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MARCH 5, 2026

Volume 20 • Issue 3

March Food Drive for Zumbro Valley Food Shelf

By Reverend Colleen Hoeft

The Zumbro Valley Food Shelf is serving more and more people each day and as you know, money doesn't go as far as it used to.

Our Food Bank has limited resources, which makes it difficult for us to get food as well.



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Benefit for Milton in Zumbro Falls



Michael and Milton Koop

A benefit in honor for Michael Koop will be held this weekend, Saturday March 7th starting at 11am at the Zumbro Falls VFW.

Michael was a friend and neighbor to many and worked for Central Livestock since he was fifteen years old. He had recently started his own business, Koop Livestock. Micheal passed away from a heart attack on December 17, 2025.

The benefit is for his son, Milton, and all proceeds will be held in a trust for the young man.

The benefit will include a meal starting at 11am as well as raffles and a silent auction.

You may drop off donations at the Buck Wild Bar & Grill in Zumbro Falls prior to the event.

The Farm that Came to Town A Guy Could

By Jayne Bredlau

We've all known a lifelong farmer who moves to town after turning over the farm to the kids, or sells it to an eager young person ready to live off the land. No more early morning livestock feedings, thawing frozen water troughs, no racing the sun and season to get everything planted, harvested and stored away for another winter. No more vegetable garden that needs weeding (so much weeding!), harvesting and canning. A rest has been well-earned.

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Announcements

- Celebrate Recovery meetings every Sunday night at 5pm at South Troy Church, 56817 Highway 63 Zumbro Falls.

- The Zumbro Valley Food Shelf is located at South Troy Wesleyan Church, 56817 Hwy 63, Zumbro Falls, MN. The hours are Tuesdays 11:00am-5:00pm and Thursdays 11:00am-6:00pm. Donations and volunteers are greatly appreciated. For more information contact Pastor Colleen Hoeft at 507-259-1442 or choeft52@gmail.com.

- Three Rivers Community Action is currently accepting new Meals On Wheels clients in the communities of Bellechester, Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Goodhue, Pine Island, Kenyon, Wabasha and Wanamingo. Receive a hot meal delivered to your home by a volunteer at lunch time up to 5 days per week. To qualify you must be 60 or older, live within city limits, have limited mobility and/or are unable to prepare nutritious meals. The suggested donation is \$5-\$10 per meal. Please contact Three Rivers at 507-316-0610 or email: oas@threeriverscap.org

Breakfast and Bingo Hosted by ZM FFA Alumni



Courtesy of ZM FFA

On Saturday, February 28th, ZM FFA Alumni hosted breakfast at ZM High School Cafeteria. Bingo Daddy was there calling bingo and told his best jokes, too!

Funds raised from this event help support our local FFA chapter by providing scholarships and help offset costs to attend leadership events.

Zumbrota-Mazeppa Vocational Construction Class Open House



Step inside two newly constructed homes built by the talented students of the ZM Construction Class! This is a great opportunity to see quality craftsmanship, learn about the building process, and explore upcoming homeownership options.

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A Time to Hope



By Pastor Colleen Hoeft

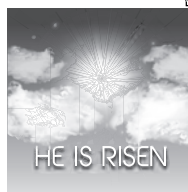
The phrase "all hope is gone" conveys a sense of despair and hopelessness. It serves as a stark declaration that the current state of affairs is beyond repair, yet it also implies a call to action, suggesting that when there's nothing left to lose, people might finally be willing to fight for change. What happens when our hopes are dashed? We may lose the feeling of trust in ourselves or in others. Do we become cynics and pessimists? Do we begin to believe that all is lost? Do we blame ourselves? What keeps us from becoming the cynic that H.L. Mencken described: "A man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin."

The dictionary defines 'hope' as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. The somewhat more archaic definition describes 'hope' as a feeling of trust. Shakespeare put it well: "Eating the air on promise of supply." Romans 8:24-25, "For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

On any given day, so many of us are doing our best to navigate real stressors, real uncertainties, and real complexities in our workplaces, homes, and communities. Add to that the struggles, division and anger in the world right now it would seem that the future is very bleak, and it becomes easy to see how we can get swept up in the doom-and-gloom and feel as though hope is out of reach.

Hope is a time-tested strategy for navigating uncertainty, adversity, and everyday life.

EASTER AT SOUTH TROY



Good Friday Meditation and Communion
April 3, 5-7pm

April 5: Easter Sunday

Easter Breakfast at 9:30 am -

STC Youth will be cooking and serving!

Easter Celebration Service 10:30am

We will be focusing on the true meaning of Easter.

There will be activities for the children as well as great music and teaching for the entire family.

South Troy Church

56817 Highway 63 Zumbro Falls, MN

History has shown us that hope isn't just an idea; it's only found through faith in Jesus Christ that hope has changed lives, started movements, and sustained humanity through its darkest chapters.

Hope doesn't eliminate conflict or hardship, but it does create space for perspective, courage, compassion, and possibility. It allows us to say: "This is not OK, but somehow, I am OK in this moment, and I trust that better days are ahead."

Even when so much feels wrong in the world, we keep showing up. We find a way to persist and move forward, even when it's hard.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians we come upon this idea/word hope. Confident hope—meaning our hope is in something we can trust—hope in God and His Son Jesus Christ.

South Troy Church wants to invite children age 4 years old-5th grade to join us.

First Wednesday VBS
The first Wednesday of each month from 6-7:30pm.

This is a monthly Vacation Bible School format filled with God's word, some crafts, fun and a meal.

January-April the Armor of God:

• March 4: Gospel of Peace

• April 1: Shield of Faith

• May 6: Helmet of Salvation and Sword of the Spirit



And more than wishful thinking, Hope is a certainty that we will receive that which we are trusting. Ephesians 1:18, "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance."

Paul is praying that our hearts will be flooded with light, so that we can understand the confident hope to everyone that follows Jesus. And the confident hope that we will receive a glorious inheritance. Actually, we will experience being God's inheritance. When we get to heaven- we are His inheritance- He is waiting for you to arrive. He longs for you to be with Him so that He can enjoy you face to face!

(continued on page 3)

Celebrate Recovery

A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

A Christian 12 Step Program

Join us on Sundays at South Troy Church

We meet Sundays at 5 pm
South Troy Wesleyan Church
56817 Highway 63 Zumbro Falls, MN

Schedule for meetings:

- Supper at 5:00 pm
- Large group meeting: 5:45 - 6:30 pm
- Small group meeting: 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find healing for your hurts, hang-ups and habits.

Begin your journey today!

Questions?

Contact Pastor Colleen Hoeft at celebrate@celebraterecovery.southtroy.org or 507.259.1442. Visit southtroywesleyan.org for more information.



Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls Messenger

Business & Subscription Office:

P.O. Box 125 Dennison, MN 55018

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SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

TRINITY LINCOLN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Dan Reich
507-753-2576 • 35933 Cty. Rd. 17, Lake City, MN
Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.

ST. PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

222 1st Ave S., Mazeppa
507-843-3885
Wednesday Mass 6:00 p.m.; Sunday Mass 10:00 a.m.

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Hall 507-753-2424, West Albany
Sunday Mass 8:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mass 7:00 p.m.

ST. JOHNS (BEAR VALLEY) LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Dan Reich • 507-753-2576
Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH (POTSDAM)

Pastor Dean Zemple
7134 Highway 246 NE, Elgin, MN
Sunday worship at 9:15 a.m.
(Bible class at 8:15 during the school year)

LANDS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor: David Krinke, Email: pastordavid@landslutheran.org
Pastor: Nikki Rockne, Email: pastornikki@landslutheran.org
P O Box 225/16640 Hwy 60 Blvd, Zumbrota, MN (507) 732-5482

Web Site: www.landslutheran.org
Facebook: Lands Lutheran Church
Sunday services 8:30 am Contemporary Worship
10:30 am Traditional Worship

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY Sausages

John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."
— Luke 3:10-11

The man had been invited in, and he had become part of the church. He lived on a pension and struggled with a mental illness. He had been the CEO of a large company in Toronto until his health had changed. His life had become drastically different, but he lived with a large and generous heart. He wanted to contribute, and one day he walked into the church to join others.

He said, "I have eight sausages, still frozen. I don't like sausages, but I would like to share them with others. Can we make two pots of soup; one with sausage, and one without?" We assured him that we could do that. He enjoyed the soup that had no sausage, and he was pleased that others enjoyed the soup with sausage.

He knew that meals were harder to find at the end of the month. He had learned that a pension check goes only so far. He knew that if he shared with others, it would be good news for them. His sharing also inspired others. It was the start of our church's Stone Soup meal, and many people have contributed to it. He was glad to find a place of peace that could help him serve others.

