

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

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.



**FIXED
RIGHT
OR IT'S
FREE!**

**Schedule a check up for your furnace
before cold weather arrives**

Minnesota winters demand a lot from your heating system. Regular maintenance is key to keeping your forced air heating system operating safely and efficiently. Streitz Heating & Cooling offers comprehensive heating maintenance services for homeowners in Dundas, Northfield, and nearby areas, helping prevent breakdowns before they happen.

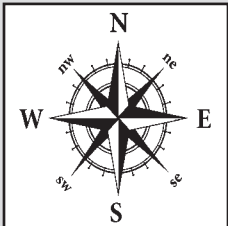
During each tune-up, we clean and inspect your system's critical components, test for safety issues, and fine-tune performance to keep your furnace running at its best. Regular maintenance also helps extend your system's lifespan and ensures you stay protected under your warranty.



708 Schilling Drive N
P.O. Box 128
Dundas, MN 55019
www.streitzheating.com
Phone: (507) 645-4040

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Menards and Lawyers



By Terry Campbell

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Happy New Year everybody.

Tires - Tires Tires

**Community Co-op Faribault
can help you with any tires
you need!**

Passenger, Car or Truck • Semi • Tractors
Large Equipment
Lawn Mowers • Dump Trucks • Skid Loaders
Front End Loaders



When it comes to tires, we have you covered!

**Everyday Low Prices on Tires,
Fuel and More**

When You Stop By Community Co-op!

Proudly Serving You Since 1925

**Community
Co-op**

Proudly Serving You Since 1925

9 Central Avenue
Faribault, MN 55021

(507) 334-8642

**800-COOP OIL
(800-266-7645)**

www.fbocoop.com



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.



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 al-

ways 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.

Serving Our Hometowns Thanks To Your Support!

(continued from page 1)

In the continuing era of online everything, your hometown Messenger newspaper continues with an unwavering goal to bring hometown news to you.

Thanks to local advertisers and your voluntary subscriptions, we are in your mail box each month with your hometown news and information.

Without this support, we would not be here. We hope you continue to see value in the Messenger and will support the paper with your voluntary subscription.

While there are plenty of social media sources and on line sites out there, most don't deliver the hometown news and message like we try to do here.

Every year, many local newspapers are forced out of business, consolidate, or reduce coverage. We have watched this happen many times in recent years in small rural communities..

With our small staff and some volunteers, we understand this challenge first hand here at the Messenger, which is why we publish the Messenger in its monthly format.

Our goal with the Messenger is to help insure our home towns still have a community voice of its own!

This format allows the community to maintain a local paper, and better connect local residents, businesses and the community. We also continue to understand the need for more timely information between issues, so we will continue expanding our digital and online offerings, while maintaining our dedication to our hometowns!

We remain a small family owned business with a goal of supporting our rural communities and businesses. Your voluntary subscription along with our local and area business that advertise on these pages will keep us here for you!

We are proud to continue to offer you this local hometown paper, in your mail box and welcome your comments, suggestions and story ideas. Our future success depends on the support of our local community, and we thank you in advance for your continued support of The Messenger!

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.

Keeping your name in front of your potential customers is an essential part of marketing your business in today's competitive market.

Place your ad in the next issue of The Messenger.

Call Terry at 507-951-7417 or email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

We've Got Your Family's Back

Personalized insurance solutions to protect your family's future and security, no matter what.



www.vsgmi.com

COMMUNITY GROWN
INSURANCE
...you're covered!



Trust in Tomorrow.

Security Agency Kenyon

600 2nd St, Kenyon MN 55946
Phone: 507-789-6366

Email: info@securityinsurancekenyon.com

Keller Agency

305 Main St
Nerstrand MN 55053
Phone: 507-334-6550

Sviggum Agency

133 Main Street
Wanamingo MN 55983
Phone: 507-824-5105
Email: agent@svigguminsurance.com

Northfield Agency

711 Division Street S
Northfield, MN
Phone: 507-645-8861
Email: nfldins@hotmail.com

Migraines and Immunity



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

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

your thinking, mood, and ability to function, with even ordinary stimuli like light or sound becoming unbearable. Researchers are 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 irregular sleep schedules, bright lights, and poor air quality further compound the risk. Women also experience longer, more disabling attacks compared to men, with migraines ranking as the fourth leading cause of disability for women globally. However, women are more proactive in adopting preventive measures which offer hope for better management and relief.

