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2026 Goodhue County Breakfast on the Farm



Mark your calendars, because the Goodhue County Breakfast on the Farm is coming around again. On Friday, June 5th, from 7-11 am, you are invited to enjoy a wonderful breakfast spread including egg bake, donuts, yogurt, fruit, cheese curds, and ice cream.

(continued on page 14)

Goodhue County Home Study Spring Festival— America Celebrates 250 Years



A 1/3 scale replica of the 29x17 flag sewn by women supporting the Union troops in 1862.

By Beth Brekke

Women of the Goodhue County Home Study groups gathered at New Life Church in Wanamingo on May 4th for their annual spring festival. Festival chairperson and Home Study president, Patty Kempf welcomed members and guests. Secretary, Sharon Rechtzigel led the pledge and creed ahead of the noon lunch catered by Area 57 Cafe.

Tables were decorated with red, white and blue centerpieces, honoring the day's "250th Anniversary of America" theme. Donated by each local group, the centerpieces were later given away as door prizes. Keeping with the theme, the afternoon program featured Civil

War Living History Reenactor, Marie McNamara.

When the Civil War began in 1861, people expected it to last about three months, not four years. With the men gone to war, women's rolls changed.

(continued on page 6)

GHS Awards Fifty-One Diplomas



Valedictorian, Kinslea Edstrom

By Beth Brekke

"May the rest of our lives be the best of our lives." This quote from the musical, Mamma Mia! was chosen as the graduation motto by the Goodhue High School Class of 2026.

(continued on page 10)

Announcements



(schedule of events on page 13)

• **Belvidere Happy-Go-Luckies 4-H Club** (usually) meets the first Monday of each month at 7p.m. at St. Peter's Church, rural Goodhue. New members are always welcome! Contact club leader Michelle Benrud at 651-923-5247 for more information.

(continued on page 2)

Wheat Trail Festival Organizers Feed Farmers

By Beth Brekke

Wheat Trail Festival Organizers partnered with Goodhue Market and the Goodhue FFA to deliver meals to farmers working in the country on Saturday May 9th. The gesture was timed for spring field work and Mental Health Awareness month.

(continued on page 11)

Pictured to the right: Shawn, Lucas and Will Erickson set up 400 lunch bags that were filled and delivered to random farms as a gesture of support during Mental Health Awareness Month.



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Pastors Corner

By Pastor Robbin Robbert
St. John's Lutheran Church,
rural Goodhue

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not

to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” — Jeremiah 29:11

Graduation is filled with many emotions. There is joy and excitement for what lies ahead. There is relief after long years of study and hard work. There is also uncertainty. High school and college graduates stand at the edge of a new chapter, and no one can fully see what the future will hold.

Parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, and congregations often feel that uncertainty too. The people who love these graduates are proud of them, but they also know the world can be difficult and unpredictable. So what comfort can truly steady the heart at a moment like this?

Not confidence in a career.

Not confidence in money.

Not confidence even in our own abilities.

Our peace comes from the promises of God.

Jeremiah 29:11 was first spoken to God's people during a difficult and uncertain time. They did not know what the future would look like, but the Lord assured them that He had not abandoned them. His plans were still good. His hands were still guiding history. His love for His people had not changed.

That same Lord speaks to graduates today.

You may not yet know where you will live, whom or if you will marry, what work you will do, or what crosses you may someday carry. But your heavenly Father already knows. The One who formed you, redeemed you through Christ, and called you by name

will not suddenly stop caring for you now.

The future is not unknown to Him.

And because of Jesus, God's plans for His children are ultimately plans filled with eternal hope. Earthly paths may twist and turn. Success may come and go. There will be disappointments, failures, and seasons of waiting. Yet the Lord remains faithful through them all. In Christ, your future is secure beyond what any diploma or career could ever provide.

That is why Christian families can have peace that passes all understanding. The graduates we love do not walk into the future

alone. The Good Shepherd goes before them. His Word will guide them. His mercy will sustain them. His forgiveness will restore them when they fall. And one day He will bring them safely home.

So graduates, step forward with courage and humility. Give thanks for those who have helped you along the way. Work hard. Serve faithfully. Love others well. But above all, remain close to the Lord who promises you hope and a future.

His plans are better than anything we could ever design for ourselves.

Announcements

• **The Hiawatha Valley Genealogy Society meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Goodhue County History Center, 1166 Oak St., Red Wing, MN 55066.** The society welcomes participants of all ages and genders who are interested in discovering, researching, or expanding their knowledge of their family's ancestors. Whether you are just beginning or have years of experience, the group offers a supportive environment to help you build your genealogy skills and connect with others who share your interest. Your first meeting is complimentary!

• **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

Do you have an announcement?

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8:30a.m. Quilting and Bible Study on Wednesday at St Peter's, and 10:30a.m. Midweek Bible Study on Thursday at St Peter's.

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

Fight the Good Mental Fight

I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin. . . . — Romans 7:22-23

It is hard to overstate how much our minds are like battlefields. This is true for all believers in Christ, including the apostle Paul, who describes his own struggles in our text for today.

In this passage Paul says that one set of thoughts in his mind is turned toward God and aims to do good. The other set of thoughts, however, is turned toward evil and wants to sin. Paul thanks God in Christ that he is indeed saved. But in the very next verse he recognizes that he is still of two minds; he is a slave to God's law at the same time that he is a slave to sin. In verse 24 Paul seems to despair of living in this sort of spiritual duplicity. "What a wretched man I am!" he says.

In this way Paul expresses the frustrating way the Christian life goes—we are pulled one way and tugged the other by opposing powers within us. Though we are truly and irrevocably saved through the blood of Jesus Christ, we are at the same time slaves to our sinful old selves.

Thus we are in constant battle. Who will rule our heart and mind today? Who will rule our thinking about our work, marriage, or politics? The inner thoughts that we barely even notice may really be spiritual combat.

Though the battle rages on, we can ultimately say, with Paul, "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

O God, you have freed us from the curse of sin and death. But we need your power in our minds each day. Guide us to live by your Spirit. Amen.

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Web Site: www.landslutheran.org
Facebook: Lands Lutheran Church
9:00a.m. Service at Everson Park, next to the church

Goodhue Education Foundation Spring Auction

By Beth Brekke

For the first time, the Goodhue Education Foundation held their spring auction immediately following the school prom grand march. Set up in gym 3, silent auction items were available to view and bids opened at 5 PM Saturday May 2nd. Holding the activities back-to-back made it convenient to support students by attending both events. In addition to browsing the silent auction items, attendees could support the foundation by purchasing sandwiches, hotdogs, chips, cookies, or beverage concessions. The live auction began at 5:30 and ended before the silent auction items closed at 6:30.

The purpose of the non-profit foundation is to provide financial support and enrichment to students above and beyond what is supported by education dollars. Their vision is to continue to enhance the pride and community support for the Goodhue School from alumni, parents, community members, educators, and businesses. O'Reilly Organic Dairy,

Kohlhofer Farms and many other local businesses sponsored the spring auction, the group's biggest fundraiser.

Gift cards and gift baskets were popular silent auction offerings along with handcrafted and promotional items. This year's live auction featured large items including a wooden bench handcrafted by Mike Mann (\$225), a log splitter donated by Lodermeier's Inc (\$300), and a mountain bike given by Trust Realty (\$150). Experiences were highly sought after including a Mount Frontenac Golf Course package and a \$3000.00 travel credit through Christina's Travel Agency. Friendly, competitive bidding escalated from \$90 for a cheesecake by Ann Buck, to \$525 for three dozen cupcakes by Kelsey Strauss, to \$600 for three dozen of Peg O'Connor's monster cookies.

All proceeds from the event directly support the staff and students at Goodhue Public School. The foundation collaborates with the school board and staff to find the best ways to help promote excellence for all students involved in academics, arts, athletics, and other activities. They are pleased to have funded all grant requests received from the school and also make significant contributions to an endowment fund thanks to fundraising events like these.

THANK YOU to everyone that donated items to the auction, donated at the auction, and helped in any way to make the event a success.



Bidding on the many Goodhue Education Foundation silent auction donations.



Wooden bench handcrafted by Mike Mann and donated to the Goodhue Education Foundation live auction.



Auctioneer, Keith Dicke tries out the patio furniture donated by Knight Baarry Title while Paul Witte sells the set.

OBITUARY

Mitchell Craig Lindholm

Mitchell Craig Lindholm, age 42 of Goodhue, died unexpectedly on Sunday, April 26, 2026.