Stone Soup is now a community event where food, clothes, and friendship are shared on two Thursdays each month. Many are invited so that the good news can be shared. This has led many people to walk through the door of a church who might not have otherwise done so. You are invited too!

Dear God, help us to be generous and kind even if our life turns upside down. Help us to use what you have given us to bless others. Amen.

Email your church announcements, schedule, etc. to the Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls Messenger at: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Dave Neil
180 2nd Ave NE, Mazeppa • 843-4962
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.

ZUMBRO COMMUNITY CHURCH

Dave Mohler
58354 Cty. Rd. 7, Zumbro Falls
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evening 7:00 p.m.

SOUTH TROY WESLEYAN CHURCH

Pastor Colleen Hoeft
56187 Hwy. 63, Zumbro Falls
www.southtroywesleyan.org • 507-259-1442
Sunday 10:30a.m.
Sunday 5:00p.m. Celebrate Recovery - 5pm- meal, 5:45 large group and 6:30 small groups.
Wednesday Kids and Teen worship at 6pm - meal at 6, followed by worship and small groups.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Dean Zemple
80 3rd Ave. S., Hammond, MN
Sunday worship at 11:00 a.m.
(Bible class at 12 noon during the school year)

ST. JOHN'S MAZEPPA

Pastor Al Horn • 507-843-5302
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

20 - 3rd St. SW, Oronoco, MN
507-367-4711 • www.oronocochurch.org
10:00a.m. Worship

March Food Drive for Zumbro Valley Food Shelf

(continued from page 1)



We are challenging area churches and groups to be a part of our March food drive- to fill the shelves at Zumbro Valley Food Shelf. We thought some friendly competition would be a fun way to get more people involved!

If your church or group gets the largest amount of food- you'll receive a trophy, your picture in the paper and the satisfaction of helping feed over 300 people a month at your local, rural food shelf. Time for breakfast!!

Feel free to call with any questions: 507 259 1442.

Breakfast options:

Cereal, (single family size- 8-16 oz)
Muffin mixes
Shelf stable milk
Peanut butter
Jelly
Pancake mix
Pancake syrup
Pop tarts
Oatmeal
Canned fruit or other



They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

I hope you would consider joining us over the month of March.

If you are interested, please let us know.

At the end of the month, we'll weigh the food from each church and celebrate the winning amount!

Do You Have an Announcement?

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Breakfast at Mazeppa Methodist Church

**Saturday, March 14
6:30a.m.- 10:30a.m.**

*Pancakes, Eggs, Toast, Sausage
and Lots of Treats!*



**Free Will
Donation**

Arlis Alma Brinkman

Arlis Alma Brinkman, 85, of Lake City, died on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at the Lake City Care Center.



Arlis was born on September 26, 1940 in Lake City to John and Alma (Klein) Hinck. She attended country schools and later went to Goodhue High School where she graduated from in 1958. She was a life-long member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Belvidere where she was baptized and confirmed. On November 3, 1962, she married Ralph Brinkman at St. Peter's Lutheran Church Belvidere. They bought the farm she grew up on and continued to operate the farm for many years. Arlis wore many different hats at the farm, from housework to helping with the animals. They enjoyed playing cards and going to Polka Dances. She liked it when Ralph would hook up the horses to the wagon and the whole family would go

for a wagon ride. Before her stroke in 2012, Arlis loved to visit with people and talk with her circle of friends on the telephone keeping up with all that was happening. More than anything she loved spending time with her family.

Arlis is survived by her daughters, Terri (Dana) Ryan of Goodhue and June (Kevin Liffri) Brinkman of Lake City; grandson, Kurt (Cheri) Brinkman of Goodhue; great-grandchildren, Kendra Brinkman, Lincoln and Lane Brinkman, Kyla Possehl; and nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ralph; grandson, Andrew Brinkman; parents; sister, Lois Brinkman.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Thursday, February 12, 2026 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church Belvidere. Reverend Steve Frenz officiated. Visitation was 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at the Mahn Family Funeral Home, Anderson Peterson Chapel in Lake City, and for one hour prior to the funeral on Thursday at the church. Burial took place at the church cemetery. Online memorials can be left for the family at www.mahnfamilyfuneralhome.com

A Time to Hope

(continued from page 2)

How amazing is that!!! Not only do you get your inheritance He will receive His. You are not just 'waiting' for heaven- God is waiting for you! He longs for you to be home with Him. Jesus said in John 14:2-3 says, "There is more than enough room in my Father's home.[If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." He is actually preparing a place for His inheritance. You are His inheritance, you are His portion, His prize, His joy! From the book, "Who God says you are, "You are not just going to Heaven—you are part of what makes Heaven, Heaven for God. You are His inheritance. And He can't wait to receive you!" Wayne Kinde. That's powerful, that's our confident hope. Our hope is built on His promises for His people.

When Christians know God better and better, they are assured of the reality of heaven and reassured of their destiny.

Hope is a choice. It inspires us to dream big, set goals, and take meaningful action. It is a radical practice that keeps us well in a world that often isn't. To live hope-filled is to believe that a brighter future is possible for us, for our children, for our communities, and for the world, and that we have a role in shaping it.

Celebrate Recovery gives us an Acrostic for the word HOPE

Higher Power: Recognizing Jesus Christ as our true Higher Power who can help us overcome our struggles.

Openness to Change: Being willing to allow God to change us and our circumstances.

Power to Change: Acknowledging that we cannot change on our own and that we need God's strength to transform our lives.

Expect to Change: Having faith that change is possible through God's grace and power

When we surrender and recognize that we need Jesus power in our lives- we are free! You and I can have hope- no matter how dark the situation- because our God has risen from the grave! Our God has a plan for you!! Our God can help you overcome any struggle and give you the power to change. And as you receive that power- don't just sit on it and say- what a good boy/girl am I! Instead change those things that God is called out in your life, change and surrender the attitude that brings you defeat. Obey the God of the cross. Walk with Him and your Hope will return.

That same power that raised Jesus from the dead LIVES IN YOU!!! You are filled with His power to live with hope and a future!

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Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls
Messenger

The Farm that Came to Town A Guy Could



By Jayne Bredlau
(continued from page 1)

Except, the farm never leaves the heart of the farmer. The knowledge, love and legacy are crucial to spur the next generation of farmers to greatness. The saying applies, “necessity is the mother of invention.” I am convinced that farmers are the original “mothers” of invention.

My Dad, who wasn’t a farmer but he was clever, would say, “A guy could....” and then share his latest idea to create, fix or solve a challenge. A guy (or gal!) could put a screw and washer here, flywheel there, pound posts,

hammer boards, frame up or mark out the exact details for the thing-a-ma-jig. To make the work, work. To get-er-done.

Hi – I’m Jayne, owner of The Greensted Grocery store in Zumbrota. In 2018 my husband, Dean, and I started a small “urban farm” growing microgreens in our garage. No, we’d never heard of microgreens; we had no plans to start up a farm business. We had no investors, tools, infrastructure, nothing. Not even a shovel. We didn’t know a darn thing about what we were doing. We bought some soil, seeds and plastic growing flats. We planted the seeds, you know, trying out all of our YouTube best tips, tricks and how-tos. They grew! They were delicious. But we had so much to learn.

We bootstrapped everything. We tried and failed. And succeeded. We took risks, asked questions, dug deep into all of our mental, physical and spiritual reserves. We cried, laughed, got mad and glad. We showed up at Farmers Markets, took opportunity and knocked on doors. In the end, we created a registered trademarked brand – The Greensted®. Under the brand we had five microgreen products, packaged, labeled, barcoded and ready for retail sales. By 2021 our microgreens were offered in 50+ grocery and co-op stores. We set up large scale production, harvesting, packaging and distributing 200+ pounds (1000+ packages) of microgreens per week. Like farming the production schedule was rigorous, planting and harvesting our



field of dreams every week. There was no wiggle room. No vacations. No “off the clock” time.

Then we learned vegetable gardening (we had to buy a shovel first) and offered produce share boxes. Soon after we opened our locally sourced grocery store, The Greensted Grocery, in July of 2021. Turns out three enterprises were kind of a lot, though.

In October of 2025 we had the opportunity to move our “farm to town.” We created a new brand, The Greensted Fresh-n-Local® - a name that suits the vision of bringing the best in regional, wholesome, clean and authentic foods to our community. It is great

being part of the buzz and vibe of downtown Z-town. Our farm products (dairy, meat, eggs, produce) come from local farmers. Packaged goods are sourced from small businesses throughout Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. The mission: Your hometown source for all things local.

A guy and gal could, so we did. What’s your story?

