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MARCH 26, 2026

Volume 20 • Issue 3

Announcements



• **Save the date! 2026 Dennison Days August 7 & 8!**

• **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

Dundas Council Appoints Ebling to Planning Commission, Eyes New Housing

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Dundas City Council made a key appointment and discussed ongoing development activity during its meeting, according

2026 Tax Statement, Property Valuation Notice



A mailing last week from Rice County to all property owners includes two documents: a Notice of Valuation and Classification for Taxes Payable for 2027 and a 2026 property tax statement.

Although both documents are important to review and understand, they contain very different information.

(continued on page 15)

to City Administrator Jenelle Teppen.

One item on the agenda was the appointment of a Bridgewater Township representative to the Dundas Planning Commission. The position opened after longtime representative Larry Aldirks declined to be reappointed.

Under the orderly annexation agreement between Dundas and Bridgewater Township, three members from the township serve on the city's Planning Commission. The agreement has been in place since the early 2000s and ensures township representation in planning matters that may affect both communities.

After Bridgewater Township submitted two potential candidates, the council voted to appoint Andrew Ebling to the commission.

"We asked the township to give us two names for the Planning Commission, and they submitted two names," Teppen said.



"The council made a motion to appoint Andrew Ebling to the Dundas Planning Commission."

Ebling has served for several years on the Bridgewater Township Board.

The council also continues to monitor two proposed housing developments that are in the early stages of review.

(continued on page 15)

Allina Clinic Purchase Headed for April 7 Council Vote

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News



Northfield Hospital + Clinics plans to bring its proposal to purchase the Allina Health Northfield Clinic to the Northfield City Council's April 7 meeting for final approval of the \$6-million acquisition, NH + C president and CEO Zander Abbot reported to the council.

Abbot presented an acquisition progress report to the council which has final say on the matter. NH + C announced its intention to merge with the clinic in December and spent the intervening weeks focused on due diligence regarding patient care and access as well as financial, legal and operational elements of the purchase.

(continued on page 4)

Rice County Steam & Gas Annual Flea Market & Swap Meet May 24th & 25th

The Rice County Steam & Gas Show has announced their annual Swap Meet and Flea Market for May 23rd & 24th, 2026.

**Annual Swap Meet & Flea Market
Consignment Auction 9am Saturday
S.E.A.T.P. Tractor Pull 9am Sunday
Railroad Train Rides**

Check out their website and facebook page for more information. www.ricecountysteamandgas.com.

(see ad on page 12)



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Easter Brunch Menu

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Fear



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life's everyday challenges.
www.isaiahministries.cc

Exhausted anxiety
Face numb
Chest tightening
Hard to breathe
Lonesome like no other
Thoughts of self-harm
Past haunting
Distress reappearing
Misunderstood
Heavy, so extremely heavy

These words describe the content of my heart this past summer. I just came off a time of dense fear and depression. It was crippling to say the least. The situation I was facing is far too long to describe at this time. In a nutshell, I had trauma from the past resurfacing, and I was panicking and spiraling to a pretty dark place. Thanks to Jesus, I got out by speaking truth, declaring the promises of the Bible, praying, worshipping, and letting the Lord parent me.

Fear is not of the Lord. If you are feeling any sort of anxiety or panic, this is not from Jesus but from the enemy, Satan. We live in a spiritual world, my friends, and we are in a spiritual battle.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

When we witness and experience rage, gripping addiction, disabling fear, distressing anxiety, and many other torments, there is a spirit behind these things. This is the enemy at work. No fear though, my beloveds, no fear.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound

mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). If you have a relationship with Jesus and He resides in your heart, you have authority over the enemy. "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Relationship with Jesus and having Him reside in your heart—what are you talking about, Ashley? Having a relationship with Jesus and Him living in your heart means you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, asked for forgiveness for your mess-ups, and believed that He died on the cross for your sins and was resurrected from the dead. Then you talk to Him. You talk to Jesus and you never stop.

When you have relationship with Jesus, you have confidence that when fear springs, creeps, or stirs up, you can put your gaze on the Lord. You have assurance that Jesus has you and is with you wherever you go (see Joshua 1:9).

One way to help combat fear when it is knocking at your door (or is already inside) is by putting on the Armor of God. If you are unfamiliar with this armor, it is made up of six pieces and is shown in Ephesians 6:10–20. I will list out these six pieces with a short description of how I see them being used. I would encourage you to put this armor on and not take it off. You can put it on by praying these pieces over yourself out loud or inwardly, journaling them, or even drawing a little picture of them. Check in with yourself daily to see if any piece needs a tightening!