Mitch was born on January 13, 1984 in Red Wing, the son of Randy and Geri (Tholkes) Lindholm. He graduated from Cannon Falls High School in 2002. After high school, Mitch got his CDL and was a self-employed truck driver, hauling grain for Dave Ryan and Kevin Eckblad. He later drove for Eilen & Sons Trucking where he made lifelong friendships. For the past 16 years, he worked for NPL Construction, working his way up to foreman. He was a proud owner of the car wash where he worked endless hours with his son.

Mitch and Jessica are proud parents of Carter, Mallory, Bianca, and Chloe, all at home. A devoted father, he would do anything

for his children and loved spending time doing whatever his kids were doing! He taught them valuable life skills throughout. Family and church were very important to him. He was active at St. Luke Lutheran Church, serving as church president and attending bible studies.

He enjoyed skiing and teaching others to ski, and considered Welch Village his home mountain. He also enjoyed snowmobiling, hunting, and auto racing. A handy man, he was good at building, making, and fixing things. Mitch had a unique sense of humor, and when he was around you, he wanted you to be part of the fun and feel included! No one was safe from a joke on April fool's day. He will be forever missed by his family and friends.

Along with his children, he is also survived by his parents, Randy and Geri Lindholm of Vasa; siblings, Jill Lindholm of Darlington, WI, Jon (Kyle) Lindholm of Red Wing and Nate (Kelsey) Lindholm of Welch; parents-in-law, Jeff and Sue Samuelson; brother-in-law, Justin (Kelli) Samuelson of Roberts, WI; grandmother-in-law, Jerrie Samuelson; and grandfather-in-law, Richard Wolter. He was an adored uncle to many nieces and nephews, and aunts and uncles.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents and great-grandparents.

A visitation was held on Sunday, May 3 from 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 37750 Co 6 Blvd, Goodhue. A memorial service will be held on Monday, May 4 at 1:00 pm at St. Luke Lutheran Church. Honorary urn bearers will be Jill, Jon, and Nate Lindholm, and Justin Samuelson. A private interment will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred. Gifts in Mitch's memory may be given to St. Luke Church, and an account has been established at First Farmers & Merchants in Goodhue for the benefit of Mitch's children. Make checks payable to the Family of Mitch Lindholm.

GHS and St. John's Present School Plays

By Beth Brekke

Weeks of practice and preparation at Goodhue High School and St. John's Lutheran School culminated in delightful entertainment for the community. St. John's presented their Spring Celebration on May 8th and Goodhue Wildcat Theater performed Clue on stage May 15th.

St. John's preschool teachers, Mrs. Kristine Pankow and Mrs. Jessica Robbert wrangled their 16 youngsters clad in cowboy hats and boots through two square dance style routines.

They were followed by 13 kindergarten through second grade students performing A Barnyard Moosical. The group was led through songs depicting pigs, chickens, cows and goats by teacher, Mrs. Julie Pasch.

The program moved into a patriotic theme with Mrs. Jody Bitter's third, fourth and fifth grades along with the sixth, seventh and eighth graders under the direction of school principal and teacher, Joel Pankow. The 28 students recited history facts and sang a variety of songs including Yankee Doodle, The Star Spangled Banner, You're a Grand Old



St. John's principal and teacher, Joel Pankow introduces the 3-8 grade classes that spoke and sang of American history in honor of the United States 250th birthday.

Flag and America the Beautiful.

Dressed in all kinds of red, white and blue, the group invited the audience to sing along and then enjoy sandwiches and bars before leaving.

The revived Goodhue Wildcat Theater Club presented two performances of Clue on May

15th. A 1:30 production mainly for the student body, and a 6:30 evening performance kept the community guessing which one of Mr. Boddy's guests was a killer.

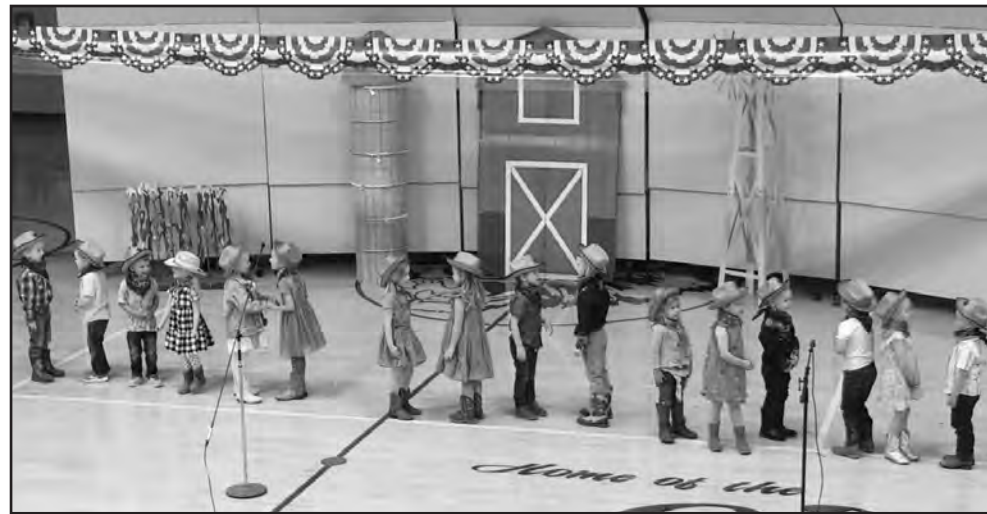
English teacher and speech coach, Heidi Hanson directed the eleven cast members through 90 minutes of raucous antics as din-

ner guests scrambled to uncover clues to the murderer's identity. The play is based on the board game, Clue, where everyone is a suspect with a motive, a weapon and an opportunity. In a modern twist, audience members were invited to use a QR code in the program to solve the mystery.

(continued on page 5)



Kindergarten, first and second grade students donned cow headbands during a portion of "A Barnyard Moosical".



St. John's preschool students enjoyed dancing through two productions at their Spring Celebration.



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GHS and St. John's Present School Plays

(continued from page 4)

Results of the “who done it” poll determined how the show would end.

The guilty party in the evening performance was Miss Scarlet, played by Madilyn Stehr.

The entire cast did an outstanding job, as did the many crew members working backstage with props, sound and lights. The production was made possible with support of the school-board, school administration, music department and custodians. Special thanks to those who loaned or donated costumes, accessories, set pieces and time.



Theater Director, Heidi Hanson, top left with the cast and crew of "Clue".

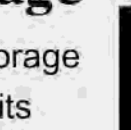
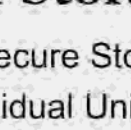
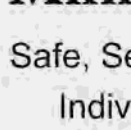
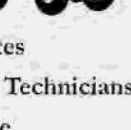
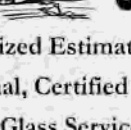
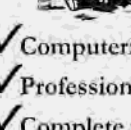
Goodhue Jaycees Scholarship Recipients



Congratulations to the class of 2026 and to our recipient winners Jack Carlson, Ava Walaker, and Nolan Mandelkow on each receiving a \$1,000 scholarship. We look forward to see what you accomplish in the future. *Courtesy of Goodhue Jaycees*



"Clue" cast members on stage during the evening performance.



Jim Sviggum | Adam Dicke | Justin Thomforde

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Goodhue County Home Study Spring Festival—America Celebrates 250 Years

(continued from page 1)

Women went to work in shops and offices and had to run farms. Marie's presentation focused on what the home-front was like during the Civil War. "What do I think about with my family at home? What are the basics that they need? They need food, clothing, and they need shelter." Women of the 1860s focused on the same things.

Grocery stores may have been some distance from home but canned food products were a useful new invention. Holding up and

describing some of the many items in her display, Marie noted that women have always liked pretty things, including decorative plates and glassware.

McNamara likes to say she "brings the museum to you". Dressed in full 19th century costume, including bonnet and gloves, she says, "It takes as long to get dressed as it does to take all of the boxes (of display items) to the car". Long skirts and layers were the style of the time. "You have to put on a pair of drawers and then you put on a chemise because that protects your dress from oils. And then you put your corset on. I've got a corset on. That was a big protective measure to hold yourself together plus support these hoops. I've got hoops on," she said motioning to her waist. "I've got two petticoats on.

You didn't want the ribs of your hoops to show so you wore petticoats." In the winter when the women went out to milk cows and feed livestock they might wear a shorter skirt, a wool petticoat and heavy socks.

McNamara showed other fashions of the era and explained how sewing machines were just becoming available and were one of the first 'buy-on-time' items. Women could group together and share one machine in a sewing club.