I look forward to sharing great stories behind the products in our store, in future The Farm that Came to Town columns.

The Greensted Grocery
224 S Main Street, Zumbrota, MN
thegreensted.com

Minnesota FFA Foundation Wants to Hear Your Story Planning for the 100th anniversary celebration is underway

PLAINVIEW, Minn. — The Minnesota FFA Foundation – which supports the state’s FFA organization through scholarships, teacher preparation, youth leadership, state convention and other special projects – is kicking off planning for Minnesota FFA’s 100th anniversary celebration in 2029. And it needs your help.



As part of the celebration, the Foundation is gathering unique FFA stories from across the state that could potentially be shared on a larger platform such as in videos, books or recorded for historical reference. These are stories that honor great FFA moments, influential people, important events and special memories that have shaped the legacy of the youth program. Please use this form to submit your unique FFA story and share photos.

“We are excited to commemorate this historical milestone through storytelling and reflecting on the positive impact FFA has had on people, agriculture, businesses and communities across the state for the past 100 years,” said Val Aarsvold, executive director of the Minnesota FFA Foundation. “Even though we are still three years away from the 100th anniversary year, we are starting to plan now in order to make sure we accurately share the impact this organization has made during its first 100 years so we can continue even stronger in the future.”

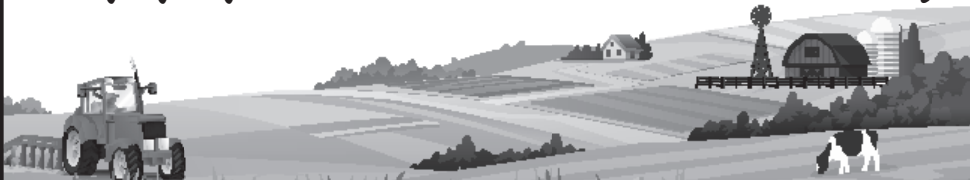
To learn more about Minnesota FFA’s 100th anniversary celebration, visit MNFFA100.org.

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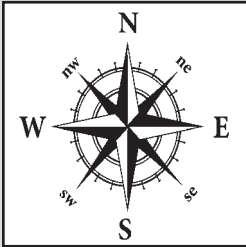
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

A Polaris in Florida



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 had a love affair with horsepower. If it had an engine, I was intrigued by it. My job as a young kid was to mow lawn on the farm. I was too young to drive a big tractor yet, so I spent hours on a garden tractor. I loved the sound of a motor running, what a great combination, the rumble and the fragrance of engine oil and fuel. Hasn't changed much over the last sixty years, just a different variation of the internal combustion engine.

This winter we vacationed in Florida, and spent time at Cocoa Beach. A certain restaurant on the beach, Longboards Tiki Beach Grill was our favorite. We sat outside on the deck by the ocean. The first day we were going to watch a space launch, since Cape Canaveral is just a few miles away and we would have a ring side seat of the blast off. It seems launches are scheduled regularly and scrubbed almost as often.

As we left the restaurant, we noticed a row of Polaris Slingshots lined up outside. My first thought was perhaps a club had stopped for lunch, but my wife noticed they were for rent. Now it was getting more interesting. A Polaris Slingshot is the result of mating the front end of a sports car with the rear of a motorcycle. They are made in Huntsville, Alabama. With nothing more exciting to do, we decided to rent one and head down the Florida beach on state Highway A1A. It took a couple minutes to scan the card and initial the waiver, and away we went. The sales guy gave us a four-digit code to start it and seemed more concerned we wouldn't remember the code than that we would make it back. I wanted the fun, so I requested one with a manual transmission.

It looked fast and mean. I was already comparing it against my favorite sports car. It had no doors and was a total open air experience. A 1,700 pound vehicle with a 2 liter four cylinder engine generating 204 horsepower at 7,500 rpm. That is 8 pounds per hp. My Corvette has a 5.7 liter engine developing 350 horsepower at 5,200 rpm. A ratio of 9.5



pound per hp. They both go from zero to 60 mph in five seconds and consume about 25 mpg. This little Slingshot has a 12.5 to 1 compression ratio though, requiring 91 or higher octane fuel.

Time for the rubber to hit the road. I found that the Slingshot had better traction with one tire than the Chevy with two. As I ran through the gears all I could get was a squeak and it wasn't the rear tire breaking with the pavement. It was the rear drive belt slipping. Definitely impressive traction, probably due to the weight distribution. The Slingshot cruised at 65 mph turning 2,500 rpm and redlined at 8,000 rpm, but there was no way I was pushing that flimsy thing anywhere near that

point. No danger, I discovered because the engine has a cutout when it reaches 125 mph.

It had a terrific stereo system that drowned out the scream of the engine. Ashley cranked it up as we blasted down the Atlantic sea coast highway. You get quite the feeling of speed when you are basically sitting on and watching the pavement go past. There is not much of a windshield either. I was surprised that it seemed very stable and had solid traction. Fun to drive but no danger of one being on my wish list. I prefer the V-8 over a four banger. Still, I would do it again. Nothing beats the sunshine and fresh ocean air on a warm day in Florida.

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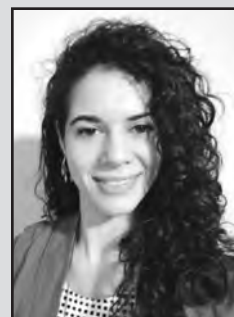
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A Minnesotan: Goats



By RosaLin Alcoser

High on the hills lives a lonely goat. Well maybe, I am not sure exactly how lonely the hill goats are. My sister, however, does believe that everyone has at least one good story about an encounter that they have had with a goat.

Our goat encounter story happened when the neighbor's new pet goat got loose and ended up on our parents front porch when we were children. Not knowing who's goat it was we put the dog in the house and the goat in the dog's fenced-in yard, thinking that whoever owned the goat would come looking for it, which they did. This

arrangement drove our dog nuts, and the goat would only stop bleeding if my sister sat outside next to it. Causing her to spend the whole day sitting outside with said goat.

One of my favorite goat stories I have heard was back when I lived in the Ozark region of Southern Missouri. I heard it from one of my mother's high school friends out in the Jefferson City area. Their house is built into the side of a hill. Making the top of the hill and the roof of the house is about on the same level as the roof, which had a skylight.

One day they heard something going "clomp! Clomp!" on the top of their roof. Naturally they went outside to see what was making the clomping sound. Low and behold what did they see out there, but a goat was walking on top of their roof. Right up there by their skylight.

In the end, the goat was removed from the roof, after as I am told getting to close to the skylight for comfort.

My sister sticks to her claim that everyone has at least one story about an encounter with a goat. If you have not had an encounter with a goat that warrants a story, there is still time. You just have not had that goat story-worthy experience yet. And if you never have one, then you are not spending enough time seeking out goats.

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Farm Girl Chatter The Most Wonderful Time of Year... No Not Christmas, Calving Season!

By McKell Lemmerman

The most wonderful time of year is finally approaching — and no, it doesn't come wrapped in ribbon or lit by a Christmas tree. For me, the real holiday is calving season. While some farmers are already deep in it and others won't begin until April or May, the feeling is universal: anticipation mixed with exhaustion, humor tangled with responsibility, and a quiet sense that something meaningful is about to unfold. It's the season when sleep becomes negotiable, coffee becomes essential, and your social circle narrows to a barn full of cows who have absolutely no respect for your bedtime.

Calving season has a way of reminding you who is truly running the schedule — and it isn't you. You can check a cow ten times with nothing happening, convince yourself it's safe to rest, and return twenty minutes later to find a calf already on the ground. Somehow they always seem to choose the coldest, crappiest, or darkest hours of the night to begin. There you are, half-awake in chore boots, stained jeans, and an old ratty sweatshirt that has seen better days. You step outside to cold air that fills your lungs and wakes you faster than an energy drink. Yet under the moonlight and barn lights, the exhaustion feels secondary to the purpose of you playing tug-o-war to the barn. Calving season is not gentle. It tests patience, endurance, and emotional resilience. You experience the highs of healthy deliveries and the heartbreak when outcomes aren't perfect. Agriculture teaches you quickly that life is precious and unpredictable. Those challenges also deepen your respect for the animals in your care and the responsibility you carry as their owner. Every healthy calf on the ground represents months of preparation, late-night checks, and unwavering commitment.

During this season, you become many roles at once: caretaker, problem solver, night watch, and occasionally your cows' unofficial OB-GYN doctor. Each trip to the barn carries suspense. Some nights are peaceful; others demand quick thinking and steady hands. When a delivery stalls, time stretches thin. You have to move the mom to the chute to work as her OB doctor. You find the feet, wrap the chains, your breath fogs in the air while you work carefully, aware that your actions matter. Then the thud... a calf finally arrives, wiggly and drawing that first determined breath. The biggest sigh of relief washes over you in a way that words can't quite hold. You stand there in bedding and silence, heart pounding, grateful for the fragile miracle in front of you that you just helped. Although a cow that can have her own calf is the biggest blessing, there is something that really touches your soul when you are able to give assistance to a live calf.