- Belt of Truth—Cling to the truth of Jesus. You can know His truth by reading the Bible.
- Breastplate of Righteousness—You are in right standing with the Lord because of what Jesus did on the cross. We want to do our best to live a righteous lifestyle too.

- Feet Fitted with the Readiness of the Gospel of Peace—Repentance, knowing the gospel, sharing the gospel, receiving God's peace, and sharing His peace. The gospel is what I shared earlier about having Jesus in your heart.

- Shield of Faith—Your faith in Christ and all that He says will block the fiery arrows of the enemy that want to destroy you.

- Helmet of Salvation—You are saved and renew your mind with God's promises.

- Sword of the Spirit—This is the Bible; use it to strengthen yourself and fight against the lies of the enemy.

Jesus loves you. He loves you more than you will ever know. The Lord is coming through for you.

(continued on page 3)

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.

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

Pastor Steve Roberts - srobertsds1@frontiernet.net

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Website: calvarynorthfield.org

Sundays 1:00 pm

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713 Division St S, Northfield, MN 55057

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<https://www.northfieldcc.org/>

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9:15am Sunday School

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OBITUARY

Betty L. Woodward

Betty L. Woodward, age 98 of Dundas and formerly a longtime resident of Cannon Falls, died on Thursday, March 5, 2026.



Betty was born on May 25, 1927 in Cleveland Township, Minnesota, to Howard and Anna Belle (Soule) Tyrrell. At an early age, her father died and her mother later married Theodore "Ted" Johnson. She graduated in 1945 from Cannon Falls High School.

She married Leo E. Barsness and together raised five children. She was a loving, supportive, and caring mother. She had a special gift of keeping track of all of us, including the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. After her children were grown, she worked at various jobs in the area, including Althoff Hardware.

In 1992, she married Willis Woodward, and they enjoyed several years together. She also enjoyed golfing with friends, tending her flowers, and was an avid reader.

She was a member of First English Lutheran Church in Cannon Falls for most all of her life.

She was preceded in death by her parents; both husbands; son, Alan Barsness; son-in-law, Brad Mills; step-son, Dennis Pommerening; step-daughters, Gloria Storlie and Gail Woodward; siblings, Fran Lorenson-Janu and Ralph Tyrrell.

She is survived by her daughters, Mary (Dave) Reid, Laurel (Bernie) Sholing, Lynne (Wally) Ress, and Wendy Mills; step children, Linda Chmiel, Roger Woodward, and Marcia Pommerening; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; sisters, Bonnie Erlanson and MaryAnn Banks; and several nieces and nephews.

A private family service will be held at a later date.

Big Spring Plans at Northfield Public Library

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News



The Northfield Public Library is heading into spring with a packed calendar of programs and a renewed focus on accessibility as demand for events grows.

Natalie Draper, the Northfield Director of Library Services, said that the talk of a local option sales tax has increased awareness of the library's needs — from the aging "story-book steps" on the west side of the building to opportunities to expand community space to the necessary work on the building's foundation. If the proposal moves through the state legislature and other city council approvals and then appears on the November ballot, voters would have the chance to weigh in.

Inside the building, Draper said the library

is tightening how it manages attendance to keep aisles clear, preserve wheelchair seating, and ensure visibility for services like captioning or ASL interpreting. She urged patrons to register when sign-ups are offered — and to cancel if plans change — so staff can better gauge demand and, when possible, add another session.

A key upgrade is coming early next month: the Bunday room, which is the library's main meeting room will be unavailable for the first two weeks of April while crews install a hearing loop under the floor and replace the room's carpeting with easier-to-clean flooring.

Spring break programming also ramps up across locations, including activities at the Library Oasis. Kids can drop in at the Oasis between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on March 26 to build LEGO "glasses," while adults are invited to an Adult LEGO Craft Night at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, with limited supplies.

Looking ahead, the library and partners will host a free screening of the documentary "Join or Die" at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 11, at the Viking Theater at St. Olaf College, followed by discussion and chances to connect with local civic groups. Full details and registration links are available on the library's online calendar.

**Keep Up With Your Hometown News at
www.dundasmn.com**



Dennison Lions Club

ANNUAL SPRING BREAKFAST

Sunday, March 29, 2026
8:00a.m.-12:00p.m.
at Dennison Lutheran Church, Dennison



All You Care to Eat
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Juice, Milk, Coffee

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*Proceeds will benefit the Dennison Lions Club and
Dennison Community Church activities*

Dennison
Lions Club
is a
non-profit
organization.

Fear

(continued from page 2)

He will perfect all that concerns you (see Psalm 138:8 NKJV). Jesus, I pray for all those reading, let them know You, Your love, and that they have nothing to fear because You are in the room. You are not going anywhere. You are holding them and will not let go.