Dress material went up from 75 cents to \$35/yard during the war. "The inflation was



A few Civil War era artifacts and reproductions in Marie McNamara's collection.

terrible for homemakers." The price of other basic necessities like flour rose from \$6/barrel to \$1000/barrel. Coffee beans rose from 35 cents/pound to \$60. Due to a Confederate blockade, the Southern states were not able to buy coffee at all so substituted things like ground acorns, chicory and roasted barley.

Women were nurses, spies, and soldiers but the great majority were at home taking care of the house, farm and family. Nothing they did was easy. "They were heating with wood and they would have the kids help a lot." Women made soap and candles. "We were not in the industrial revolution—they did a lot from scratch"

The women knit socks and gloves, and sent letters and photographs to the men that had gone to war for so much longer than expected. Many of those men never returned home. During the 150th anniversary of the war (2011-2015), a project to find and refurbish the graves of Minnesota men killed in combat was initiated. Only 22 bodies had been returned as most were buried in the South near the combat sight.

Lastly, McNamara shared the story of how a group of women supported the soldiers by creating the largest Union flag. 1862 was the worst year of the Civil War for the Union troops. "The patriotism ran so high with the women," McNamara said, telling how they had a 110-foot flagpole erected by Reads Landing in Wabasha County to display their wool and cotton flag. At 29 feet long and 17 feet tall it is too large to be kept on display but can be seen by appointment at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul. A 1/3 scale replica made in 2016 is on display at the Wabash County Historical Society Museum in Reads Landing.

The event concluded with a medley of pa-



Tom Ersland sang several patriotic songs for the women attending the Spring Festival, ending with a group sing-a-long of God Bless America.

triotic songs sung by Tom Ersland of Kenyon.

For more information on Goodhue County Home Study, including upcoming trips to the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre and the Granite Falls Casino and stops in South Dakota, contact Patty Kempf at 507-208-3409.

For information on Civil War Living History Reenactment, events, presentations and rates, contact Marie McNamara at 651-301-5410 or Randal Kuznicki at 651-380-1542.



Marie McNamara in full 1860s costume presents Civil War history at the Goodhue County Home Study Group Spring Festival on May 4th. She is a long-time active participant in the Third Regiment of Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Co. C Civil War Living History Reenactors, attending special events and doing presentations several times each year.

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Messenger

Vine Haven Hardware Grand Opening



Bounce house ready to entertain kids during the Vine Haven Hardware store's grand opening celebration May 2nd.



Becky Hadler-Phernetton serves cake to Wayne and Marilyn Schilling during the Vine Haven Hardware store's grand opening celebration.

Goodhue Sweeps Regionals

Submitted

The Goodhue Envirothon team is sending three teams to the state competition. The regional competition was held Wednesday, May 6th at the Byron Sportsmen and Conservation Club. Envirothon is an outdoor nature competition that tests students in current issues of the environment as well as in the areas of soils, waters, wildlife, and forestry. The state competition was Monday, May 18th at Oliver Kelley Farm near St. Cloud.

The Goodhue senior girls were the region champs. This is their third career trip to the state competition and the second time win-

ning the region. Team members include Brynna Shaw, Kendra Rehder, Kylie Madelkow, Natalie Thomforde, and Macy Buck.

The Goodhue sophomores were second place in the regional and include Toby Lodermier, Arlyn von Knobelsdorff, Tim Strauss, Brody Doerhoefer, and Gus Raasch.

The final team was made up of Goodhue 9th graders Amelia Lodermeier, Jackson Lodermeier, Aaron Betcher, Jeffrey Huntley, and Ben Gadiant.

There were four other teams that participated from Goodhue. Goodhue 9th grade girls earned 5th and Goodhue senior boys earned 7th. Goodhue Junior girls were 12th and Goodhue Junior boys were tied for 13th. There were 16 HS teams and 16 MS teams that participated in this year's competition. The regional competition includes teams from Fillmore, Winona, Olmsted, Wabasha, Root River, Mower, Goodhue, Dodge, and Freeborn Counties. Goodhue Envirothon teams are coached by Matt Halverson (HS) and Robby Ebner (MS).



Senior Girls (1st Place): L to R: Natalie Thomforde, Kylie Mandelkow, Kendra Rehder, Brynna Shaw, Macy Buck



Sophomores Boys (2nd Place): L to R: Gus Raasch, Tim Strauss, Toby Lodermeier, Brody Doerhoefer, Arlyn von Knobelsdorff



9th Grade (3rd Place): L to R: Amelia Lodermeier, Jeff Huntley, Aaron Betcher, Jackson Lodermeier, Ben Gadiant



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A Night in Paris

By Beth Brekke

Lights twinkling on a dark background like a night sky and golden netting leading around an Eiffel Tower facsimile to a park bench, put the 'grand' in grand march. This scene set the mood for the "Night in Paris" theme of the 2026 Goodhue Prom. 59 Couples participated in the long-held tradition that drew a near-capacity crowd of spectators. Guys in dark suits and gals in floor-length, jewel-tone dresses remain the most popular fashion choices. The public event began at 4 PM in gym 1 with plenty of photo opportunities at the conclusion. Couples travelled to the Mount Frontenac Golf Course for dinner and dancing following the grand march.

Pictured to the right: Doors to the gym 1 street entrance decorated for commencement and the all-night lock-in.



These records, each with a photo of one senior class member, were part of the rockstar-theme decorations at the all-night graduation party. They served as a place for friends to leave an autograph for each other.



Rhett Miller and Torin Callstrom



Jack Carlson and Sofie Lodermeier grab a selfie on prom night.



"A Night in Paris" was the theme for the 2026 prom. Couples paused at the edge of the stage before going down the stairs and following the lighted path to the Eiffel Tower and a park bench for more photo ops.

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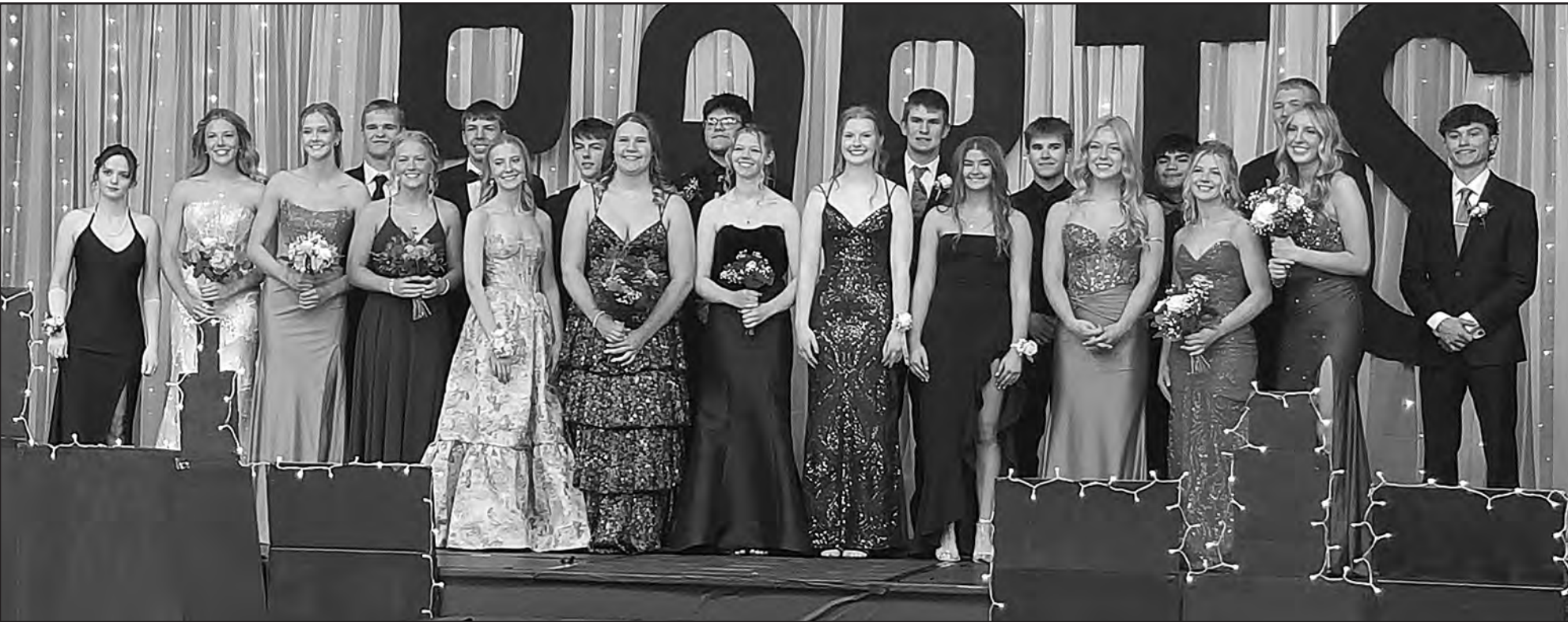
60146 Hwy. 63, Zumbro Falls

Goodhue Prom

June 4, 2026

- GOODHUE-BELLECHESTER MESSENGER -

Page 9



Seniors attending the 2026 prom



Juniors attending the 2026 prom



Sophomores attending the 2026 prom

GHS Awards Fifty-One Diplomas

(continued from page 1)

As they look forward to life outside the halls of GHS, Superintendent Dr. Evan Gough reminded them of the path that brought them here and the community that supports their future. "As you move on to new opportunities and experiences, remember the people and community that helped you reach this point. No matter where life takes you, there will always be people here who are proud of you, supportive of you, and excited to see what you accomplish in the future."