Then comes the moment that feels almost sacred. A newborn calf, still slick with life, lifts its head for the first time. A first-time mother circles, confused yet instinctively protective, nudging her calf toward its feet. Watching those shaky legs attempt their first stand feels like witnessing resilience in its purest form. Under the soft hum of a barn light, steam rises from warm bodies into the cold air, and the world narrows to this quiet exchange of life and care. In those moments, it's impossible not to feel the presence of something greater — a reminder of creation unfolding exactly as it was meant to. The barn becomes a chapel of sorts, straw beneath your boots and breath hanging like incense, where gratitude comes naturally and prayers feel as simple as whispering, thank you for this life.

Calving season carries humor right alongside its difficulty. There's always the cow who insists on doing the exact opposite of what you expect, the calf that runs everywhere except where you need it to go, or the realization that you've been talking to livestock like coworkers because they're the only ones awake with you. You laugh at the absurdity — muddy knees, frozen fingers, hair doing whatever it wants — because humor is part of surviving the season. The cows don't judge, and somehow that makes the long nights lighter.

Yet woven through the laughter is something deeply emotional. There are moments of heartbreak that sit quietly in your chest, reminding you how fragile life is. When the calf is stillborn and you hear those low



sounding moos call out from mom. It is almost like she is begging for her innocent baby to awake and nurse, but there was never a call back to her. In those times, faith becomes steady ground. You do what you can with the skills you've been given, then trust the rest to God. The successes — every healthy calf standing, every mother calmly licking her newborn — feel like small blessings placed gently in your hands.

As the season unfolds, the barn becomes its own world. Mornings arrive in pale pastel yellow, blue and green light with frost sparkling like glass and little steam rolls curling upward from warm breath. You begin measuring time not by clocks but by arrivals — who calved overnight, who's close, who needs watching, who is left. The rhythm feels ancient and grinding, echoing cycles of life that existed long before you and will continue long after.

Through the exhaustion and wonder, you find spiritual reflection woven into ordinary tasks. Standing in the quiet before dawn, listening to a calf nurse for the first time, you feel a profound humility. Life is beginning right in front of you — messy, imperfect, miraculous. It's a reminder that care is a calling, stewardship is a privilege, and every breath is a gift. In these moments, faith doesn't feel distant or abstract; it feels present in warm straw, steady hands, and the fragile strength of a newborn finding its footing.

By the time the season slows, you carry more than fatigue. You carry pride in the lives you helped bring into the world, lessons in patience and adaptability. You have a re-

newed appreciation for the work that sustains both animals and people. Calving season isn't just a task — it's an experience that grounds you, humbles you, and reminds you why you chose this life in the first place.

Despite the sleepless nights, stubborn cows, and endless barn checks; you find yourself looking forward to doing it all again. Calving season isn't just work. It is the unforgettable privilege of witnessing life begin — one wobbly, determined calf at a time.

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Vine Haven Hardware officially opened in Goodhue on March 2nd with a Grand Opening event coming soon. Store hours are Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, 8 AM- 4 PM; Wednesday 8 AM-3 PM and Saturday 9 AM-Noon.

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GOODHUE, MN

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WHEAT TRAIL FESTIVAL

Historical Happenings

Compiled by
Helen Reiland

THE MAZEPPA JOURNAL, Editor and Publisher: Barbara and Reider Tommeraas
FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1956
Mazeppa School Consolidated

After five years of planning and extremely hard work on the part of Supt. F.G. Eimmerman, the board of education and citizens' groups, the Mazeppa public school is consolidated!

Word was received just as The Journal was going to press Thursday morning by John Webster, clerk, for Dean M. Schweickhard, commissioner of education---and this is one of the few times the editors were glad to "hold the presses."

Mr. Schweickhard's letter read as follows;

This is to acknowledge receipt of the resolution adopted by the school board of Joint Independent School district No. 141-50.

The district now has an area of 58 sections and an assessed valuation of \$813,086. There will be an elementary enrollment o 195 pupils in grades 1-6 and a secondary enrollment of 139 pupils in grades 7-12.

Biggest Event In Local History Readied

Much has been heard in recent weeks of Plowville, to be held on five farms north of Mazeppa, Sept. 14-15. But just what will mean a crowd of 15,000 people, at least---at the matches on the Clarence Arendt, Neil Arendt, Florian Reding, Peter Perrotti and Donald Darcy.

Parking facilities will have to be provided,

To police the event, these groups have been called on; sheriff's office at Wabasha; state highway patrol; Rochester & Wabasha National Guard. Rochester Red Cross with a mobile unit and first aid station at the site.

It means the preparation of mountains of food by various church and civic groups—including Bellechester and Mazeppa Catholic Aids, the Zumbro Falls Methodist Aid, Mazeppa American Legion auxiliary. Pity the purchasing committee---who don't want to run short of food, but who won't wake in the night with nightmares of ordering too much.

As Harold Severson, publicity chairman stated, "For two days next month, this town will be the agricultural capital of Minnesota". It's a friendly little town with a group of businessmen who believe in promoting worthwhile events. Last year Mazeppans celebrated their town's hundredth anniversary with a gala two day celebration. Earlier this summer they put on a dairy festival that attracted thousands of visitors.

And in the words of Mr. Sand: "We're not saying this deal will put Mazeppa on the map. Mazeppa already is on the map. However, a great many people who had never heard of our town will get a chance to what Mazeppa is like. We think it's one of the finest small towns in the state."

Along The Side

It sounds most interesting—and the likes of which won't be seen here for a good many years---what a project it's been this week trying to move in just one of the rural school houses(with one still to go.) Such a roundabout route had to be taken; telephone and light wires taken down and the truck breaking down...the bridge on the south end of town received a new coat of pain from the county recently.

**Peter Perrotti Family Preparing Headquarters
for Plowville '56**



Here is the Peter Perrotti family, who have been preparing their farm as headquarters for Plowville '56. From left to right, standing are Mr. Perrotti, sons Donald and Cletus. Seated are Mrs. Perrotti and daughter, Mary. Photo courtesy of Rochester Post Bulletin

Celebrating the 100th Day of School



More excitement from our 100th day of school! Students in Ignite enjoyed celebrating the 100th Day by constructing the number 100, building towers with 100 cups, creating domino chain reactions with 100 dominos, and more! We also explored the Winter Olympics, and designed model ice rinks and athletes. *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*

22nd Annual
Zumborta - Mazeppa

EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EXPO!

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Primary Book Bingo

Mrs. Duden's class was the first class to win our Primary Book Bingo. Thanks to the Zumbrota Education Foundation for their support of this project, every student received a new book to take home last week.

Courtesy of Z-M Schools

Congratulations, Tanner!



Tanner is a 2026 National Merit Award Scholarship Finalist *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*



Sophomores Participate in Honor Choir



Congratulations to Henry Li and Christian Ersland. These two sophomores were selected this past November to participate in the Minnesota American Choral Directors Association State 9th and 10th Grade Honor Choir. Their concert was held on Saturday, February 14th at Prior Lake High School. *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*



Students Get Real-World Look at the Mechanics Trade



Zumbrota-Mazeppa Advanced Power students had the opportunity to work with Steve and Dustin from Lodermeier's Equipment. We would like to give a huge thanks to Lodermeier's for giving our students a real-world look at the mechanics trade!

Courtesy of Z-M Schools

Zumbrota-Mazeppa Vocational Construction Class Open House

(continued from page 1)

Saturday, March 7, 2026 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
600 Golfview Ave, Zumbrota • 540 Golfview Ave, Zumbrota
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Just Enough Snow

By Beth Brekke

Minnesota has a long history with snowmobiles. Some of that history was on display during the annual Goodhue-Bellechester Railriders snowmobile show February 7th.

44 Sleds lined the street south of the Corner Bar while owners and spectators enjoyed the show and indoor program.

Referred to as “The Grandfather of Snowmobiling”, Edgar Hetten founded both Polaris Industries and Polar Manufacturing (later re-named Arctic Enterprises and Arctic Cat) in

Minnesota. He designed sleds at each company, focusing on developing snowmobiles for commercial and recreational use and could reach speeds of 25 mph. The Goodhue show included examples of both companies early 1960’s models owned by Nick Novak of Mazeppa.