Lord, we put on the belt of truth. Help us cling to your promises. We put on the breastplate of righteousness. Remind us that we are in right standing with you because of what you did on the cross and help us to live in a godly way. We put on the feet that are fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace. Show us any sin that needs to be dealt with. Help us know and share your peace. We hold the shield of faith, to block the arrows of the enemy. We lean into what you say and not the lies of the enemy. We put on the helmet of salvation. If we have you in our hearts, we are saved and are going to heaven. Help us renew our minds to truth as well. We grab a hold of the sword, your Bible. Remind us to read it daily and apply its guidance. Amen to amen.



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Allina Clinic Purchase Headed for April 7 Council Vote

(continued from page 1)

“The Northfield Hospital and Clinic’s board of directors met for the first time just last on February 26, to review this due diligence,” NH + C president and CEO Zander Abbott re-

ported to the council. “The work went very well. We got excellent questions and feedback and the board remains supportive. The board of trustees met again to do a second round of due diligence review, at which point the board of trustees of the hospital looked to propose a motion to recommend to this body that Northfield Hospital and Clinic proceed with purchasing the Allina Northfield Clinic building.”

Abbott has touted the acquisition’s positive impact on health care and health care access in Northfield as well as its strengthening the financial position of the Northfield hospital.

“It’s coming to the City Council, we’re getting updates, because as a municipal hospital if the action involves the sale of real estate then the City Council needs to approve that per our charter,” Northfield Mayor Erica Zweifel explained on the KYMN In the

Morning show following Abbot’s report.

Elements of the purchase highlighted in the report included:

Allina Health being granted a 12-year right of first refusal, should NH + C change its ownership structure as a municipal hospital, although there is a carve-out should NH + C become an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit.

An assurance from Abbott based on conversations with Rice County officials that the purchase will not affect city tax revenue, with NH + C assuming the tax burden — \$223,000 in 2025 — going forward.

The launch of the clinic under NH + C ownership is targeted for September of this year.

CVEC Spring Term

Cannon Valley Elder Collegium (www.cvec.org), offers fifteen Spring Term courses for learners aged 50+. Fourteen courses will be taught in-person at Northfield locations; one course will be offered online via Zoom.

For thirty years, CVEC has stuck to its successful formula:

- Thought-provoking courses, with engaged elder students
- Outstanding instructors: professors, teachers, community experts
- No tests, no grades, no papers to write, no class presentations
- Affordable tuition fees, course books are extra, scholarships available

Registration for CVEC’s Spring Term is underway. Go to www.cvec.org for complete course details and to register. Spring Term 2026 starts March 23, and ends May 15. Registration continues for courses with openings until April 3.

Spring 2026 courses cover a wide range of topics: Northfield’s beginnings to today, understanding AI, ethics in everyday life, Minnesota weather, misfit characters in movies, Vietnam’s history, playwright Tom Stoppard, American civil liberties, Irish history, short stories, and more. CVEC welcomes participants from Minnesota’s Cannon River valley region; online participants join from throughout the USA.





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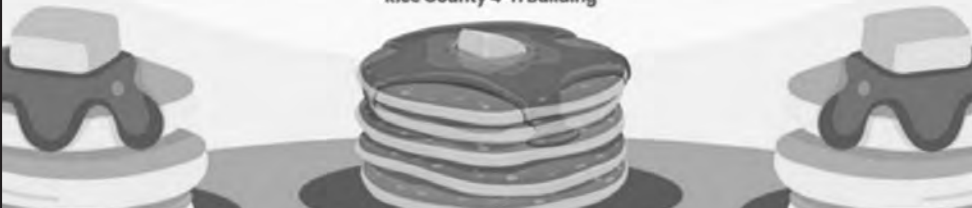
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RICE COUNTY EXCHANGE

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday, April 12
9 am - 12 noon
Rice County 4-H Building



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Plant a Native Shoreland this Summer to Improve Lake Water Quality

Residents of the Cannon River Watershed are invited to learn how native plants can improve water quality, support pollinators, and create beautiful, low-maintenance landscapes through a series of upcoming workshops and events this spring.

The Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (CRWJPO) is encouraging landowners, lakeshore residents, and gardening enthusiasts to explore the benefits of native landscaping. Native plants have deep root systems that help filter runoff, stabilize soil, and absorb excess rainwater before it reaches lakes and rivers. They also provide essential habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

"Native landscapes are a powerful tool for protecting our local waters," said Emmie Scheffler from the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization. "Even small changes in how we manage our yards and shorelines can have a big impact on water quality across the watershed."

To help residents get started, several partner organizations are hosting workshops and educational events throughout March and April. Topics include reducing traditional turf lawns, planting for pollinators, and landscaping practices that protect water quality.