Following Dr. Gough's welcoming remarks, the high school choir performed "Time After Time" with solo parts by four seniors. Jacob McNamara then gave remarks on behalf of the faculty. He focused on living in the moment as you never know when one could change your life, saying, "Most moments don't feel important while they're happening."

He called the senior's attention to a letter they would receive tonight. "One tradition that we've had in fifth grade for years is that you write a letter to your senior self...What's amazing about watching students write these letters is not that I know their handwriting is going to improve, but that they feel like graduation is so far away...and suddenly, here you are. That's the thing about life, the moments that we think will last forever will somehow become memories faster than you expected them to come. These moments will end and we have to make the most of them."

McNamara went on in remembrance of deceased classmate, Austin "Randy" Holst, recalling how he lived life to the fullest with the slogan, "All gas, no brakes". "Be all-in and embrace the situation you are in because it'll be gone before you know it...Dream big, set achievable goals and work your tail off getting there." McNamara praised the class for

their work ethic and example to younger students. "Go out and make your family and community proud and know that you will always by a Goodhue Wildcat."

Ava Wallaker and Roland Munson polled their classmates on their favorite memories to share in their class speech. Stories involved worms and caterpillars in Kindergarten and first grade, competitions and broken bones in middle school, and learning through COVID in 2020. They acknowledged special teachers and special events like getting their driver's licenses and, of course Austin. They are proud of class accomplishments in sports and academics, thankful for good teachers and being part of the same small class throughout their school years. "You have the ability to impact those around you more than if you went to a larger school. Impact. That's what our message is. Every day you impact someone with words, gestures, and actions. To the class, each and every one of you have the opportunity to make an impact at any time...Each of us carry a piece of our class as we all embark on different paths. The lessons we have learned these last 13 years will carry us on. It is with that we close the chapter we began 13 years ago."

The 51 students of the 113th graduating class of Goodhue High School then received their diplomas from principal, Michele Rehder and school board members before leaving the stage to the recessional music of the high school band. A recording of the livestream can be found on the Wildcats YouTube page.

Graduates were applauded and honored while escorted by family or friends in a car parade around town. Posters and decorations adorned vehicles from the fire truck that kicked things off to semi trucks, classic convertibles to family SUVs, and pickups of all ages.

The class of 2026 spent their last night as a group locked in the school where they enjoyed a rockstar-themed party with cheeseburgers, mac and cheese, chips, ice cream and snacks. Danzig The Hypnotist entertained with a comedy hypnosis show at 11:30 PM. Other fun activities included games, a photo booth, and valuable door prizes.



Salutatorian, Julia Evans. Eyv Figueroa Hernandez in background



The empty chair tribute to Austin "Randy" Holst



Lights, sirens and three graduates led the car parade around town



Shelby Vogel in the car parade



Sofia Lodermeier riding with her dad, Brent

Wheat Trail Festival Organizers Feed Farmers

(continued from page 1)

The new, upcoming outdoor music and camping festival hopes to bring more attention to the mental health challenges that face our rural area. The food and conversation was meant to let farm workers know that people care and the community appreciates what they do.

400 lunch bags lined the tables inside the Goodhue Fire Department hall ready for volunteers to fill them with ham sandwiches, a bag of chips, a freshly baked chocolate chip cookie and a bottle of water. The bags also



Ben Holst and his sons received lunch bags while hauling manure for Brett Dankers Pumping.



Putting sandwiches together at Goodhue Market

contained a thank you message, mental health resources and festival information. The festival committee and Goodhue FFA chapter Members helped prepare the food, fill bags and make deliveries. Goodhue Market donated some food and supplies and offered others at cost. Lunches were left for employees and customers of some local Ag busi-

nesses while others were gifted at random across the area.

The Wheat Trail Festival is planned for July 24-25 in Belle Creek Township, 16764 342nd St. Way, Goodhue. The event hopes to raise money for mental health resources. See more about the festival in this issue.



(L-R) Micah Huneke, Noah Delk and Gus Raasch. Gus and new Goodhue FFA member, Noah delivered meals in the field to Micah at Huneke Dairy near Bellechester.

Wheat Trail Festival Puts the Spotlight on Rural Mental Health

By Beth Brekke

You've seen the ads, but what is the Wheat Trail Festival? It's a weekend of fun, camping, live music, food trucks, beanbag tournament, BBQ contest and more bringing awareness to mental health issues. Excitement is growing for the outdoor festival with a cause taking place July 24-25 in Belle Creek Township.

16764 342nd St. Way, Goodhue MN, is midpoint between Goodhue, Cannon Falls and Red Wing. The 200 acres owned by Dan Ryan will be transformed with stages, parking areas and 170 campsites for the weekend. Described as a kid-friendly summer community gathering with music, it will focus on mental-health support for rural and farming communities.

Leading the effort is Will Erickson who is using his previous experience with the Goodhue County Fair board and Goodhue Volksfest to organize the event. "I'm grateful to be able to make this vision come true after many years of thinking about it and talking about it. A little nudge from a great buddy made me move forward. What makes this special is the significant need for mental health and suicide support in the Ag and rural communities. I figured I would use my years of knowledge to support this issue. If I can make a difference in one person's life, that is a win in my eyes."

Working on the event with Will are Josh Finnesgard, Jamie Kells, Shawn Erickson, Molly Grobe, Lucas Erickson, Derek and Katie Weckerling, Paul Thomas "PT" Hohag, and Travis Ryan. Will says they are, "A group of friends who want meaning behind an event. We want to bring people together for conversations."

Any talk of suicide needs to be taken seriously. 134 people die by suicide each day in the United States making it the eleventh leading cause of death overall. Especially true in small communities, every suicide impacts at least 135 people. Team member, Jamie Kells reiterates, "Mental health challenges and suicide affect so many, yet they're often left unspoken. Raising awareness helps reduce stigma, encourages people to seek help, and builds supportive communities."

The festival is being put on in partnership with the LIVIN Foundation. Their mission, according to their website, is to "Prevent suicide by creating quality connections through everyday conversations about mental health, by way of programs and partnerships. We can't change the past, but together we can affect the future!" Their vision is to make "#LIVIN a universally recognized movement that promotes a world that is just as comfortable talking about mental health as it is the weather". On partnering with the Wheat Trail Festival, they acknowledge, "If we want to expand our impact, we'll need to plant some new roots!"

Through LivWell partners and the LIVIN Foundation, the Wheat Trail Festival organizers planned a suicide prevention training held at the Goodhue Community Center on March 7th. The free event included breakfast, suicide awareness training and a question and answer session. Paul Thomas Hohag, a media personality known as PT on KMNB The Wolf 102.9 FM radio station, welcomed attendees via live video feed.

After losing his father to suicide in 2013, PT founded the Minneapolis based non-profit LIVIN to start conversations around mental health and preventing suicide. "Instead of focusing on the way he died, I needed to embrace the way he lived. I needed to encourage others to talk about depression and suicide instead of hiding it due to embarrassment.

This way we could reduce the stigma associated with depression and other mental illnesses and maybe, just maybe, save a life in the process.

(continued on page 12)

Wheat Trail Festival Puts the Spotlight on Rural Mental Health

(continued from page 11)

Remember, it is ALWAYS a great day to be alive."