Chiropractic care supports the immune system by improving nerve function, reducing stress hormones (like cortisol), and enhancing circulation, all thanks to its focus on spinal alignment which optimizes communication between the nervous and immune systems, potentially leading to fewer illnesses and faster recovery, though more extensive research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms. Adjustments help clear spinal misalignments (subluxations) that can interfere with nerve signals, allowing immune cells and nutrients to flow better, boosting the body's defenses. How it works: Nervous Sys-

tem Connection: Your spine houses the central nervous system, which directly talks to your immune system; spinal issues can disrupt this communication, weakening your immune response. Increased Immune Cell Activity: Studies suggest chiropractic adjustments can boost the activity of immune cells, like lymphocytes and natural killer cells, helping fight pathogens. Reduced Stress: Chiropractic care can lower cortisol (stress hormone) levels, which typically suppress immunity, allowing your body to respond better to threats. Better Circulation & Lymph Flow: By restoring spinal alignment, adjustments improve blood flow and lymphatic drainage, delivering immune cells and removing toxins more effectively. Potential Benefits: Fewer infections and quicker recovery from respiratory issues. Reduced inflammation, a key factor in many chronic conditions. Overall enhanced ability to fight off viruses and bacteria. Key Research: Studies show increased immunoglobulin production and better outcomes for respiratory infections in patients receiving chiropractic care. Historical data from the 1918 flu pandemic suggested much lower death rates for chiropractic patients compared to conventional care, highlighting strong innate healing. In essence, by keeping the spine aligned, chiropractic care aims to optimize the body's communication network, creating an environment where the immune system can work at its best.

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

FLAKE OUT FESTIVAL & WINTER PARADE SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2026

HOT DISH COOK OFF

12:00PM

Hosted by
Dennison
Lions Club



\$5.00/Entry

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

12:00 PM Bring Entry to City Hall

12:30 PM-2:00 PM Tasting/Voting

2:30 PM Hot Dish Winner Announced (1st & 2nd Place Payout)

Call or text Diane at 612-532-0268

Be In The FLAKE OUT Festival

WINTER PARADE
Saturday, February 7
6:30 PM

Main Street, Dennison

*Enter your float or parade entry
and you could win!*

**For more
information
or to pre-register
call or text:
Diane at
612-532-0268**

**\$200⁰⁰
PRIZE
FOR BEST
FLOAT!**



Take a Short Drive
to Delicious

Steaks - Seafood - Burgers
Sandwiches - Salads
Full Bar - Off Sale

Join Us for Lunch or Dinner

Daily Features

WEDNESDAY
Enjoy Our Jumbo" Wings Specials!
BBQ Rib Dinner - 1/2 or Full Rack (begins at 4:00p.m.)

THURSDAY
\$3.50 All Taps, Domestic Bottles, Rail Drinks!
Taco Specials! Fajita Specials! Margarita Special
FINALLY FRIDAY All You Can Eat Fish Dinner

SATURDAY
Hand Battered Jumbo Shrimp or Slow Roasted Prime Rib

SUNDAY
Enjoy Our Sunday Breakfast Beginning at 9a.m.
and Sunday Supper Features

ENJOY MICHELLE'S FAMOUS DESSERTS!

Open Wednesday-Thursday 11:00am-8:30pm
Friday-Saturday 11:00am-9:30pm
Sunday 9:00am-8:00pm (Bar Open Later)

37540 Goodhue Ave., Dennison, MN • 507-645-9992 • www.firesidelounge.net

CLOSING EARLY
FOR THE BIG GAME
SUNDAY, FEB. 8
Kitchen Closing
at 3PM
Bar Closing at 4PM

FLAKE OUT

SAVE THE DATE! Festival SAVE THE DATE!

& WINTER PARADE

DENNISON, MN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2026

8:30 AM Euchre at Fireside on the Patio, 100% Payout
Bring partner if possible, not required. \$20 team entry. Questions contact Jen at 507-649-0602.