Upcoming events include:
Rain Gardens: Plan, Prep, Plant, Maintain" Virtual Workshop by the Scott SWCD, March 26, 6-7 p.m.

Rain Gardens: Plan, Prep, Plant, Maintain - Online Webinar by Scott SWCD, March 26, 6 - 7 PM

Le Sueur County Horticulture Day by the Le Sueur County Master Gardeners - April 11, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Le Center

Landscaping for Clean Water Intro Class (Online) by Dakota SWCD - April 22, 6-7:30 p.m.

In addition to workshops, the Cannon River

Watershed Joint Powers Organization offers free one-on-one assistance for watershed residents interested in native shoreland plantings. Services include site evaluations, plant selection guidance, shoreline restoration planning, and information about funding opportunities.

The organization is currently offering up to \$500 in cost-share funding for native shoreland plantings for eligible property owners within the Cannon River Watershed. Learn more at: <https://www.cannonriverwatershedmn.gov/nativeshoreland>.

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Rice County Event Invites Women to Talk Conservation Across Landscapes

Women from across the region are invited to come together for an evening of conversation, connection, and inspiration focused on conservation across the landscape.

The Rice County Soil and Water Conservation District and Minnesota Women in Conservation will host a special gathering on Wednesday, April 1 at 5:30 p.m. in the Straight River Room at the Rice County Fairgrounds in Faribault.

This free event is designed to bring together women who care about the land and water in their communities. Whether participants are farmers, landowners, lakeshore residents, conservation professionals, or simply interested in learning more, the evening will offer a welcoming space to connect and share ideas.

Topics of interest may include restoring native prairie, improving soil health, planting trees, regenerative farming, enhancing wildlife habitat, and protecting the water quality of local lakes and streams. The gathering will encourage conversation and collaboration among women who are working in different ways to care for the land.

Dinner and beverages will be provided, and children are welcome to attend.

The event is free, but attendees are encouraged to RSVP by contacting Teresa DeMars, at (507) 332-5408 or Teresa.Demars@riceswcd.org.



RICE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION + MINNESOTA WOMEN IN CONSERVATION

You're invited to join other women from across our area for an evening of conversation, connection, and inspiration focused on conservation across landscapes. Whether your passion is restoring native habitat, improving soil health, planting trees, or protecting water quality of our local lakes and streams, this gathering is for you.

Children Welcome

Free
Open to all women
Dinner and beverages provided

Wednesday, April 1st
5:30 PM
Straight River Room at
Rice County Fairgrounds
1900 Fairgrounds Dr
Faribault, MN 55021

RSVP + send any questions to Teresa DeMars - Teresa.Demars@riceswcd.org



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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 does-

n'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 renewed 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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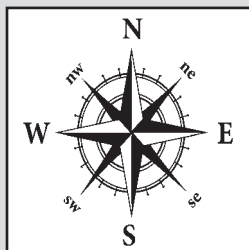
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

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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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.

Stability Starts with Child Care



Kelly Fluharty, Vice President of Early Childhood So. MN Initiative Foundation

Across our region, many families are carrying more stress than usual. For some, federal enforcement pressures have introduced fear into everyday routines. Even when children do not have the words for it, they feel it in the tension around them, they notice the disrupted plans or sudden changes in who is available to care for them.

In moments like this, child care is more than a convenience. It is a stabilizing force, one of the few places where a child can count on adults, consistent routines and a sense of belonging. For parents and caregivers, reliable

child care is what makes it possible to keep a job, attend a training, take a shift at the hospital or show up for a family business.

We should talk about child care the way we talk about roads, broadband and housing: as essential infrastructure for vibrant rural economies.

Many communities in southern Minnesota are child care deserts, places where the supply of licensed care falls far short of what families need. In practice, that can mean waiting lists for infant care that stretch longer than infancy, households patching together care from relatives and neighbors and employers watching talented workers reduce hours or leave the workforce because there is nowhere accessible or affordable for their children to go. Providers face rising costs, staffing shortages and a business model where tuition alone often cannot cover what quality care costs.

When child care is scarce, the impacts ripple outward. Schools, clinics and Main Street businesses feel it. Economic development efforts feel it. Communities working hard to retain and attract young families feel it.

This is why First Children's Finance created the Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP), a community driven approach that helps rural places identify the true scope of their child care gaps and build solutions that fit local reality. With regional support for technical assistance and the RCCIP, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) has helped communities across our region move from concern to coordinated action. Over 18 to 24 months, the RCCIP process brings together leaders,

providers, employers and parents to move from knowing there is a problem to building a shared plan and practical strategies for sustainable change. Last month, I was grateful to onboard with the core team for First Children's Finance's most recent RCCIP effort in Fillmore County. I look forward to seeing how this team will help gather the ideas and information necessary to help communities across the county align resources, reduce barriers for providers and expand options for families in ways that make sense locally.