The program then moved on with QPR training. QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) is a formula that hopes to help save lives through recognizing warning signs and directing people to mental health resources including the 988 suicide prevention hotline. Other programs can be found through the county and state Department of Health. If people get the help they need, they may never be suicidal again. It is often a 10 minute window within a crisis that drives people to suicide and survivors admit that they immediately regretted their attempt. It is a myth that no one can stop a suicide. QPR is meant to inform people on how to open a conversation, listen without judgement and find professional help.

Ray Stenglein, Training & Inspiration Director for LivWell, led the training. Ray has turned personal tragedy into passion to help others and save lives. He began looking for mental health resources in 2012 when his oldest daughter attempted suicide five times. He lost his youngest daughter to suicide in 2016. He admits to using medication and a therapist to deal with his own mental health. "And that is OK", he says, encouraging men to seek help. Men between the ages of 25 and 50 make up the largest demographic of those who die by suicide – at a rate of nearly 4 times higher than women. "Between agriculture, community and construction (occupations), men are a big part of it."

"We want to focus on the farmer," says festival organizer, Shawn Erickson. Facing everyday struggles puts farmers at risk as they see their identity and legacy highly connected to their business. Pride and a lack of time and resources keep many from seeking professional help but sometimes they just need to talk. People considering suicide want to talk and this training may help recognize when someone is in a crisis, learn how to have these conversations and lead them to available resources.

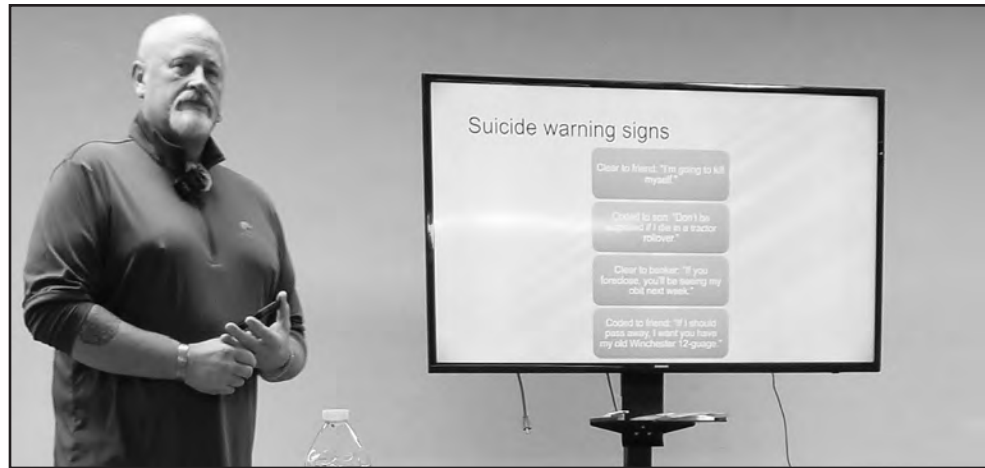
This course provides knowledge and skills to protect young people from self-directed violence. With today's youth having phones and social media providing constant contact, bullying doesn't end after school lets out. 52% of high-school-age kids struggle with anxiety or depression. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 11-24. LivWell wants those working with youth to reduce this risk by knowing as much as possible about mental health, suicidal behaviors and intervention. Many attending the March training were parents, educators or youth leaders. Stenglein stressed the importance of sharing personal struggles with children to open conversations and reduce the stigma around mental health.

Shawn says, "I am active in getting behind



Shawn Erickson speaks on rural mental health and how the new Wheat Trail Festival plans to bring awareness to the topic. Shawn is one of the organizers creating the two-day event featuring camping, outdoor activities and multiple country music entertainers.

Wheat Trail Festival because as a farm kid of the 1980s, Agriculture teacher of 25 years, livestock business owner, and former farm business management instructor, rural mental



Ray Stenglein with LivWell Partners presented QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training sponsored by the Wheat Trail Festival organization. Those attending the 90 minute seminar were given tips on recognizing a crisis and stepping in when needed and also received a certificate of completion.

health has been part of my life and awareness ever since I can remember. I know firsthand the importance of this topic and this is a small way that I can help give back to the agricultural community that has made me who I am today.

This could be something very, very special

for Southeastern Minnesota".

Highlighting the festival activities will be great country music provided by local artists Bryan Anderson on Friday and Foster Grand on Saturday.

(continued on page 13)

WHEAT TRAIL FESTIVAL

FOR RURAL MENTAL HEALTH

JULY 24TH & 25TH

FRIDAY NIGHT: GOODHUE, MN

SIDE STAGE: RYAN COLEMAN
BRYAN ANDERSON
NOAH HICKS

SATURDAY NIGHT:

SIDE STAGE: TRAVIS THALMERT
FOSTER GRAND
CORI KENNEDY

DYLAN SCOTT

MONTGOMERY GENTRY

FEATURING EDDIE MONTGOMERY

NOAH HICKS

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GOODHUE VOLKSFEST

JUNE 10-14, 2026

GOODHUEVOLKSFEST.COM



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

Medallion Hunt | First clue drops
5pm | **Pickle Ball Tourn.** | Heritage Park | \$30/team
7pm | **Pool Games** | Goodhue Pool

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

7pm | **Bar Olympics** | 2nd St Pub
5-7pm | **Volunteer Kickoff Party** | Corner Bar

7:00pm GATE | 8:00pm MUSIC

GA \$25 PRE-SALE & AT GATE

VIP \$60 PRE-SALE & AT GATE



FRIDAY, JUNE 12

1pm | **Pedal Tractor Pull** | Broadway/2nd Ave
4-7pm | **Sharp Sound DJ** | 2nd St Pub
4-7pm | **Kids Bounce Party, 12yr ↓** | GHS Gym 3
6pm | **Miss Goodhue** | GHS Gym 1 | \$5/Person

7pm | **Street Dance** | N 2nd St.

POP ROCKS

Fire at the Falls

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

8am reg. | **Udder Run** | Front of GHS | \$20/ea adv or \$25/ea day of
8am-1pm | **Car & Tractor Show** | St. Peters Church
8:30-11:30am | **Burrito Breakfast & Quilt Show** | St. Peters Church
8:45-10am reg. | **Road Rally** | Goodhue C-Store | \$5/person
9am | **Volleyball Tourn., Co-ed** | Rosie Park | \$30/team
9am-3pm | **Craft and Vendor Market** | Lion's Community Center
10am-Gone | **Minnow Shirts** | 2nd St Pub
10am | **3-on-3 Basketball, 11yr ↑** | GHS Gym 1 & 2 | \$100/Team
10am-12pm | **Kids Bounce Party, Toddler ONLY** | GHS Gym 3

11am-1pm | **Touch A Truck** | GHS Parking Lot
11am reg. | **Bean Bag Tourn.** | Rosie Park | \$40/team
12pm-2pm | **Kids Bounce Party, 12yr ↓** | GHS Gym 3
1pm | **Bingo** | Fire Hall
1-4pm | **Gopher State Garden Tractor Pull** | 3rd Ave
1-3pm | **Emma Marie Live** | 2nd St Pub
3-6pm | **Ron Bublitiz Live** | Corner Bar
3-7pm | **360 Photo Booth** | Food Court
4-7pm | **Hayden Ashworth Live** | 2nd St Pub
6pm | **Street Dance** | N 2nd St.
10pm | **Fireworks** | Rosie Park

6:00pm GATE | 6:30pm MUSIC

GA \$50 UNTIL 5/15 | \$60 5/15+ & AT GATE

VIP \$110 UNTIL 5/15 | \$130 5/15+

LONESTAR

DAVID NAIL

 Wild Bill & The Bruisers


SUNDAY, JUNE 14

9am-11:45am | **Dads Belgian Waffle Feed** | Lion's Community Center
5yr ↓ Free | Kids \$7 | Adults \$13
9am | **Community Worship Lutheran Service** | GHS Gym 1
11am | **Kids Coin Quest, 4-12yr** | Rosie Park
1pm | **Parade**

2-5pm | **Hayden Ashworth Live** | Corner Bar
2-5pm | **Tim Emmons Live** | 2nd St Pub
2:30pm | **Fire Dept. Water Fight** | Fire Dept.
4:30pm | **Monty's Traveling Reptile Show** | Rosie Park Pavillion

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Wheat Trail Festival Puts the Spotlight on Rural Mental Health

(continued from page 12)



Will Erickson answers questions following the suicide prevention seminar held in Goodhue on March 7th. The Wheat Trail Festival will take place July 24th-25th at 16764 342nd Street in rural Goodhue.