11:00 AM Medallion Hunt - \$150 Cash Prize (Meet at City Hall for Rules and Map)

11:30 AM Complimentary Hot Chocolate Bar at City Hall

12:00 PM HOT DISH COOKOFF
\$5.00/entry. Tasters will pay \$5.00 to taste all entries/vote.
12:00 PM Bring Entry to City Hall • 12:30 PM-2:00 PM Tasting/Voting
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
\$30/packet, 10 games, designer purses and \$150 gift card packages

6:30 PM 12th Annual Denni Dazzle Parade \$200.00 Prize for Best Float!
Hosted by the Dennison Lions. Call or text Diane at 612-532-0268

6:45 PM Red Neck Pool "Round Two" at Cattlemen's Saloon

7:00 PM LIVE MUSIC Bryan Anderson at Cattlemen's Saloon

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

Flake Out Festival Raffle Saturday, February 7

Buy a Raffle Ticket from any Lions Member, Fireside Lounge, Dennison Depot Gas Station, Cattlemen's Saloon or Heritage Bank in Dennison for \$5.00 for your chance to win!

Grand Prize \$500.00 Cash!
2nd Prize \$250 Cash • 3rd Prize \$100 Cash

SPONSORED BY DENNISON LIONS CLUB CHARITABLE GAMBLING PERMIT #2762. MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

We're local, qualified and ready to help you achieve your dreams!

Talk with a lender today!

Our Services Include:

Personal Banking: Ag Lending, Personal Checking, Ready Reserve, Personal Savings, iHelp Student Loans, Safe Deposit Boxes, Personal Loans, Mortgages, Construction Loans

Business Banking: Business Checking, Business Savings, Business Financing, Night Deposit, Teleserv (24 Hr. Phone Banking), Internet Banking, Direct Deposit, ACH Processing

LAKE COUNTRY
COMMUNITY BANK

www.lccbank.com

Nerstrand Lobby Hours: 9am-2pm M-F
313 Main Street • (507) 333-2500
- ATM AVAILABLE AT PARKSIDE -

Member
FDIC

slumberland

FURNITURE

a family-owned company

Slumberland is pleased to be part of the Dundas community!



HOME



SLEEP



DÉCOR

FREE SHIPPING


SPECIAL FINANCING AVAILABLE
\$\$\$
SEE STORE FOR DETAILS

PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE


VISIT US TODAY!
404 SCHILLING DRIVE • DUNDAS

*Available in all markets we serve (use our online "check delivery" tool to verify your zip code). Some restrictions may apply in areas at the far limits of our service areas. Please contact your local store or chat with us online to learn more.



Kineticco® home water systems

YOUR HOME IS BETTER

WITH KINETICO WATER

Kineticco Premier Series® Water Softeners

Some brands may claim to have the most efficient water softener, but Kineticco has the data to prove it.



Haferman
WATER CONDITIONING, INC.

507.225.0685
hwcwater.com

Haferman Water is an Authorized, Independent Kineticco Dealer

water softeners • water filters
drinking water systems

FREE
WATER ANALYSIS & ESTIMATE

for new customers only
water analysis includes:
hardness, iron, ph, tds, and chlorine

WHY CHOOSE US?

At ProBuilt Construction, we were founded on the belief that homeowners deserve better - better quality, better service, and a better experience.

Following a FREE AND THOROUGH EVALUATION, our expert project managers and craftsmen will bring your vision to life, enhancing your home's curb appeal.

SERVICES



ROOFING

Whether your roof has aged over time or suffered damage from Minnesota's weather, the ProBuilt team will deliver dependable, professional roofing solutions tailored to your home and budget.



SIDING

ProBuilt offers comprehensive siding solutions from evaluation to installation, enhancing your home's protection, value, and curb appeal.



WINDOWS

As a Marvin Windows Certified installer, we've been selected for our commitment to excellence and ability to deliver a smooth, high-quality experience.



GUTTERS

We provide expert gutter installation to keep your home protected from water damage. Preserve your home's foundation, landscaping, and exterior for years to come.



FIRE & WATER RECONSTRUCTION

Let's return your damaged house to your beloved home. When fire or water damage hits your home, everything stops. The disruption is immediate, overwhelming, and deeply personal. We understand the impact on you and your family, and we're ready to help you move forward, one step at a time. Whether repairing fire-damaged structures or addressing water intrusion, we create a custom plan to return your property to its pre-loss condition with lasting results.



SOLAR

We're proud to offer clean, efficient solar solutions in partnership with Powerfully Green Solar, a local installer with over 15 years of experience.



PROUDLY SERVING GOODHUE, DODGE, RICE, DAKOTA, OLMSTED, STEELE AND WABASHA COUNTIES

CONTACT US!