SMIF's support for community-driven efforts like these are anchored to our belief that investing in our youngest generation is one of the smartest investments our region can make, and we back that belief through partnerships, training, grants and support for technical assistance. In this moment, we also need a shared commitment to protecting the everyday conditions that help families stay rooted here, like welcoming communities, reliable care for young children and practical pathways for providers to stay open and grow. Working alongside communities and partners such as First Children's Finance, we can treat child care as an economic development priority, not an afterthought.

We cannot control every pressure families are facing right now. But we can strengthen the local systems that hold people up, so children experience steady and high-quality care, households remain financially stable and rural communities can keep building a future where families want to stay.

If your community is experiencing a child care gap, please reach out to SMIF for connections to partners like First Children's Fi-

nance, and urge your local and State decision-makers to invest in systems that help keep these businesses viable. If we want vibrant economies in southern Minnesota, we have to make it possible to raise a family here, and that starts with child care.

I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at kellyf@smifoundation.org or 507-214-7012.

About Kelly Fluharty

Kelly Fluharty joined Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation as vice president of Early Childhood in 2025, bringing expertise from public health and rural healthcare sectors. Working at the intersection of public health, healthcare and social services, Kelly led initiatives to build more inclusive and resilient systems of care delivery.

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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, aerobic 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 goals is:

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

Make 2026 your healthiest year yet.

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

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

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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 phenomenon, 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 vitality, 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.

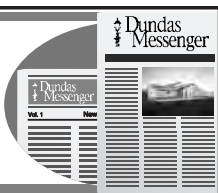
Additionally, blueberries work synergistically with the gut, as their polyphenols reach the colon, where beneficial microbes transform them into bioactive compounds. This interaction may promote a healthier microbiome and even enhance cognitive performance in older adults. While further research is encouraged, 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.*

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Change starts in your community 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 21 and older, 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. 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.

"Speaking of Cannabis" is rolling out in southeast Minnesota. It's sponsored by 11 Public Health departments in Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

Local data highlights why this work matters. According to the 2025 Minnesota Student Survey, 3.7% of Rice County eighth-, ninth- and 11th-graders reported cannabis use in the past month, slightly above the statewide rate of 3.1%.

Concerning for young people whose developing brains are more vulnerable to the effects of cannabis is how young people perceive the risks of its use. In Rice County, only 61.2% of eighth-graders, 59.1% of ninth-graders, and 52.5% of 11th-graders believe cannabis is harmful. The goal of this campaign is to help parents better understand the risks linked to youth cannabis use, feel more confident talking with their children about these dangers, and to know where to find trusted resources.

"The cannabis we see today is very different from what was around in the '70s and '80s, bringing new risks and a higher potential for addiction," said Grace Pint, Rice County Public Health Substance Use Prevention Coordinator.

"Speaking of Cannabis" started in northeast Minnesota, and was originally created 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.

Through a partnership with PlaceBased, a media company specializing in out-of-home advertising, "Speaking of Cannabis" messages – such as digital displays, posters, and window clings – will be found throughout southeast Minnesota communities.

This work is made possible by a grant from the Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention program of the Minnesota Department of Health's Health Improvement Bureau. For more information, visit www.speakingofcannabis.org or access the site through the Rice County Public Health website at www.ricecountymn.gov/287/Health-Promotion-Wellness.

FBI, County Warn of Scam Aimed at Property Owners Applying for Permits



Rice County has joined the FBI in warning the public about an emerging phishing scheme by criminals impersonating government officials to solicit fraudulent payments for planning and zoning permits.

The criminals, who have already targeted several Rice County property owners, leverage publicly available permit information to identify potential victims and increase the legitimacy of the scam. Victims of this scam have been identified nationwide.

Rice County's Environmental Services Department has taken steps to mitigate the likelihood applicants receive these scam emails, said Julie Runkel, Rice County Environmental Services director.

How the scam works

Individuals and businesses with active applications for land-use permits are being targeted by criminals impersonating city and county planning and zoning officials, fraudulently requesting fees associated with these permits. Victims receive unsolicited emails citing their permit information, zoning application numbers and/or property addresses. Victims are instructed to pay invoices for fees

related to their permits and directed to make payments via wire transfer, peer-to-peer payment or cryptocurrency.

Common indicators of the scheme are:

- The emails contain detailed, accurate information about planning and zoning requests, including property addresses, case numbers and the true names of city and county officials.