Another rare and distinctive entry was a 1964 Trailmaker snowmobile manufactured by the

Abe Mathews Engineering Company based in Hibbing. This specialized all-terrain vehicle featured a Kohler 8-13hp engine, a unique track with an internal octagon drive system, and pneumatic tires. The Trailmaker earned its owner, Mike Wilson of Red Wing the trophies for best 1970 and older sled (7 in class), Best of Show/People’s Choice (also received \$50), and Most Off The Wall (\$10). The Off The Wall winner must be able to drive the sled legally on the trail although Wilson did not participate in the ride.

The show was held just in time to create a custom trail with the snow that remained be-



Early models of Arctic Cat and Polaris snowmobiles on display at the annual Goodhue-Bellechester Railriders show.

tween a few days of warm weather before and after the cold show day. Steve VanDeusen and Jonathan Luhman talked to landowners, getting permission to modify and groom the trail for a 15-mile ride after the show. 26 sleds took part in the ride described as “pretty smooth and mostly snow, with a little ice, a little dirt, but awesome!”.

The Corner Bar provided food for the event and many sponsors supplied prizes for the raffle. A 50/50 raffle awarded \$205.00 to Treyben Kehren.

For a complete list of sponsors, winners and more pictures, see the Goodhue-Bellechester Railriders Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064591093438>



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Essential Exercise



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

Why is exercise important? There are thousands of online sources and books describing how to get in shape and how to get fit. For many the goal of building muscle may not be motivating, so what other reasons are there for regular exercise and what is the minimum amount of exercise required?

Your body is designed for movement. Every part of your body benefits from regular movement throughout the day. As modern lifestyle increasingly promotes sitting in one place for long periods of time, the body functions begin to have a harder time working properly. Daily movement benefits bone health, liver health, and the body's ability to get rid of toxins.

As the body ages, bone strength will be directly related to the amount of strain and use placed upon the bones. If there is minimal movement or pressure placed on the bones, the cells that build bone material will not be stimulated to reinforce the bone structure and make it stronger. Generally, the strongest bones are measured in twenty-year-old individuals who are coming to the end of the growth stage and have experienced some of the most active years of life. But healthy bones can be maintained throughout your entire life with a healthy food plan and regular exercise. In her book, *Healthy Bones, Healthy You*, Lara Pizzorno states, "At age 72, I have the bone density of a thirty-year old!" Lara describes exercises that build bones safely. These exercises provide the regular stimulation needed to keep the cells active that maintain bone density.

An increasing health challenge across

America over the last four decades has been the rise in fatty liver disease, specifically non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. This health challenge may go unnoticed since you cannot see or feel the difference initially. According to the American Diabetes Association about 38% of Americans have a fatty liver and up to 70% of individuals with diabetes have a fatty liver. In 2019, the Journal for the American Medical Association reported that a fatty liver is becoming one of the most common liver disorders in children.

A fatty liver develops when fat begins to be stored in the liver. When fat builds up in the liver, the liver cells are not able to function properly, fatigue increases, blood sugar levels increase, cholesterol levels increase, and health begins to decline.

Daily exercise can be an effective way to reduce and eliminate fat build up in the liver. The Journal of Sport and Health Science published a report in January 2026 showing a dose response to the amount of exercise and reduction of fatty liver. The study presented the minimal amount of movement to reduce fat build up in the liver was 25 minutes of brisk walking at least 5 days a week. A moderate level of movement was 30 minutes of walking or aerobic exercise 5 days a week. The maximum level of movement to provide any benefit for liver health was 45 minutes 5 days a week. Movement can include aerobic exercise, cardiovascular exercise, and resistance exercises. More than 45 minutes each day did not provide any additional benefit to liver health.

Daily movement will also benefit the ability of the body to detoxify and remove toxin

buildup. The body has an amazing drainage system known as the lymphatic system. The lymph vessels in the human body are small vessels that absorb the excess water and fluids that come out from the blood vessels. These lymph vessels act like drain tiles returning the excess fluid to the heart for recirculation. Lymph vessels have no pump and no muscle to move the fluid along the pathway. Lymph tubes are dependent upon body movement to cause the fluid to move from one part of the body to the next part of the body. When a person sits for long periods of time, or is unable to move due to illness, the lymph fluid can build up resulting in swelling tissue and inflammation.

In order to reduce inflammation and improve overall health, daily movement is a necessity. Identify those moving activities that you enjoy. A daily walk, bicycle ride, aero-

bic exercise, pickleball, rebounder, or vibration plate, are just a few ideas that are among the popular choices available to you. Set a SMART goal for yourself and see what progress you notice. A SMART goal is:

S – Specific
M – Measurable
A – Achievable
R – Relevant
T – Time Bound

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

Change starts in your community: The Minnesotans behind the Speaking of Cannabis campaign

Recently, you may have noticed messages about Speaking of Cannabis online, in stores and around your community.

Much like alcohol, cannabis is now legal for adults, but that doesn't mean it's always safe. Using it during a time when the brain is actively growing can have harmful and long-term effects on things like memory, coordination, concentration and mental health. This is why the Speaking of Cannabis campaign was created: to support parents, caregivers, mentors and other trusted adults to understand and talk to the youth in their communities about the risks of cannabis use.

The Speaking of Cannabis campaign came to Southeast Minnesota because of a group effort by public health staff. A subgroup from Fillmore, Goodhue, Olmsted and Winona County is leading the effort, in partnership with Dodge, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Rice, Steele, and Wabasha County.

"Public health staff reviewed existing campaigns and picked Speaking of Cannabis. They talked to local adults to guide revisions and create new messages, recommended display locations, provided their county logos, and granted Meta access so O'Rourke Media Group could run Facebook ads across all 11 counties," said Ruth Greenslade, MPP, Public Health Supervisor, Goodhue County Health and Human Services.

Speaking of Cannabis started in Northeast Minnesota. It was originally created last year by public health staff from Carlton, Cook, Lake and St. Louis Counties and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa's Human Services Division, with support from a Minnesota Department of Health Infrastructure Grant.

The campaign's website and original materials were created by the Duluth-based Sek Design Studio, who helped develop a look and tone for the campaign that is friendly, informative and non-judgmental.

PlaceBased, a Minneapolis-based media company specializing in out-of-home advertisements, placed displays, posters, and window clings in community locations in both Northeast Minnesota and Southeast Minnesota.

You can find messages from Speaking of Cannabis in your community, online and throughout the region. This activity is made possible by a grant from the Cannabis & Substance Use Prevention program of the Minnesota Department of Health's Health Improvement Bureau. For more information, visit www.speakingofcannabis.org.

If you would like to connect with our Wabasha County Cannabis and Substance Misuse Prevention Collaborative, please reach out to Tina Moen, Wabasha County Coordinator at tmoen@co.wabasha.mn.us.



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Is Brain Rot Real? Blueberries help Circulation!



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

Short-form video platforms have reshaped how we engage with digital content, training our brains to prioritize speed and novelty over depth and focus. This shift has led to noticeable changes in attention spans, making it harder to stay on task or enjoy quiet moments without distraction. The term "brain rot" has gained popularity to describe this phenome-

non, not because it exaggerates the issue, but because it captures the lived experience of many. The constant stimulation from endless feeds and autoplay features strains our ability to focus, regulate impulses, and manage stress, leaving us mentally fatigued and less productive.

Research confirms that heavy use of short-form video platforms weakens attention and self-control. A meta-analysis of 71 studies involving nearly 100,000 participants found that higher usage consistently correlated with poorer cognitive performance, particularly in attention and impulse regulation. These effects are not tied to intelligence or personality but are a result of the brain adapting to an environment of constant novelty and rapid rewards. Interestingly, while focus and self-control suffer, self-esteem and body image remain largely unaffected. The design of these platforms, rather than the content itself, drives these cognitive challenges by overloading attention systems and reinforcing habits of quick gratification.

Younger users, especially adolescents, are more vulnerable to these effects due to their still-developing brains. Studies show that frequent scrolling disrupts sustained attention, academic performance, and task persistence, with neuroimaging revealing changes in brain regions responsible for focus and reward processing. However, not everyone is

equally affected. Those with stronger self-regulation skills or more diverse offline activities tend to experience less severe attention problems. This highlights the importance of understanding individual habits and limits, as well as the role of platform design in shaping behavior.

The good news is that focus can be retrained. Attention loss isn't a failure of willpower but a learned response to an overstimulating environment. To rebuild focus, experts recommend removing short-form video apps from your phone, setting clear boundaries like time boxing, and engaging in activities that reward sustained effort, such as reading, exercising, or cooking. Tracking progress with simple metrics, like uninterrupted focus blocks or reduced screen time, can also help. By changing the environment and practicing deeper engagement, you can restore your brain's ability to focus and regain control over your attention.