📞 507-200-1545

✉ info@probuiltnm.com 🌐 www.probuiltnm.com

1359 BLUFF ST, DUNDAS, MN 55019
BC807868





STEVE KING
612-698-9547



JEFF AMY
507-363-3652



TIGE WALKER
507-323-0319

Healthy Weight



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist



With the New Year starting, many will take this time to set some goals for the year ahead. A frequently mentioned goal is to improve health, reduce weight, and make better

lifestyle choices. Current records at the Center for Disease Control state that more than 70% of the adult population is overweight or obese. So what is a healthy weight and what are the best principles for maintaining or achieving a healthy weight?

A healthy weight may be evaluated by body mass index (BMI) or by waist to height ratio.

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

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

- 1) Eat three meals each day. Each meal should include a protein source.
- 2) Keep a 5-hour break between meals. No snacks. Allow the digestion to complete from one meal before another meal is consumed.

3) No meal should be longer than 60 minutes.

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

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

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

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

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

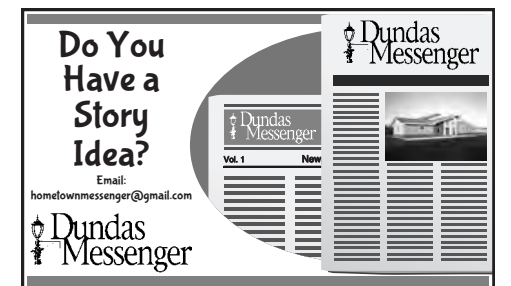
Perhaps applying these principles seems like too much of a change, but let's make this more fun with a challenge. You can receive support and direction establishing these practices in your own life by taking on the Healthy Weight Challenge, a 60-day challenge from January 17 – March 17 to improve lifestyle habits and see real change. Local businesses are sponsoring the challenge with gift certificates, educational videos, and on-line support. You can find out more information about the Healthy Weight Challenge by scanning the QR code or contacting me by email.

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



portion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

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



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.

DON'T LET HEARING PROBLEMS SLOW YOU DOWN!



Call today for your **FREE,**
No Pressure, No Obligation Consultation

Jayne Bongers Owner/MN, Certified

Advantage Care
Hearing Center

507-412-9813

3 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

100 S. 4th St.
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

1575 20th St. NW
Faribault, MN 55021

1605 Main St.
Zumbrota, MN 55992

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.

Our advertisers
appreciate your
business!

Tell them you saw
their ad in the
Dundas Messenger



Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com



K Y M N 95.1 F M 1080 AM

For something different

Tim McNiff Weekday Mornings
www.kymnradio.net

FREELANCE WRITERS WANTED

Duties include covering feature and human interest stories and upcoming events in the Messenger coverage area.

Will also work with content production for on-line distribution.

Pay negotiable and based on experience.

Qualified applicants will possess:

- Ability to work with deadlines
- Great people skills
- Knowledge of/access to a computer
- Enjoy small town atmosphere
- The ability to work some night hours as needed for editorial

Email resume to:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

or call Terry at 507-951-7417



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

By Rice County

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 directed 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

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.

Live Music

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

BRYAN ANDERSON

COME CHECK OUT RED NECK POOL DURING FLAKE OUT!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

"A BEAUTIFUL MESS"

ACOUSTIC DUO

Try Miss Marie's Homemade Flatbreads or Randy's Pizza's on your next visit!

CATTLEMEN'S SALOON

MAIN STREET, DENNISON • 507-782-9753

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

8:30 a.m.

at Fireside on the Patio

Bring partner if possible, not required.

Questions? Contact Jen at 507-649-0602.

\$20⁰⁰ Team Entry

100% Payout

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 press 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)

MISSING PERSON

S I N C E J U L Y 6 , 2 0 2 4

NICOLE "NIKKI" ANDERSON

5 FOOT 10 INCHES

135 LBS

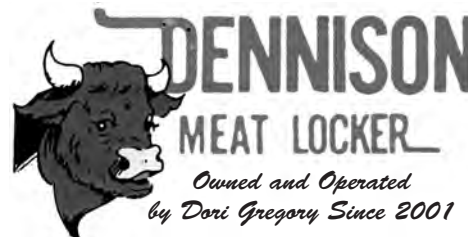
Last seen on July 6, 2024 wearing a grey sweatshirt and camouflage pants in the City of Randolph.

ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON



REWARD UP TO
\$50,000

The Dakota County Sheriff's Office continues to actively investigate the disappearance of Nikki and is seeking any information leading to her whereabouts. You may provide information anonymously at the link above or call 651-564-9097



Dennison Meat Locker
Provides Quality Custom
Meat Processing Services
to the Community

**WE ALSO OFFER RETAIL SAUSAGE, STEAKS, HAMBURGER
AND OTHER MEAT PRODUCTS**

- Pork • Beef • Poultry • Lamb • Venison
- Whole Roasted Hogs • Elk • Homemade Smoked Sausage

109 Farm Road, Dennison, MN • Monday-Friday 8a.m.-5p.m.; Saturday 8a.m.-2p.m.
www.dennisonmeatlocker.com • dennisonmeats@gmail.com • 507-645-8734

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 na-

tional 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 playoff 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@smi-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.

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.

2026 Precinct Caucuses

(continued from page 1)

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 States 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 Dundas locations

Republican Party
Northfield High School
1400 Division St S
Northfield MN 55057

Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party
Northfield Middle School - Room 161
2200 Division Street South
Northfield MN 55057

Rice County Tax Levy up 8.5%

(continued from page 1)

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.

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

Email us at:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com



AREA DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

 A Delicious Gift for You

\$25⁰⁰

Gift Certificate

Send us a review of your visit to your favorite restaurant in the Diners Guide and enter to win a **\$25.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE!**

E-mail to: messengerdrawing@gmail.com, put Diners Guide in subject line.

NEW! GRAB N GO LUNCHES

YUM!

Don't Let Your Hurry Come Before Your Hunger!

TOREY'S
RESTAURANTS & BAR
TOREYS.NET

PICK UP ONE OF OUR DELICIOUS SALADS OR WRAPS!

LOCATED NEAR THE BACK ENTRANCE OF THE RESTAURANT AT 208 N. CEDAR, OWATONNA

Available Weekdays 11am-1pm

507-455-9260
MON-TUES-THURS 11AM-9PM
FRIDAY 11AM-9PM
SAT 3:00PM-9:00PM • SUN CLOSED

CHECK OUT OUR MANY NEW LUNCH & DINNER MENU ITEMS!

BOOK YOUR FALL & WINTER EVENTS! Banquet Hall, Seating Up to 300

SPECIAL DINNER \$100 PER COUPLE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

THE THREE COURSE DINNER

FIRST COURSE - A CHOICE OF SOUP OR SALAD
Lobster Bisque Or Ensalada Andina

SECOND COURSE - SURF & TURF
5oz Filet Mignon topped with garlic butter, 5oz lobster tail served with sauteed vegetables, mashed potato, and creamy cognac sauce.

DESSERT (Tres Leches Cake)
Homemade cake soaked with a blend of three milks, topped with whipped cream, caramel, chocolate, and crisp coconut.

CALL US TODAY FOR RESERVATIONS 507 623 1001

Cahill Bistro & Bar
Latin American Fusion

Breakfast served weekends 9am to 2pm • Happy Hour Sun.-Thurs. 3 to 5:30pm
Mon.-Thurs. 10am - 9pm; Fri.-Sun. 10am - 10pm
632 2nd street Kenyon, MN • 507-623-1001 • www.cahillbistrobar.com

\$10.00 Daily Lunch Specials!

NOW OPEN MONDAYS

 112 Main Street Wanamingo, MN
Bar Hours:
Monday-Thursday 11am-10pm
Friday-Saturday 11am-1am; Sunday 11am-9pm

Kitchen Hours:
Monday-Saturday 11am-9pm
Sunday 11am-7m

We wish everyone
Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!!

New Food Specials & Drink Specials
Coming in January!

SAKER'S
SPORTS BAR & GRILL

401 8th Street SE, Kasson, MN • 507-340-2002
11:00am-9:00pm Tues-Thurs; 11:00am-10:00pm Fri & Sat
Closed Sunday & Monday
but available for private parties

PLAZA MORENA
CAMPESTRE GRILL

DAILY SPECIALS!
Noon Buffet 11am to 2pm

5% OFF MEAL PURCHASE WITH THIS AD

ORDER ONLINE!
WWW.DODGEPLAZAMORENA.COM
Sunday-Thursday 11:00am to 9:00pm
Friday-Saturday 11:00am to 10:00pm
411 W. Highway St. Dodge Center
507-374-9555

TAMMY'S PLACE
Restaurant & Bar
Kasson, MN



**DRINKS • APPETIZERS • SANDWICHES
BURGERS • SALADS • WRAPS • DESSERTS**

DAILY SPECIALS

Closed Mon.; Tues-Thurs 11am-9pm; Fri-Sat 11am-10pm; Sun 11am-8pm
111 West Main Street, Kasson, MN
507-634-3133

DAILY Specials

- Soups
- Salads
- Sandwiches
- Fresh Ground Coffee
- Call In Order
- Groups Welcome!