- The emails use professional language, formatting and imagery consistent with legitimate government communications for planning and zoning applications, including review processes, planning commission procedures, regulatory compliance and relevant ordinances.

- The email addresses contain usernames similar to city or county planning and zoning departments but originate from non-governmental domains, such as "@usa.com"

- Email delivery may be timed to coincide with ongoing communications with city and county officials regarding the permitting process.

- Attached PDF invoices contain itemized statements of purported fees and direct applicants to request payment instructions via email, rather than telephone, to ensure a reliable audit trail for all correspondence related to the application. This is designed to deter the victim from calling the city or county to verify the fees.

- The emails emphasize urgency, threatening delays or other obstacles in the permitting process if the applicant does not immediately render payment.

Tips to protect yourself

- Do not assume emails are legitimate based on the use of city or county letterhead, seals, names of officials or proper spelling and grammar.

- Verify the email address, including the domain name, matches the email address of the official with whom you are corresponding and does not contain extraneous characters or misspellings.

- Check the county official website (www.ricecountymn.gov) for notices about ongoing impersonation schemes.

- Call the Rice County Environmental Services Department using the phone number listed on the official website (507-332-6113), to verify outstanding fees.

- Log into your permit application in RT Vision. All legitimate invoices will be shown

on your permit application.

Report it

- If you or someone you know has fallen victim to this impersonation scam, file a complaint with the IC3 at www.ic3.gov. Include any available information including:

- The email address, date of email, phone number, if provided;
- The date of your project's scheduled hearing, if applicable; and,
- The amount listed in the fraudulent invoice, the method requested to pay fees and bank account information, if provided.

Two ties and a date change: 2026 Township election results

Rice County township elections brought a few surprises: Not only did a race in two townships end in a tie, but 84% of Morristown Township voters approved moving its election day from March to the first Tuesday in November to align with state and federal elections. The change takes effect in this November.

Races for Bridgewater supervisor seat C and Wells' open supervisor seat both ended in a tie. According to state statute, each township's canvassing board will determine the winner by lot. The statute is silent on a method for making the determination.

In Erin Township, voters -- by a more than a 2-1 margin -- turned back a proposal which would have had its clerk and treasurer appointed rather than elected. Last year, the question failed by four votes (54%-46%).

Other results from township elections received so far are below. Results are unofficial until canvassed by the township's canvassing board. A check mark (☒) indicates the winner.

Bridgewater

Supervisor Seat C: Frances Boehning - 76 ☒ Michael Little - 76

Supervisor Seat E: Nick Bolton- 97 ☒ Mark Koktavy - 53

Cannon City

Clerk: Marilyn Caron - 24 ☒ Write-ins - 3

Supervisor: Clayton F. Mechura - 24 ☒ Write-ins - 2

Erin

Clerk: Sharon Kaisershot - 58 ☒ Write-ins - 7

Supervisor:

Joseph LeBrun - 61 ☒ Write-ins - 5

Question: Providing for the appointment of the clerk and treasurer by the town board?

Yes - 20 No - 55 ☒

213253

Forest

Supervisor: Larry Conrad - 39 ☒ Write-ins - 1

Supervisor (special election): Daniel Deutsch - 41 ☒

Morristown

Clerk: Erin Duhme - 19 ☒

Supervisor: Andrew Wagner - 18 ☒

Question: Shall the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November be designated as the date of the Morristown Township general election?

Yes - 16 No - 3 ☒

Northfield

Supervisor: Foster Transburg - 39 ☒

Richland

Clerk: Robert Sommers - 13 ☒ Supervisor: Sean Bauer - 13 ☒

Shieldsville

Clerk: Susan Ceplecha-Novak - 34 ☒ Supervisor: Andy Ernste - 36 ☒

Walcott

Clerk: Kourtney Spitzack - 28 ☒ Supervisor: Tom Donkers - 27 ☒

Warsaw

Clerk: Debra DeGrood - 24 ☒ Supervisor: Andy Hopkins - 20 ☒

Webster

Supervisor:

Eric Ekstrand - 81 ☒ Dwayne Harnack - 71 Paul Sirba - 1

Write-ins - 18

Wells

Clerk: Gray Gunhove - 17 ☒

Supervisor (both write-ins) TIE: Jeff LaCanne - 1 Brenda Pittman - 1

Wheatland

Clerk: James Duban - 49 ☒

Supervisor (all write-ins): Gary Pavak - 26 ☒ Others - 20

Wheeling

Clerk: Mikela Medin - 22 ☒ Supervisor: Mark Bongers - 22 ☒



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DUNDAS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2026

7:00 p.m. City Hall

Present: Councilors Luke LaCroix, Ashley Gallagher, Grant Modory, Luke Swartwood
Absent: Mayor Glenn Switzer