Blueberries are proving to be more than just another trendy superfood, with research highlighting their significant impact on blood vessel function. A comprehensive review of clinical trials revealed that their most consistent benefit wasn't tied to weight loss or detox claims but rather to improved circulation, sometimes within hours of consumption. This is crucial because healthy blood flow plays a vital role in long-term vi-



tality, brain performance, and aging gracefully, yet it's often overlooked in discussions about health.

What sets blueberries apart is their ability to influence multiple systems in the body simultaneously. Their rich blue hue comes from anthocyanins, compounds that the body converts into metabolites supporting nitric oxide signaling. This pathway is essential for maintaining flexible and responsive blood vessels, ensuring the heart and brain receive adequate oxygen and nutrients. This goes beyond the typical antioxidant narrative, emphasizing their role in sustaining the body's internal infrastructure, which becomes increasingly important with age.

Additionally, blueberries work synergistically with the gut, as their polyphenols reach the colon, where beneficial microbes transform them into bioactive compounds. This interaction may promote a healthier microbiome and even enhance cognitive performance in older adults. While further research is encouraged, the evidence so far paints a compelling picture: this simple, traditional food delivers measurable, whole-body benefits quickly, making it a powerful ally for health and longevity.

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

The Savvy Senior How to Navigate Inheriting an IRA From a Parent



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

What are the rules regarding inherited IRAs? My brother and I recently inherited our father's IRA when he passed away late last year and would like to know what we need to do to handle it properly.

—Oldest Sibling

Dear Oldest,

I'm sorry to hear about the loss of your father, but you're smart to be planning ahead. Inheriting an IRA from a parent comes with a unique set of rules. Understanding them can help you make the most of the money you inherit and avoid an unpleasant surprise at tax time. Here are some basics you should know.

Setting It Up

Many people assume they can roll an inherited IRA into their own IRA, but that's not allowed for most beneficiaries. If you inherit an IRA from a parent, sibling, or anyone other than a spouse, you cannot treat the account as your own. Instead, your share must be transferred into a newly established inherited IRA, properly titled in the deceased owner's name—for example, John Smith, deceased, for the benefit of Jane Smith.

If your father named multiple beneficiaries, the IRA can be split into separate inherited accounts. This allows each beneficiary to manage withdrawals independently, as if they were the sole beneficiary.

You can open an inherited IRA at most banks or brokerage firms, although the simplest option is often to set it up with the firm that already holds your father's account.

The 10-Year Withdrawal Rule

Under the SECURE Act, signed into law in December 2019, most non-spouse beneficiaries must withdraw all the money from an inherited IRA by the end of the 10th year following the original owner's death. This rule applies if the owner died in 2020 or later.

If your father had already begun taking required minimum distributions (RMDs), you generally must continue taking annual RMDs while also emptying the account within 10 years. If he had not yet started RMDs, annual withdrawals aren't required, as long as the entire IRA is withdrawn by the end of the 10-year period.

You may take withdrawals faster if you choose, but distributions from a traditional IRA are taxable as ordinary income in the year taken. Roth IRA withdrawals, however, are usually tax-free, provided the account has been open at least five years.

If you fail to take a required RMD, or don't



withdraw enough, the penalty is 25 percent of the amount you should have taken. That penalty can be reduced to 10 percent if the mistake is corrected within two years.

Exceptions to the Rule

Several beneficiaries are exempt from the 10-year rule, including a surviving spouse, a minor child, a disabled or chronically ill beneficiary, or someone who is within 10 years of age of the original IRA owner. These beneficiaries may be allowed to stretch withdrawals over a longer period.

Minimize Your Taxes

As tempting as it may be to cash out an inherited IRA in a lump sum, or take large withdrawals over just a few years, proceed carefully. Doing so could trigger a hefty tax bill. Withdrawals from a traditional IRA are generally taxed as income at your regular tax rate.

For many heirs, spreading distributions over the 10-year period can help manage taxes and reduce the risk of being pushed into a higher tax bracket. Other strategies may make sense if your income fluctuates or you're nearing retirement.

To help navigate these decisions, consider working with a financial advisor. If you don't have one, you can find a fee-only, fiduciary financial planner through the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors at napfa.org.

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: I heard about a thing called "Vanessa's Law" the other day and I wasn't quite sure what it was all about. I know it has to do with new or young drivers.

Answer: Vanessa Weiss was killed just days before her 16th birthday in May 2003. In her memory, Vanessa's Law was passed a year later. She was a passenger in a vehicle driven by an unlicensed 15-year-old.

Vanessa's Law applies to all teens who commit an impaired driving crime or crash-related moving violation but applies differently whether you have a provisional license or are unlicensed.

If you are convicted of a crash-related moving violation or an alcohol/controlled substance-related violation (such as Driving While Impaired, Implied Consent, Open Bottle, or Underage Drinking and Driving/Not a Drop Law) while you are driving without a license as a teenager, you cannot get a license, instruction permit or provisional license until you are 18. At 18, you must:

- Pass the Class D written test.
- Fulfill reinstatement requirements, including payment of fees, which can be up to \$680 depending on circumstances.
- Obtain an instruction permit and hold it for at least six months.
- Pass the road test and apply for a new license.

If you lose driving privileges due to a crash-related moving violation or an alcohol/controlled substance related violation while driving with your provisional license, you cannot regain a license until age 18.

At that time, you must complete the following steps to obtain a full driver's license:

- Fulfill all reinstatement requirements, including the payment of fees, which can be up to \$680 depending on circumstances.
- Complete the classroom portion of a formal driver education course.
- Pass the Class D written test if the license has been expired for over one year.
- Obtain an instruction permit and hold it for

three months.

- Complete the behind-the-wheel portion of a driver education course and apply for a new license.

Question: Hi, I read your "Ask A Trooper" article regarding Winter Travel Survival Kit Essentials. You might reconsider recommending cat litter as an agent for traction. Traditional cat litter is made of small chunks of clay, when one attempts to use it for traction in winter conditions it quickly dissolves into a slippery mess, making traction less viable. That was my experience.

Answer: There are several effective alternatives to help regain traction if you become stuck in the snow. Options include sand, tire chains, snow socks, traction mats or boards. In emergency situations, some people have even used floor mats, cardboard, or branches/weeds with success.

How to Use Traction Aids:

- Clear the snow: Dig out snow from in front of and behind your tires to give yourself room to move.
- Apply material: Place your chosen traction aid (sand, mats, boards, etc.) directly in the path of the drive wheels.

- Accelerate slowly: Gently apply the gas so the tires can grip the material. Avoid spinning the tires, as this can dig you in deeper.

- If your vehicle has traction control, you may want to temporarily turn it off.

- A gentle rocking motion (forward and reverse) can also help free the vehicle.

We still have a lot of winter left, and it's always best to be prepared for any winter travel emergency.

Question: I took my driver's training course many years ago. One thing I remember from my training is the steps that goes into making a right-hand turn, including:

1. Looking to my right to make sure no one/nothing is there.
2. Putting on my right turn signal.
3. Looking again for no obstacles.
4. Proceeding to move over to the curb to allow forward-moving traffic (behind me) to not be disrupted by my right-hand turn.

In my nearly 12 years back in the community, I could very easily count on both hands the number of people that have followed this method for making a right turn. Very few drivers, if any, move over to the right when making their turn, let alone use their signals. Can you provide clarification on this?

Answer: A traffic lane is a part of the street or highway wide enough for a vehicle or line of vehicles to drive safely. You are in a traffic lane whenever you drive on any street or highway. Lanes may not always be marked, but they exist whether marked or not. You must stay within a single traffic lane without weaving or straddling the lane markings. If it is a solid white line, you should not cross over it. Some areas have marked turning lanes.

Many highways and streets have pavement markings. White lines separate lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction.

- White dashes: You can change lanes where this marking is present.
- Shorter and thicker white dashes: The lane is ending.
- Solid white line: You should not change lanes. Solid white lines also mark crosswalks, stop lines at intersections, parking stalls and the edges of a roadway.

- Double solid white lines: You must not change lanes.

- Solid white line with bicycle insignia: This area is for bicycle or electric-assist bicycle traffic only.

- If you are on a bicycle, you must travel in the same direction as adjacent traffic

You often need to change lanes to turn, merge with traffic or do other driving activities. Changing lanes can be dangerous and must be done carefully. To stay safe, make sure you have space to the side behind and ahead of your vehicle before moving into another lane. Turn your head to check the lane you are moving into for vehicles. Don't rely



solely on mirrors; you may miss vehicles in your blind spots.

Drivers who turn improperly cause many traffic crashes. Move safely into the correct lane well ahead of the place where you will make the actual turn.