LUNCH LADIES
Kenyon, MN
507-623-0259

Monday-Friday
10:30am to 7pm
(later during sporting events)
Saturday 10:30am to 5pm
Closed Sundays

701 2nd St
Kenyon

BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



**BURGERS, ESPRESSO
HOTDISH, PIZZA
ICE CREAM**

TRY OUR DAILY SPECIALS!

ANGIE'S
EST. 1972
Restaurant

635 2nd Street, Kenyon
Hours:
Tues.-Sat. 7am to 8pm; Sunday 8am to 6:30pm
Closed Mondays
507-789-1100

[facebook](https://www.facebook.com/angiesrestaurant)

CLIP & SAVE

East Wind 東風 Buffet

10% OFF
With this ad
Cannot be used with other offers.

MENU OR BUFFET

Hours: Monday: 11am-9pm; Tuesday: Closed; Wed.-Sun.: 11am-9pm
507-451-9666

1015 W. Frontage Rd., Suite 103, Owatonna • South of Lowe's • Dine In Only • Expires March 31, 2026

Center Restaurant
FAMILY
507-633-3333
Thank You

30 Main Street
Dodge Center, MN 55927

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Generous portions,
friendly service and delicious
homestyle cooking
anytime!

TRY OUR DAILY SPECIALS!



BREAKFAST SERVED ALL DAY!

Hours: Sunday-Thursday 7am-3pm; Friday-Saturday 7am-8pm
507-633-3333

[facebook](https://www.facebook.com/centerrestaurant)

PLAZA MORENA
CAMPESTRE GRILL

DINING ROOM
Open 7 Days a Week 11:00am-10:00pm

5% OFF MEAL PURCHASE

Expires March 31, 2026. Does not include alcohol.
Not valid with any other offer.

160 26th St NE, Owatonna • 507-413-0819
www.plazamorena.com



Business Link

• Bellechester • Castle Rock • Claremont • Dennison • Dodge Center •
 • Dundas • Goodhue • Hampton • Kenyon • Mazeppa • Nerstrand •
 • Randolph • Wanamingo • West Concord • Zumbro Falls •

DODGE COUNTY LAND TITLE COMPANY

* Over 40 Years Experience
 * Residential
 * Farm
 * Commercial

Use Dodge County Land Title Company for your next real estate transaction or loan closing.

38 W Main Street, Dodge Center, MN
 Ph: 507-633-6355
 Email: dclandtitle@kmtel.com

TRAXLER
 POWER & EQUIPMENT

Specializing in
 Farm Equipment Repair
 Authorized **UNIK** Dealer
 DOT Inspections/Welding

507-789-6321

NAPA AUTO & TRUCK PARTS

Kenyon NAPA Store
507-789-5254
502 Huseth Street, Kenyon

LODERMEIER'S
 STEEL & WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS

- Machinery Storage
- Commercial
- Livestock Buildings
- Garages

38241 County 6 Blvd, Goodhue
651-923-4441
 Lodermeiers.net

ROVLAND
 ALL SEASONS COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Tires
- Wheel alignments
- Steering & suspension
- Brake repair
- A/C maintenance
- Batteries

641 S Main Wanamingo
507-824-2710

BASIC HANDGUN SAFETY CLASS
 For Those With No Handgun Experience

- Learn handgun safety fundamentals
- Individual classes available
- Learn to shoot safely & properly
- You can fire a variety of handguns

NRA Instructor with 24 Years Experience
CALL TO SET UP YOUR CLASS TIME, SCHEDULED AT YOUR CONVENIENCE
507-951-7417

R&M STEEL

Full Line of Square Tubes, Channels, Angle, Flat & Pipes

Shearing, Cutting and Bending

61154 190th St Dodge Center
507-374-2524

All Your Printing & Sign Needs

D&S Banner, Sign & Print

All Your Printing and Sign Needs
 In House Graphic Design
 Large Format Graphics for Vehicles and Trailers
 Installation services

113 Forest Street, Kenyon, MN 55946
507-789-4611
 dandsbannersignandprint.com

L&D Recycling, Inc.
 Scrap Iron & Metals

Steel, Farm Machinery, Car Bodies, Aluminum, Copper, Batteries, Appliances, E-Scrap