Staff: City Planner Nate Sparks, City Engineer Dustin Tipp, City Administrator/Clerk Jenelle Teppen

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Modory called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by LaCroix, second by Gallagher, to approve the agenda. Motion Carried Unanimously (MCU)

CONSENT AGENDA

- Regular Minutes of February 9, 2026
- Consider Resolution 2026-12 Approving an Application for a Temporary One-Day Gambling Permit from Ducks Unlimited Cannon Flyways Chapter
- Disbursements - \$74,803.96

Motion by Gallagher, second by Swartwood, to approve the consent agenda. MCU

REGULAR AGENDA

• Consider Rebound Partners – Proposed North Railway Street Project

City Planner Nate Sparks introduced the item, noting that the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Authority both met to review the Concept Plan, with specific focus on the areas that they have re-

sponsibility for. Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan (Planning Commission) and the EDA review of a Letter of Intent and request for a purchase agreement. The City Council's focus at this time is with respect to establishing a Tax Increment Financing District for the site.

After brief discussion, the City Council voiced their willingness to consider establishing a TIF District for the area, that they generally accept the terms of the Letter of Interest and that they authorize staff to move ahead with the developer on the project.

A motion was made by Swartwood, second by LaCroix, to approve

• Consider Proposal from Axon for Squad Cameras

The City Administrator introduced the item noting that one of the current cameras is no longer working and due to their age they are no longer supported and require replacement. Axon proposed a five-year plan for purchase of new cameras, staff noted that the payment for 2026 would be worked into the budget and that future years payments would be included in the annual budget.

A motion was made by Swartwood, second by Gallagher, to approve purchase of two squad cameras from Axon and acceptance of the Master Services and Purchasing Agreement.

• Consider Resolution 2026-13 Approving Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan

The City Administrator gave an overview of the proposed Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan, noting that she worked with the members of the Human Resources Com-

mittee (Modory and LaCroix) on the plan and they recommend approval.

A motion was made by LaCroix, second by Gallagher, to approve a Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan.

• Consider Approving Ordinance 2026-03 Amending Section §150 Building Regulations; Construction Adding Section §150.05 Plumbing, Plans and Specifications, and Inspections to the City Code Plumbing

A motion was made by Swartwood, second by LaCroix, to approve Ordinance 2026-03 Amending Section §150 Building Regulations; Construction Adding Section §150.05 Plumbing, Plans and Specifications, and Inspections to the City Code Plumbing.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The City Engineer reported that the Schilling Drive Sanitary Sewer project will go out to bid in April. The project is planned to be constructed in August/September.

He also reported that the Tower Park project will likely begin in mid-June with site grading to be completed by July and the playground could be installed in August.

Lastly, staff continues to work with the Union Pacific Railroad on the crossing upgrade at West Ave which will likely happen during this construction season. Fundas have been included in the 2026 budget in order to pay the City's portion of the cost.

ADJOURN

Motion by LaCroix, second by Swartwood, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 PM. MCU
Minutes prepared by Jenelle Teppen, City Administrator/City Clerk

2026 Tax Statement, Property Valuation Notice

(continued from page 1)

Property tax statements, though produced and mailed by the county, include a listing of taxes payable for all taxing entities applicable to a particular parcel – i.e. school district, city/township and economic development authority. The statement also lists applicable fees, which in Rice County includes a solid waste service fee for all parcels containing a building valued at \$5,000 or more.

Property owners will this year notice an increase in that fee to \$60.

Initiated in 1990 and last increased in 2012, the fee helps cover costs of solid waste alternatives the state requires counties to provide its residents. That includes recycling, household hazardous waste disposal, composting and waste reduction as well as general solid waste systems.

Most property owners will see the service fee as a line item on their property tax statement. Property owners who own multiple buildings, homes, mobile homes or apartment units will see a lump sum figure determined by multiplying the number of units owned by \$60.

Commercial/industrial buildings with a valuation of more than \$5,000 are also assessed the solid waste service fee based on a formula approved by the Rice County Board of Commissioners.

2026 valuation determines 2027 taxes

The Notice of Valuation document notifies property owners of the market value and classification of their property for assessment year 2026. Property taxes paid in 2027 will be based on this classification.

If you believe that your valuation and classification are correct, it is not necessary to contact your assessor and/or attend any of the listed meetings.

If the property information is not correct, if you disagree with the value/classification or have questions about your notice, first contact the Rice County Assessor's Office at 507-332-6102 to discuss any questions or concerns.

All property owners can attend the Open Book meeting in Faribault to have a one-on-one discussion with the assessor. Often your issues can be resolved at this level. The assessor will advise you of your further appeal rights, if needed.