- Slow down before turning. Signal your intent at least 100 feet before the turn. Signals let pedestrians and drivers know what you plan to do.

- While waiting to turn, keep your wheels straight and your foot on the brake. If your vehicle is struck from behind, you are less likely to be pushed into oncoming traffic.

- Continue signaling until you begin your turn.

- Do not make sudden turns from the wrong lane.

- Watch for traffic or obstacles in the road you plan to enter.

- Always finish your turn in the correct lane.

- If the car ahead of you is signaling for a left turn, slow down and prepare to stop.

Safely Sharing the Road with Commercial Vehicles

Whether it's a semi, a school bus or a vehicle carrying hazardous materials, we share our roads with commercial vehicles every day. Because of their size and weight – often exceeding 26,000 pounds – these vehicles operate differently than the average car. To help ensure everyone gets home safely, please keep these practical tips in mind.

The Art of the Pass

Passing a commercial vehicle requires more time and space than passing a standard car.

Time your move: On a level highway, it takes 3–5 seconds longer to pass a large truck. Ensure you have enough clearance to return to your lane at least 100 feet before meeting oncoming traffic.

Check the grade:

Uphill: Trucks often lose speed, making them easier to pass.

Downhill: Trucks gain momentum quickly; allow extra distance before attempting to pass.

Clear the mirror: Only move back into the right lane once you can see the entire front of the truck in your rearview mirror. Maintain your speed so the truck driver doesn't have to brake suddenly behind you.

Don't rush: If your exit or turn is coming up soon, stay behind the vehicle rather than trying to pass it.

When a Truck Passes You

Help the driver complete the maneuver safely:

Stay right: Keep to the far side of your lane.

Be predictable: Slightly reduce your speed or maintain it – never speed up while a large vehicle is trying to pass.

Important Safety Reminders

Judging distance: Because of their massive size, commercial vehicles often appear to be traveling slower than they actually are. Many intersection crashes happen because drivers misjudge a truck's speed. When in doubt, wait.

Wind turbulence: When meeting a truck from the opposite direction, stay to the right. Turbulence will naturally push vehicles away from each other; staying right helps you maintain steering control.

Understanding how big trucks work helps us look out for each other and keep the roads safe. Together, we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.



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Ann Traxler
Attorney

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We're at the end of the 2nd week of the legislative session. Committees are meeting, bills are being introduced and heard, and lots of constituents are coming to visit my office to talk about the issues that they care about. Last week, Senate Republicans, including me, held a press conference on our initiatives to combat fraud in the state's public programs, and on Friday, we heard information about the State's economic health, with spending outpacing revenue and other troubling signs.

Economic Forecast leaves a lot of questions

The February and November budget forecasts give lawmakers and the governor their most up-to-date picture of how much money the state expects to take in and spend, based on the latest economic data. Legislators use the forecast as a financial guide for any budget decisions made during the session.

Minnesota's Office of Management and Budget released its February budget forecast on Friday, 2/27 showing a \$3.7 billion surplus in the current two-year budget cycle. The forecast continued to predict structural imbalances ahead that could easily become significant budget deficits.

I strongly believe that the state surplus that will be in the headlines exists because President Trump's policies have created a stronger national economy, but the fact remains that Minnesota continues to spend more than it takes in. We are still trying to patch the hole Democrats created when they expanded and created new programs when they held both houses of the legislature under Governor Walz's direction.

Finally, the forecast notes that we don't know the effect of the federal clawbacks of fraudulent payments authorized by the state for Medicaid and of other penalties for noncompliance with new federal laws, such as work requirements for some welfare payments.

The next tasks are clear: we must stop the fraud, prosecute the criminals, end the reckless spending, and give the taxpayers of this state some relief."

A report from the Tax Foundation on State Competitiveness rankings: Minnesota ranks 44th out of 50 for tax competitiveness. The state's top income tax rate of 9.85% is among the highest in the country. Sales taxes average over 8%, property taxes are high, and the corporate tax rate of 9.8% is also near the top nationally. Minnesota stacks tax on top of tax, and it's costing the state its competitive edge.

A Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Business Benchmarks Report ranked Minnesota 38th with 1% GDP per capita annual growth, 40th for labor force growth, and 41st in net domestic migration. Between 2019 and 2024, key economic statistics slowed to nearly stagnant or negative levels, reversing previous trends, and impacting the state's overall economic climate.



FORECAST DOCUMENTS

- ** February 2026 Budget and Economic Forecast (PDF)
- ** February 2026 Budget and Economic Forecast Presentation (PDF)
- Senator Steve Drazkowski at 2/19 press conference - Senate Media

Republicans do the heavy lifting on fraud

On February 19, Senate Republicans rolled out several new bills as part of an action plan to stop and prevent fraud in Minnesota's public programs. The bills give the legislature stricter oversight of taxpayer's dollars and the administration of these programs, support the use of technology to streamline delivery and verification of services, and provide better accountability within state government.

Bill List

Stricter legislative oversight

- Reestablishing and requiring legislative confirmation of commissioners (Kruen)
- Automatic audits and/or pause in social services have a large growth in spending (Rassmusson)

Technology to streamline verification and delivery of services

- Electronic visit verification and recipient sign off for services provided (Rassmusson)
- Do not pay list database of people ineligible to receive state payments (Drazkowski)
- Verification of eligibility requirements for Medicaid by Managed Care Organizations (Drazkowski)

Technology advancements on eligibility and verification (Koran)

Accountability in state government

- Criminal penalties for falsifying paperwork for audits (Koran)
- DHS and DCYF OIG Annual Reporting Requirements (Gruenhagen)
- Unannounced in-person site visit for every DHS and DCYF program (Holmstrom)

Fishing information for 2026

Spring is nearly here, and so is the end of ice fishing season. Dark houses, fish houses, and portables must be off the ice no later than 11:59 p.m. (end of the day) for each of the dates given in the categories below. County sheriffs may prohibit or restrict the use of motorized vehicles if dangerous ice conditions are present. If shelters are not removed, owners may be cited. A conservation officer may also confiscate, remove, or destroy any ice structure and its contents if they are not removed by the deadline.

Dates of removal are determined by an east-west line formed by U.S. Hwy. 10, east along Hwy. 34 to Minnesota Hwy. 200, east along Hwy. 200 to U.S. Hwy. 2, and east along Hwy. 2 to the Minnesota-Wisconsin border. After removal dates, shelters may remain on the ice between midnight and one hour before sunrise only when occupied or attended. Storing or leaving shelters on a public access is prohibited.

Inland waters

- South of line - March 2, 2026
- North of line - March 16, 2026

Border waters

- Minnesota-Iowa - February 20
- Minnesota-Wisconsin - March 1
- Minnesota-North and South Dakota - March 5
- Minnesota-Canada - March 31

Download your 2026 Fishing Regulations booklet here or pick one up wherever you buy your fishing licence after March 1. Regulations go into effect March 1, 2026.

The DNR also has a survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping Regulations.

Don't hesitate to contact me anytime with any issues, concerns, or feedback so I can best represent you. The best way to reach me is by email at sen.steve.drazkowski@mnsenate.gov or by phone at 651-296-5612. My legislative assistant is Margaret Martin, and her number is 651-296-4264. She will be happy to assist you, in or out of session.

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Regular Meeting of the Mazeppa City Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

The regular meeting of the Mazeppa City Council was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Chris Hagfors.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Present: Mayor Chris Hagfors. Council Persons: Mike Hammes, Erica Young, Dustin Wiebusch, and Steve Liffri.

Others Present: City Attorney Luke Lamprecht, City Engineer Matt Mohs from Bolton & Menk, Wabasha County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Jim Warren, Zumbrota Mazeppa High School Principal John Stapleton, Jake Johnson, Holden Hartert, Thomas Feils of Consolidated Energy, and City Administrator-Clerk Karl Nahrgang.

Present via electronic meeting: Holly Galbus from the News Record.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Young to approve the agenda and the addendum. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Liffri to approve the regular Council meeting minutes for January 14, 2026. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Wabasha County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Jim Warren gave the ICR for the month of January.

Administrator-Clerk Karl Nahrgang gave the Public Works report.

Administrator-Clerk Karl Nahrgang gave the Fire Department report.

Municipal Liquor Store Manager Todd Ihrke gave the Municipal Liquor Store report. City Engineer Matt Mohs gave the Engineering update.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Young to approve WWTP pay application 15 for \$198,825.50 All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

WWTP Draft Amendment #6 to Owner-En-

gineer Agreement was withdrawn from consideration.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to approve Task Order 9 for the Mazeppa Trail phase 1 not to exceed \$57,000. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Administrator-Clerk Karl Nahrgang gave the City Hall report.