55976 State Hwy. 56, West Concord
 Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm
 June-October
 Open Saturdays 9:00 to 11:30am
507-527-2408
 www.lidrecycling.com

MANTORVILLE SQUARE
 ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

Largest Antique Store in Dodge County

416 N. Mantorville Ave, Mantorville
 507-635-5554
 Facebook@MantorvilleSquareAntiques

SIFT (SAVE IT FROM TRASH)
THRIFT STORE

26 RED WING AVE Kenyon, MN

LIKE US ON **facebook**

Hours: Thur & Fri 12 to 8pm,
 Saturday 9am to 5pm

DOUG AND MARY KLATT
Call us today!
507.259.2386

Mantorville Chocolate Shoppe

420 Main St.
 Mantorville, MN 55955
 507-635-5814

OVER 100 CHOCOLATE DELICACIES HANDMADE IN STORE!

UNIQUE CANDIES SWEETEST PLACE IN TOWN

Tues-Sat 11:30-5:00; Sun 12:30-5:00

Appliance Repair

All makes & models.
 On-site service.
 Vent cleaning.
 Home or Commercial.

~Serving SE Minnesota~

Washers, Dryers, Dishwashers, Refrigerators, Stoves, Ranges, Ice Makers & More!

Dustin Sletten
507-676-4406

Tatge Jewelry

Awards By Tatge
 Celebrating 50 Years of Business in 2025

625 2nd Street, Kenyon, MN
 (507) 789-6522

fw

Flat Water Futures, LLC
 Grain and Livestock Hedging

Todd Ryan
651-764-5590
 tryan@flatwaterfutures.com

Goodhue, MN
 Branch Office

SINCE 1839
Schaeffer's
 SPECIALIZED LUBRICANTS

AGROECOPOWER

Bruce Freerksen
(507) 273-9110
 brucewithschaefferoil@gmail.com
 West Concord, MN

FAHNING & ASSOCIATES LLC.

BETH S. FAHNING-HANGGL
 AGENT #46786

Licensed Life And Health Insurance Agent

35 West Main Street
 Dodge Center, MN 55927
(507) 374-6342

Life • LTCI • Employee Benefits
 Health Insurance • MNsure Certified Agency

Traxler Law PLLC
 traxlerlaw.com

Ann Traxler
 Attorney

PRACTICE AREAS

- Wills, Trusts, & Estates
- Farm and Business Transition Planning
- General Practice
- Probate

502 Huseth St. Ste. C
 Kenyon, MN 55945
 507-405-0420
 ann@traxlerlaw.com

PLACE YOUR AD ON THIS PAGE

Call Terry at
507-951-7417
 or
 Email:
 hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Let's talk fence

Alpacas, Apples, Beef Cattle, Deer, Dairy Cattle, Elk, Emus, Gardens, Goats, Grapes, Gorillas, Horses, Lions, Llamas, Ostriches, Ponies, Raccoons, Sheep, Trout, Tigers, Yak

K FENCE

928 Chestnut St NE, Mazeppa MN 55956
 Phone 507-753-2943 • www.kfence.com
Free Estimates • Free Catalogs

ADA ENTERPRISES, INC.

Protect Your Investment - Raise Healthier Calves!

Durable. Hygienic. Proven.
 Satisfied customers in the US, Canada, and Mexico

- ✓ Raised, plastic-coated steel stalls and flooring
- ✓ Keeps calves clean, dry, and comfortable
- ✓ Options include closed or vented side panels, headlocks, and head dividers

See photos, videos, and testimonials: facebook.com/ADAEnterprises

641-324-1093
 www.adaent.net

305 Enterprise Drive
 Northwood, Iowa, USA

COUNTRY GOODS

LARGEST GIFT STORE IN SO. MN!