Read your notice carefully for all your appeal options. If you live in a jurisdiction with a Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting, then your appeal must start with your local board before advancing to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

2026 Local Boards of Appeal & Equalization and alternate meetings Open Book Meeting

- Monday, April 6, 2026 – 10 a.m.-6 p.m. – Rice County Government Services Building, 320 Third St. NW, Faribault

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization

- Tuesday, April 7, 2026 -- 9 a.m. – Forest Township Hall, 3625 Millersburg Boulevard, Faribault
- Wednesday, April 8, 2026 – 9 a.m. – Shieldsville Township Hall, 7250 154th St. W, Faribault
- Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 9 a.m. – Wells Township Hall, 18400 Roberds Lake Boulevard, Faribault

Rice County Board of Appeal and Equalization

- Wednesday, June 17, 2026 – 6:30 p.m. – Rice County Government Services Building, Commissioners Room, 320 Third St. NW, Faribault

Making payments

Property owners who have not received their property tax statement(s) or need to update their mailing address should notify the Rice County Property Tax & Elections office at 507-332-6104 as soon as possible.

Property tax statements are also available to print through Beacon, found on the Rice County website, at https://bit.ly/RiceCo_PropertyTaxRecords.

Rice County first half property taxes for real/personal property are due Friday, May 15, 2026.

Dundas Council Appoints Ebling to Planning Commission, Eyes New Housing

(continued from page 1)

One proposal involves Stone Ridge Hills Second Edition, a planned 60-lot single-family housing development located near County Road 78, a(or Dundas Boulevard,) between Dundas and Northfield. Teppen said the project remains in the preliminary phase and has not yet received final approval from the city council.

Another proposal would require annexation of a parcel of land adjacent to the Bridgewater Heights development. The developer has requested annexation in order to move forward with a potential 34-lot single-family neighborhood.

Combined, the two proposals could eventually add close to 100 housing units to the community if approved.

Outside of development matters, the city is also preparing for several upcoming community events and seasonal activities.

Dundas will host its annual Easter egg hunt at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 4, at Memorial Park. The city's annual cleanup day is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, at the trailhead parking lot located at the corner of Railway Street and Hester Street.

Teppen also said that one of their seasonal employees who works in a position doing yardwork and taking care of the boulevards has decided not to return this summer, so the City has a part-time seasonal position to fill. Those interested can find the application for the part-time position available on the city's website at cityofdundas.org.

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The Senate's first bill of 2026: paying people's rent and utilities instead of addressing fraud

Friends and neighbors,

On Wednesday, the Minnesota Senate passed its first bill of the 2026 legislative session: Senate File 3596, a \$40 million bill to pay people's past-due rent and utilities. I voted against it, and I want to explain why.

My first issue with this bill is a matter of principle. Paying people's past-due rent is a bad policy decision that carries with it a number of unintended consequences. I know a lot of people felt genuine fear and anxiety over the last couple of months, and reasonable people can debate if the responsibility for this rests more with the inflammatory rhetoric used by leaders in Minnesota or with the federal leaders overseeing the operation. But the reality remains that government paying people's overdue rent and utilities is not a good idea from a public policy standpoint.

My second issue is one of priorities. Minnesota has a serious, rampant fraud problem

on our hands. This is the number one issue I hear about pretty much everywhere I go. The governor has mostly ignored it and deflected responsibility. Even his recent actions have been small potatoes. We have been pleading with our friends on the other side of the aisle to address this. Yet here we are, half-way through March, and the Senate has taken up zero fraud bills. That should be our number one priority, and we are getting nothing from the Senate Democrat majority.

Third, there is no requirement in the bill that the payments go only to legal residents. That's going to be a hard sell to a lot of Minnesotans who are already frustrated with how the state is spending money. I know a lot of folks who continue to struggle with Minnesota's high cost of living. That's where we should be targeting our relief effort.

This program would absolutely be a target for people with bad intentions, though it is worth noting that Republicans successfully added several amendments to act as guardrails against fraud, including one amendment that requires that 5% of funds be dedicated to detecting and preventing fraud. We also added amendments to require appli-

cants to actually document that they qualify instead of taking the applicant's word for it, and to require detailed reports every 30 days.

Other amendments we offered to improve the bill were not successful. I offered one to prohibit people on the sex offender registry from getting payments. We tried to use the money for direct property tax relief instead. And we tried to limit eligibility to only legal residents. Each of those would have im-

proved the bill even further.

I don't doubt some families are genuinely struggling right now, and I am sympathetic to that. But this bill felt like pandering in many ways, and the problems with it were too large to ignore.

Thank you for staying engaged. If you have any questions, reach out any time.

Sincerely,
Senator Bill Lieske

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