Friday will also feature popular recording artist Noah Hicks, and multi-platinum country music singer and songwriter, Dylan Scott whose most recent chart-topping song is "What He'll Never Have". Saturday's line-up includes West Concord native and 2025 contestant on "The Voice", Cori Kennedy opening for Eddie Montgomery, surviving member of the Montgomery Gentry CMA Vocal Duo of the Year Award winner.

The festival will also feature a keynote speaker on mental health, shining the spotlight on the topic. Organizers feel it is bigger than just an event. Will says, "It's about community, about showing up for one another. It's about continuing to bring awareness to mental health and suicide prevention in a real and meaningful way. Wheat Trail Festival is more than music and gathering together, it's a platform to start conversations that matter, reduce stigma and remind people they are not alone. Every sponsorship, every partnership, and every supporter helps us expand that impact. We're grateful for businesses that are willing to stand beside us and invest in something bigger than themselves. Together we can raise awareness, raise funds, and most importantly, raise hope."

Festival information can be found on the Wheat Trail Festival Facebook page and website www.wheattrailfestival.org. A link can be found on the website to order tickets online through Universe.

For mental health support, information on QPR training and other programs, visit www.livinfoundation.org or www.livewellpartners.com.

If you are experiencing a crisis, use the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline. Call, text or chat for 24/7 judgement-free support for mental health, substance use, and more.

2026 Goodhue County Breakfast on the Farm

(continued from page 1)

The breakfast is free to the public, and this year's breakfast will be hosted by the Lexvold

Family at Bombay Dairy. In addition to great food, there will be many activities to choose from, including Lexvold Farm Bingo, farm tours, the name a calf contest, and live music. Attendees will also have the opportunity to meet Princess Kay of the Milky Way, Malorie Thorson, and the Goodhue County Dairy Princesses. Free shuttles to and from the farm will also be running during the event. Pick-up locations for the shuttles include the Wanamingo Baseball Field and Kenyon Wanamingo High School.

The Goodhue County Breakfast is sponsored by Goodhue County Dairy Farmers, KCUE Radio, and local businesses. Shannon Harrell of Q-Mediagroup, a radio sponsor based in Red Wing, says the event has been going strong for more than 30 years. KCUE

98.9 FM of Red Wing will be broadcasting live at the event. The event aims to provide a fun, educational setting for the community to learn more about the dairy farming industry and to help individuals understand how milk is produced. Since June is National Dairy Month, the event provides a great opportunity to celebrate.

Donna Lexvold says their family is excited to host this year's Breakfast on the Farm. She commented, "it gives us an opportunity to showcase our farm and welcome people who normally do not have the chance to visit a

dairy farm and learn about agriculture." Last year's Breakfast on the Farm was hosted by the O'Reilly family at Green Acres Organic Dairy in Goodhue. Approximately 2,000 people attended.

Bombay Dairy was founded in 1995 as a partnership between Wayne Lexvold, Dick Nystuen, and Mark Wehe. Today, the farm is proudly run by the Lexvold Family. The milk produced at Bombay Dairy is processed into various types of cheeses and sold to grocery stores under the Fieldgate Cheese brand.

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Miss Goodhue Candidates



L to R: Erin Beck, Maya Roschen, Mari O'Connor, Taylor Thomforde, Lillian Raasch, Avery Tipton, Eleanor O'Reilly, Olivia Gadiant, Liesl Veiseth, Hazel Volkman

Miss Goodhue Pageant is Friday, June 12th @ 6:00pm in gym 1. Admission is \$5/person. 5 and under is free.



Friday, June 5th, 7-11 a.m.

Bombay Dairy - Lexvold Family

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- Tractor and Farm Equipment Display
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Sponsored By: Goodhue County Dairy Farmers, KCUE Radio, and local Businesses



The Lexvold Family

L to R: Mitchel, Barron, Mallory, Marshall, Donna, Wayne, Kaitlin, Kade, Nathan, & Kael

Join our Host Family Farm - Bombay Dairy -

to celebrate June Dairy Month!

Direction from Kenyon: Take Highway 60 Blvd East 5 miles
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FREE BUS SHUTTLES:

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The shuttle will run continuously from 7-11 am.

The June Dairy Breakfast on the Farm is a "fun" yet "educational" event to explain how milk is produced and to educate consumers and community on the positive impact the dairy industry has in Goodhue County and MN. They want to say "Thank you" for being our neighbor and supporting our family farm.

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2026 Goodhue County Dairy Princesses L to R: Hannah Gudknecht of Wanamingo, Chloe Sjoquist of Cannon Falls and Leetta O'Reilly of Goodhue.
Missing: Goodhue County Dairy Princess Jenna O'Reilly of Goodhue



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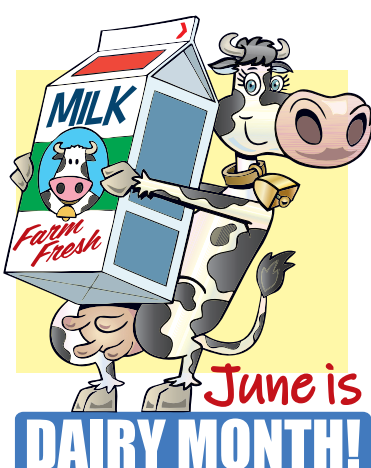


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Land Legacy



By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern
Minnesota Initiative
Foundation

During the summer of my junior year of college, I had what I now call my “quarter-life existential crisis.”

I was 21 years old and spending the summer in Waseca on the family farm, a stark departure from the life I was living in Boston during the school year. Instead of cocktail bar hopping in the city with my new 21-year-old status, I was spending most of my days tagging along on the four-wheeler with my Uncle Paul. It was one of those afternoon four-wheeler rides that changed the trajectory of my life.

Usually, we would spend those rides assessing the water levels at Moonan Marsh — but this time, Uncle Paul took me on a “legacy tour.” He pointed to plots of land that seemed empty to me, but beneath the rows of soybeans planted was a story of a family. A family who, like mine, had weathered the challenges of the 1980s farm crisis on a shoe-string and managed to make it to generation six on the family farm today. Other families weren’t so fortunate. Some were forced to sell their land at pennies on the dollar, losing not just the land but the sense of identity that came along with it. For some, the loss of that identity was so devastating that entire lives were lost to suicide. At the end of the day, Uncle Paul took me to a plot of land under a big oak tree. “This is where I want to be buried one day,” he said.

Experiencing the depth of connection between farmers and their land in such a way changed me. I learned the meaning of stewardship. Of building toward a legacy you may

never see. Of enduring sacrifices today so that future generations may somehow feel the depth of your love, buried deep into the land. In that soil is your legacy, and the legacy of love you’ve inherited from those before you.

Today, the challenges of farming have a lot of similarities to the 1980s. Between soaring land prices, the increasing cost of inputs, volatile commodity prices and extremely tight profit margins, it is harder than ever to keep farmland within the family. Especially given that the average age of a farmer in Minnesota is 57 years old, our 20-county region is set to experience nearly \$7 billion in agricultural wealth transfer over the next ten years as farmers move toward retirement. Without a clear transition plan, the earnings from this farmland may end up in the pockets of individual investors without much connection to our region. The farmer’s love buried deep in the soil may stay buried, without a pathway to bear fruit to the next generation.

At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, we offer a pathway to retaining that legacy through our Acres for Good program — an opportunity for landowners to donate their farmland to the foundation, so that future earnings from their land can be re-invested back into their community.

We know that making a decision on the future of one’s farmland is a deeply personal one.

It’s not just an “asset transfer.” It’s a sense of responsibility, an ancestral connection, a testament of resilience and a question of one’s legacy. There is a heartbreak in realizing that one’s farmland may not pass onto a next generation of family ownership. Acres for Good does not erase that heartbreak, but can perhaps give it purpose. What if your farmland legacy could show up in the face of a young child, who now has access to high quality Early Childhood education because of the investment your land left them with? Or the new entrepreneur who can follow his dream because of the start-up investment your land has unlocked? Or perhaps the emerging farmer who can build that same connection to the soil your ancestors had because of the donation you made possible?

When I drive across our region today, I no longer see empty plots of land the way I did as a child. Instead, I see the legacies that lay beneath that land — that of my own family and of the hundreds of families across southern Minnesota who are shaped by the love of the lives buried within that soil. It’s with that care to legacy that we invite you to explore a conversation with us about the legacy you, too, would like your land to leave for the future of southern Minnesota.

To learn more about our Acres for Good program, visit smifoundation.org/acres.