ACROSS FREEWAY FROM CABELA'S
INSPIRATIONAL ITEMS
HOME DECOR
LAWN DECORATIONS
UNIQUE GIFT IDEAS

OPEN MONDAY-SATURDAY 9am-5:30pm; SUNDAY NOON-4pm
 4515 NW 22nd Ave, Owatonna • View/Like us on Facebook
507-451-5661

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8			9	10	11	12
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
19						20			21	22				
			23				24							
25	26	27		28		29			30		31	32	33	34
35			36			37			38		39			
40						41				42		43		
44				45		46					47			
48						49		50			51		52	
					53		54			55		56		
57	58	59	60					61					62	63
64														
65						66	67			68				
69						70				71				
72						73				74				



THEME: ON THE FARM
ACROSS

1. Laura Ingalls' notebook
6. Boozer
9. Biblical pronoun
13. Sacred text, to some
14. "Fat chance!"
15. Afrikaners' ancestors
16. Cake spread
17. Chowd down
18. Clear the blackboard
19. *Barn chore
21. *John Deere, e.g.
23. Nirvana's "Come as You ____"
24. Spasm of pain
25. Broadband access overseer, acr.
28. Mark for omission
30. Recessed space
35. "____ and the Real Girl," movie
37. "Shoot!"
39. E in baseball box score
40. Oil org.
41. Intelligent
43. A mixture or medley
44. Children's respiratory disease
46. Foggy view?
47. Politicians, for short
48. In a sympathetic manner
50. Ski hill ride
52. Maiden name indicator
53. Bald eagle's nest
55. Repeated Latin dance step
57. *a.k.a. harvester
61. *Opposite of pasture
65. *Common varieties are yellow, red and white
66. Tall tale
68. Smooth, in manner
69. Audience's approval
70. "____ at ease"
71. Stomach sore
72. Caribou or moose
73. Soldier's bed
74. Harsh

DOWN

1. *Separate cream from milk
2. Locus, pl.
3. Seed coat
4. Form of Japanese poetry
5. Encircle
6. Deep pile carpet
7. *Cereal grass
8. Sorority letter
9. Cleopatra's necklace
10. Thermostat option
11. Guesstimate phrase (2 words)
12. Olympic cast-out, e.g.
15. Charles Darwin's vessel
20. Must-haves
22. Ribonucleic acid, acr.
24. Fine
25. *Group of chickens
26. Birthplace of Caprese
27. Oedipus' successor
29. *Baby sheep
31. * ____ rotation
32. Acrylic fiber
33. Bridal veil fabric
34. With a jagged margin
36. Gulf War missile
38. *Pasture-raised chicken's morsel
42. Vanish without this?
45. Lamentation
49. Japanese capital
51. Rh in Rh disease
53. 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.

5	4	7	1	2	9	8	6	3
3	8	2	4	6	7	1	9	5
6	1	9	8	5	3	2	4	7
8	5	1	3	7	4	9	2	6
2	9	3	6	8	5	7	1	4
4	7	6	9	1	2	5	3	8
7	2	4	5	9	6	3	8	1
9	6	8	7	3	1	4	5	2
1	3	5	2	4	8	6	7	9

SUDOKU ANSWERS

S	L	A	T	E		S	O	T											
K	O	R	A	N		H	A	H							B	O	E	R	S
I	C	I	N	G		A	T	E							E	R	A	S	E
M	I	L	K	I	N	G		T	R	A	C	T	O	R					
F	C	C	D	E	L	E		A	L	C	O	V	E						
L	A	R	S			D	A	N	G		E	R	R	O	R				
O	P	E	C			S	M	A	R	T		O	L	I	O				
C	R	O	U	P			B	L	U	R					P	O	L	S	
K	I	N	D	L	Y		T	B	A	R			N	E					
							A	E	R	Y		C	H	A					
C	O	M	B	I	N	E		F	E	E	D	L	O	T					
E	N	I	O	N			L	I	E		S	U	A	V	E				
D	E	C	L	A	T		I	L	L		U	L	C	E	R				
D	E	E	R				C	O	T					S	T	E	R	N	

We Want Your News!

Got News?
Help Us Get the Word Out!
News, Photos, Events...

Email your news to:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com

SUDOKU

**Call today and receive a
FREE SHOWER PACKAGE
PLUS \$1600 OFF**

SAFE STEP
WALK-IN TUB **1-855-576-5653**

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-in Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

5				2			6	3
	8				7			
6			8		3	2		7
		1			4			
		3				7		
			9			5		
7		4	5		6			1
			7				5	
1	3			4				9

© StatePoint Media

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



**Online Banking • Mobile Banking • Online Bill Pay
Cardhub • E-statements • Digital Wallets
Mobile Deposits • Smart Deposit ATM**



**HERITAGE
— B A N K —**

www.heritagebankmn.com

NORTHFIELD: 1520 Clinton Lane 507-645-6736

DENNISON: 37470 1st Ave. Ct. 507-645-5929

WEST CONCORD: 181 Main Street 507-527-2236



**Member
FDIC**