Zumbrota Mazeppa High School Principal John Stapleton thanked the Mazeppa City Council for sponsoring the introduction to Law Enforcement curriculum along with the City of Zumbrota. In 2025, 12 students took the course with 4 seeking post-secondary education in Law enforcement/Conservation enforcement. In 2026 13 students are enrolled in the program taught by School Resource Officer Cody Tiedemann. This is a part of the school district's expanded technical education program that includes health care and law enforcement.

Jake Johnson, Holden Hartert, and Thomas Feils of Consolidated Energy shared a potential plan to update the fuel distribution depot at 227 2nd Ave. NW. Consolidated would meet current safety standards with new containment structures for storage and loading, re-configure tank placement, and move the loading area out of the 2nd Ave. NW right-of-way.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to approve Cost of Living Adjustments and Merit Pay raises for the PW Director, PW Streets, and MMLS Manager positions. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Liffri to approve Resolution 2026-05 Issuing a temporary off-site gambling permit to the Mazeppa Lion's Club for the Mazeppa Daze Duck Race. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Young, second by Liffri to approve Resolution 2026-06 Issuing a temporary off-site gambling permit to the Mazeppa Lion's Club for the Calendar Gun Raffle. All

in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Liffri, second by Wiebusch to approve to set 2026 Mazeppa Clean-up Day for Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to approve Resolution 2026-07 Accepting the resignation of Councilperson Erica Young from the Mazeppa City Council. Four in favor, Young abstained. Carried.

A replacement Councilperson will be appointed within 90 days to complete the term of Ms. Young though 2026. A special election for the remaining 2 years of the Council term will appear on the 2026 election ballot along with the regular Council seats to be elected.

All votes from this point in the meeting were from the four remaining Council members.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Young to approve hiring Erica Young as Deputy Clerk for the City of Mazeppa. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Liffri, second by Hammes to pay the bills and claims. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

The City Attorney, Council members, and Mayor all thanked Councilperson Erica Young for her years of service to the community as an elected official and Committee Chair.

City Engineer Matt Mohs brought another item before the Council for the subscription to GIS services for the Lead Service Line

Project.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to pay the subscription to ESRI for GIS services in the amount of \$1211. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Hammes to close the meeting under Minnesota Statute 13D 105 subdivision 2B to discuss an employee issue. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Meeting closed, 7:48 PM.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to re-open the meeting. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Meeting re-opened at 9:07 PM.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Liffri to close approve a 90 Day Employee Performance Improvement Plan for Administrator Clerk Karl Nahrgang. Four in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Motion by Liffri, second by Hammes to temporarily appoint Councilperson Dustin Wiebusch to the Human Resources Committee until a new Councilperson is appointed. Three in favor, Wiebusch abstained. Carried.

Motion by Wiebusch, second by Hammes to temporarily appoint Councilperson Steve Liffri to the Planning and Zoning committee until a new Councilperson is appointed. Three in favor, Liffri abstained. Carried.

Motion by Liffri, second by Hammes to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Administrator Clerk

Zumbro Falls City Council Minutes - January 10, 2026

The Zumbro Falls City Council met at City Hall with all council members, including Fire Chief Chris Conrad. Additionally, representatives from First State Bank of Red Wing - Mazeppa Branch, President Michael Collins and Michaela Kolbeck were present. Mayor Heitmann called the meeting to order at 6PM.

Clerk read the minutes from the December meeting which were accepted as read by a motion from Anderson, seconded Benson, all in favor, carried.

Treasurer's report followed with acceptance by a motion from Benson, seconded Anderson, all in Favor, Carried. 2025 Actuals vs. Budget was presented to the council.

The council welcomed newly appointed Fire Chief, Chris Conrad, who gave an update on the current department roster, committee establishments and noted that the annual fireman's supper planning is underway for March. Donations from the Relief Association were made to the fire department in the amounts of \$110,000 (truck replacement fund) and \$10,000 (paggers and radios). Motion to accept by Anderson, seconded Benson, all in favor, carried.

Council agreed to the following to represent the city: Lake City Paper, Lakeshore Agency, First State Bank of Red Wing, Attorney firm Hoff, Barry and Kosar, Bolten and Menk for City Engineering Firm, Bruce Heitmann as weed inspector and the ZF Fire Relief Trustees are the Mayor and Clerk. Scott Kennedy and Ashley Kennedy for Emergency Management. Posting places remain: City Hall, Zumbro Falls Post Office, Falls Standard, Rod's Service and the city website. Motion to accept by Benson, seconded Winters, all in favor, carried.

Motion to give out 2026 Gaming and Tobacco Licenses was accepted by Benson, seconded Anderson, all in favor carried.

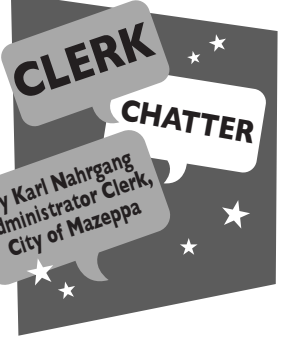
Mayor Hietmann reported that recent water pressure issues affecting some residences have been addressed and should again be working properly.

The meeting was adjourned and the clerk to pay all bills presented. A motion was made by Benson, seconded Anderson, all in favor, carried.

Submitted by Blake Hanson, Clerk



Cleanup Day is coming up. The City has scheduled Cleanup Day for Saturday, May 9, 2026. The event begins at 9:00 and goes to 11:00. There is time to look around your property and make choices to get rid of items that are lying about and drawing unwanted interest from neighbors, passers-by and from us at the City. We encourage you to get rid of old appliances, used tires, and other items we take at cleanup. We will send a list in a future water-sewer utility billing. It is a great time to jump start property clean up. There are many salvage companies that will pick up your non-running vehicles. The City respects your property rights, but also has ordinances designed to keep peace among neighbors. Very few people want to live next to a property that looks like a salvage yard or parking lot. The City encourages you to start with Cleanup Day and use that momentum to remedy the nuisance items you may have on your property.



By Karl Nahrgang
Administrator Clerk,
City of Mazeppa



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1. Comprehend
6. It has no staying power?
9. Auditioner's hope
13. Prevention measure?
14. Ill temper
15. Poetic although
16. Brooke or John Jacob, of New York
17. Downhill equipment
18. Beau
19. "'What Was I Made For?' singer
21. "'Fast Car" singer
23. Part of URL
24. Peephole glance
25. Morning drops
28. 1920s art style
30. Reduce, as in standing
35. Big Bang's original matter
37. Lad's counterpart
39. Connection
40. Milton Bradley's game
41. Tea from certain region of India
43. Some bent pipes
44. Rose oil
46. Zeus' wife
47. Remove from a manuscript
48. What bird did, homewise
50. Hyperbolic sine
52. "_____ and the City"
53. Prejudice
55. "Wow!"
57. "'Song Sung Blue" singer
61. "'I Just Called to Say I Love You" singer
64. Barrel racing meet
65. _____ Maria
67. Shockingly graphic
69. Not upright
70. Bathtub libation
71. Food contaminant
72. W on a light bulb
73. Consume
74. Aves

1. Former Portuguese colony in India
2. Deceptive maneuver
3. Naysayer's favorite prefix
4. Upbraid
5. 1/3rd of a hockey game
6. Phish homophone
7. One of Indiana's quests
8. Prepare for winter takeoff
9. Alka-Seltzer sound
10. Nucleus plus electrons
11. Actress Perlman
12. Tattered's partner
15. Rouse
20. Inscribed pillar
22. He had
24. Own
25. "'Hurricane" singer
26. Like March Madness' eight
27. Hair extensions
29. "'Folsom Prison Blues" singer
31. "'Walk on the Wild Side" singer
32. Wheel shafts
33. Tutu fabric
34. English county
36. Source of protein
38. Delhi wrap
42. Popular lassi fruit
45. Restart computer
49. Clamor
51. "'The Boys of Summer" singer
54. "Bad news travels fast", e.g.
56. Draw a conclusion
57. Pull out a pistol
58. Letter before kappa
59. Type of mine passage
60. Cheesy sandwich
61. Hit the road
62. Cupid's counterpart
63. Rub the wrong way
66. Road, in Rome
68. Bad-mouth, slangiily

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



Friday & Saturday
JULY 10 & 11
2026

Friday, July 10

Saturday, July 11



The Kentucky Headhunters 9:00 PM



Pam Tillis 9:00 PM



Rockstars of Texas - Tribute to Stevie Ray Vaughan & ZZ Top 5:00 PM



Confederate Railroad 7:00 PM



Bree Morgan 3:00 PM



Cory Waller & The Wicked Things 5:00 PM

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