Farm Girl Chatter Sweet Summertime

By McKell Lemmerman

You can always tell when summertime officially hits farm country. The gravel roads get dusty, the tractors start multiplying like rabbits, and every farmer suddenly develops a degree in weather forecasting. One little cloud rolls in and there’s already three guys standing outside saying, “looks like rain coming.”

Summer on the farm is a different kind of beautiful. The fields turn bright green almost overnight, fresh grass starts growing faster than anyone can keep up with, and the countryside finally wakes up after another long Minnesota winter. There’s something about hearing thunder roll through the hills while rain taps on the shed roof that makes everything feel alive again.

The livestock knows it, too. They spend their days belly-deep in fresh grass at what can only be described as an all-you-can-eat gourmet buffet. Honestly, some of them look so relaxed you’d think they booked a spa weekend.

Then there are babies. Calves, foals, kids, lambs—whatever kind of critter you raise—summer is when they discover speed. One minute they’re peacefully standing next to mom, and the next they’re sprinting laps around the pasture.

This is also the season of everyone’s favorite insect, yep the fly. The livestock stand in the middle of the field acting majestic until a fly lands on them and sud-

denly, they’re performing karate moves.

As the days go on, the farmers are out there sweating through three shirts a day; sweat dripping into places no sweat should ever be. Everyone smells faint of sunscreen and diesel fuel.

Summer evenings make it all worth it though. Sitting outside after chores are done with a cold drink in hand, listening to the frogs sing from the ditch while the sun drops behind the fields. Friends stop by unannounced; lawn chairs magically appear from garages, and conversations last longer.

There’s peace in those moments. Just a sweet summertime and the simple kind of happiness you can only find out in the country.



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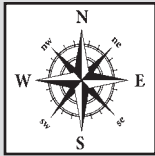


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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

What is in a Name?



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 wonder how many people dislike their name? An Internet search claims 16% of the population of the United States wish they had been given a different name. I do know some who have changed their name when they were old enough to do so. As a child I would have

happily done just that.

As a child I was not happy with my name. I hated it. Everyone I knew with that name was a girl. Believe me, an eight-year-old boy in 1965 did not want a girl's name.

I was the third child so the novelty of naming a kid was over. I was "baby boy" when I came home from the hospital. I was also the middle child. They didn't even bother to give me a middle name. They had things going on. My mom had two kids already, which I imagine my grandma was watching while she was in the hospital. By the way, I was a cheap child. My mom saved the hospital bill when I was born. It was \$98.00.

My dad had just built a new hog barn and was farrowing the group of sows the night I was born. He told me it was a hot July and the temperature was about 100 degrees in the farrowing barn that night.

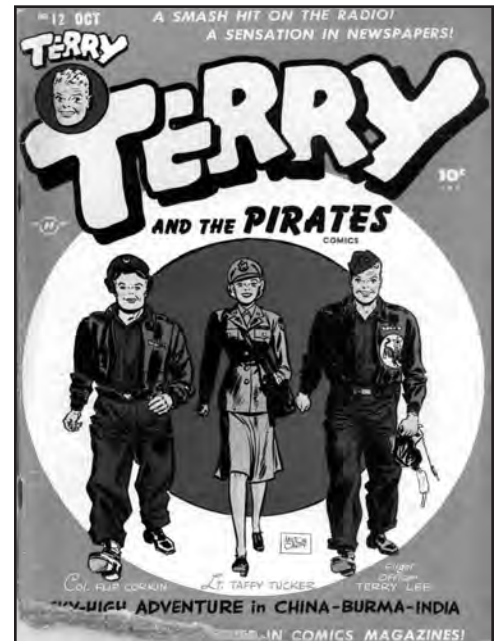
My mom said I was kind of a hefty baby and already had curly hair when I was born. The nurses nick-named me Gorgeous George after a pro wrestler in the 1950's. George Raymond Wagner (Gorgeous George), was quite a celebrity and turned pro wrestling into the showmanship sport it has become today. Muhammed Ali patterned his flamboyant boxing ring antics after Gorgeous George.

A few days after I came home from the hospital I still was "baby boy". It was time for decisions. Years ago, my dad told me how I got my name. It came to him as he read the newspaper while eating breakfast one morning.

There was a comic strip in the newspaper called "Terry and the Pirates." It was very popular and was in syndication from 1934 to

1973. It was created by Milton Caniff about an adventurous American boy, Terry Lee, who went on adventures in the far east starting with searching for a lost gold mine in China. With the outbreak of World War 2, he joined the United States Army as a pilot. Milton Caniff was very patriotic and the series then became almost exclusively about World War II with much action centering on a U.S. Army base in China. He even provided a spin off for the Stars & Stripes military newspaper. The cartoon series did win the first cartoonist of the year award in 1946 from the National Cartoonist Society.

So, it seems I was named after a cartoon character. My parents would call me Terry Lee, but the middle name was never official. I would have rather been just Lee. I guess it could have been worse. I have got used to it as time passed. Funny how when one gets older, what is important changes.



A Minnesotan: The Woods



By RosaLin Alcoser

contrast if I really just want to be out of the city and back in the woods again we have so many options for doing that as well.

Especially for people who like to hike. I grew up just walking about in the woods, which I now know is basically what hiking is, because it was something to do and it was fun. It was rural Minnesota in the mid to late 2000s going outside to play in the woods is just what we did. And if rural Minnesotan kids don't do that any more they should because it's fun. Now that I live in the city I have become a person who likes to hike, because frankly going outside into the woods is still fun.

About a half hour south west of Cannon Falls is Nerstrand Big Woods State Park. This park is home to the endangered Dwarf Trout Lily, which as we learned from a park ranger only grows in three counties in Minnesota. Funnily enough I did recognize this flower from being a child in one of three counties and I'm fairly certain that I probably picked it at somepoint—so oops.

Aside from being home to an endangered plant, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park is just a beautiful park with so many paths to walk. So if you are someone who likes to go walking in the woods and either doesn't have woods in your back yard or wants different woods to walk in. I would highly recommend going there to walk and to see the Dwarf Trout Lily.

One of the best things about living in Minnesota is how absolutely beautiful our summers are. By far our state has some of the best summer weather—mostly because we don't get baked alive all summer long—but also some of the most lush greenery I've ever seen.

We also have some of the best parks to spend the summers in, on both the city and state level. As someone who grew up in rural Minnesota and now lives in the twin cities I really do appreciate how wonderful the parks are in this state. Since if I want to be in a heavily wooded area for about a half hour to an hour I can easily do that within walking distance from my home. In

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Sitting Too Much May Lead to an Early Demise



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

Do you sit a lot? I have spent a lot of time reviewing patient habits, and one thing I always share with our community is that we often underestimate the quiet habits that shape our health. You might think that going to the gym every morning and getting your sweat in is enough to protect your heart, but recent data tells a different story. If you sit for more than 10.6 hours a day, your risk of heart failure jumps by 45%, and the risk of cardiovascular death increases by 62%. What really stands out is that this happens even to people who exercise regularly, meaning that a morning workout simply does not undo the damage of sitting at a desk for the rest of the day. To understand why this happens, we have to look at what sitting does to the body on a functional level. Prolonged sitting severely impairs your blood circulation, causing blood to pool in your legs and making your heart work much harder than it needs to. On top of that, remaining still for hours decreases your body's insulin sensitivity and significantly reduces mitochondrial activity, sending your cell's energy factories into a low-power state. Over time, these combined factors cause chronic inflammation and do real damage to your cardiovascular health. The good news I want to pass along is that breaking up this sedentary time is entirely in your control and makes an immediate difference. You do not need a drastic lifestyle overhaul to protect your heart. Studies show that simply reallocating 30 minutes of sitting time to light activity lowers your risk of heart failure by 7%. Regular movement spread consistently throughout your day is absolutely necessary

to protect your heart health and keep your metabolic function running exactly how it should.

We can tackle this together by building better rhythms into our daily lives. Simple, everyday strategies like making sure you stand up for just 10 minutes every single hour can completely reset your metabolism and restore your circulation. Finding small ways to integrate more walking into your routine, whether that means pacing during a phone call or taking a quick stroll after lunch, will significantly lower your cardiovascular risks. It is not about perfection; it is about keeping your body in motion and taking care of the heart that works so hard for you.

Sciatica Information: For those that know me, you know I am deeply passionate about helping people understand their bodies and overcome discomfort. Sciatica can hit incredibly hard, stemming from the irritation of your sciatic nerve—the long, powerful nerve running from your lower back down to your foot. When this nerve gets compressed or irritated, it causes sharp, shooting pain, numbness, or a tingling sensation that makes even the simplest daily movements feel like a monumental challenge. The majority of sciatic symptoms come from a pelvic imbalance. Chiropractic care realigns the pelvic joints and relaxes the muscles that irritate the sciatic nerve,

When that sudden bolt of pain strikes, your first instinct is usually to stop moving and rest in bed, but I always tell our community that movement—not prolonged rest—is the true key to your recovery. Staying still actually allows the tissues around the nerve to tighten up even more. By keeping your body moving, you increase crucial blood flow to the area, reduce lingering inflammation, and actively help your nervous system heal much faster than it would if you just stayed on the couch.

You do not need to push through grueling workouts when the pain is intense; instead, you want to focus on gentle, deliberate activities that relieve pressure and prevent stiffness. Short, comfortable walks and swimming are fantastic ways to keep your spine mobile without adding unnecessary stress. Incorporating simple, targeted stretches right at home—like a gentle knee-to-chest stretch or a prone, cobra-style press-up—can work wonders for decompressing the lower spine and coaxing that irritated nerve to settle down during frustrating flare-

ups.

Once you get the immediate pain under control, keeping that sciatica from returning relies heavily on the daily habits we practice. It is extremely important to pay attention to your core foundation by strengthening the muscles in your hips and midsection, which take the heavy lifting off your lower back so your spine isn't overloaded. Limiting how long you sit, correcting your posture so you aren't slouching, and supporting your spine properly with the right pillows while you sleep are simple adjustments that drastically reduce the daily compression on your spinal discs. Periodic spinal pelvic adjustments are essential for keeping the condition from coming back.

I want to reassure you that while this condition is frustrating, your body is fully capable of healing, and most people recover fully within just a few weeks. The secret is staying consistent with your activity and strategically using a wrapped ice pack during the first few days to calm the initial inflammation, before switching to comforting heat to relax those tight muscles. By staying active and making these mindful lifestyle choices, you are building a strong, resilient spine that is ready to help you get back to enjoying your everyday life pain-free.

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

Fermented Foods



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

There is a myth that has been promoted for decades that bacteria are the source of most of our health problems. The suggested thought is that a bacteria free environment will be a healthy environment. The action step has been promotion of anti-bacteria wipes and hand gels, antibiotic medications, and sterile foods. However, we have not seen a great improvement in health among our communities with these action steps.

The truth is that there are more bacteria cells than human cells living within and on any human body. Our body is outnumbered by millions of bacteria cells that live in community with our body. Most of these bacteria help promote health and fight off the germs that want to cause trouble. I describe the importance of your bacteria community similar to riding a bus. When you get on the bus and see all your friends in the seats, you know this is going to be a great trip. If you get on the bus and see some rowdy thugs, you will not have a great trip. Your goal is to make sure all the bacteria riding with you are friends who want to support you.

There are many probiotic supplement products on the market today. My general recommendation is to look for 1) a product that contains ten to twelve different bacteria names on the ingredient list, 2) a product that is stored in the refrigerator, and 3) a product with at least 25 billion colony forming units (CFU) per capsule. This capsule should be taken in the evening before bed to allow the bacteria to move

through the intestines without a rush of food around.

Probiotic rich foods are an excellent way to regularly support quality bacteria friends for your daily trip. Some of these foods include: sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, kombucha, yogurt, and cheese. Most any vegetable can be fermented in a simple process in the kitchen. The fermentation process will produce a soured vegetable product similar to pickling but without the vinegar. The vegetable and liquid brine will be rich with bacteria that will stimulate healthy digestion, improved energy, mental clarity, and healthy skin.

A 2021 article in the Stanford Medicine News described a recent 10-week study comparing a high fiber diet with a fermented food diet. At the conclusion of the study, those individuals in the fermented food group had lowered inflammation to nineteen different measures. The participants in the high fiber diet did not see a decrease in any of the nineteen measures. By regularly consuming bacteria rich foods, the "friends on the bus" kept the problems away.

Sources you can access to learn more about fermentation and healthy fermented foods include: www.cuttingedgecultures.com - an online resource providing starter cultures and education, www.culturedfoodlife.com - a website with articles, videos, recipes, and starter cultures for sale. Sandor Katz has a well-known book called, "Wild Fermentation," and Dr. William Davis authored, "Super Gut." These sources will start you towards a healthier lifestyle based on quality fermented foods.

Health is the result of healthy choices. A supportive community is needed to help make these healthy choices become a lifestyle. I have written in previous articles about healthy weight and continue to provide resources to support healthy lifestyle choices that can help you reach your health goals. Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. Nutrition is designed for healing. I can help you reach greater health freedom in 2026. Contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

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Talking Strokes with University of Minnesota

Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While strokes can occur at any age, stroke risk increases with age. Early action is critical for optimal outcomes.

Haitham Hussein, MD, with the University of Minnesota Medical School and M Health Fairview talks about stroke symptoms, risk factors and ways to prevent it.

Q: What are the symptoms of a stroke?

Dr. Hussein: Stroke symptoms usually happen suddenly. The most common symptoms include weakness or numbness on one side of

the body (arm, leg or face droop), trouble walking or losing balance, speech difficulties (slurring, confusion or inability to express/understand words) and vision changes (painless blindness in one eye, peripheral vision loss or double vision). Severe headache and a decreased level of consciousness can also be signs of a less common, but severe, type of stroke.

Anyone who suspects that they are experiencing stroke warning signs must call 911 immediately. You do not have to be sure that you are having a stroke – suspicion is a good enough reason to call 911.

Q: What is the difference between a stroke and a heart attack?

Dr. Hussein: Stroke is a brain condition characterized by neurological symptoms that result from brain dysfunction. There are two types of strokes:

Ischemic stroke: Caused by a blockage of one of the arteries.

Hemorrhagic stroke: Caused by a rupture of one of the arteries of the brain, causing bleeding within or around the brain.

To differentiate between types of stroke,

brain imaging — either a CT scan or an MRI — is essential. Patients with stroke symptoms should avoid taking aspirin prior to arriving at the hospital and confirming the absence of a hemorrhagic stroke.

A heart attack occurs when a coronary artery is blocked, causing a severe reduction in blood flow to the heart muscle, which then begins to die. Symptoms of a heart attack include chest pain or a feeling of heaviness, shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, cold sweats and nausea.

Q: What are the risk factors? Is there anything I can do to prevent a stroke?

Dr. Hussein: Risk factors of stroke include chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, high cholesterol and stress, unhealthy lifestyle such as unhealthy diet, smoking and lack of exercise, and social conditions such as belonging to racial minorities, poverty, lack of health insurance, food insecurity and living in areas with air/water pollution.

There's a lot you can do to prevent stroke. The American Heart Association highlights eight key measures to maintain good health and prevent heart disease and stroke: a healthy diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, avoiding smoking, managing body weight and maintaining good blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol. Every one of us must have a primary care provider from birth to old age. Primary care providers are the champions of stroke prevention. We also now know that good dental care is protective from stroke, so I encourage everyone to have a primary dentist/dental hygienist, brush their teeth and floss twice a day.

Q: How are strokes treated?

Dr. Hussein: Stroke treatment depends on the type of stroke. Ischemic stroke is treated with clot busters and mechanical thrombectomy. Clot busters are IV medications that go in the bloodstream and dissolve blood clots

that block arteries. Mechanical thrombectomy is a minimally invasive procedure to open blocked large arteries with thin wires and catheters under X-ray.

Hemorrhagic stroke is treated by tightly controlling the blood pressure and, in some cases, brain surgery to remove the blood, lower the brain pressure or close the source of bleeding, such as a brain aneurysm. All these treatments are time dependent. The faster a stroke patient comes to the hospital, the more likely they would qualify for and benefit from the treatment. Time is brain!

Q: How does your work improve health in Minnesota?

Dr. Hussein: We at the University of Minnesota Stroke Program have three missions: patient care, education and research. Our telestroke network allows us to provide the same high quality care to stroke patients whether they are admitted to one of our rural or urban hospitals. This is very important because studies have shown that nationwide, stroke outcomes in rural settings are worse than in urban settings. We train the future generation of doctors, neurologists and stroke specialists in our neurology department and stroke service, contribute to medical education programs for doctors in rural Minnesota, and engage in community education through various channels. As a major stroke research center, we are involved in many ongoing clinical trials. This keeps us at the forefront of stroke care advancements and provides our patients with the opportunity to participate in studies that are shaping the future of treatment

Dr. Haitham Hussein is an associate professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School and a neurologist with M Health Fairview. His clinical interests include stroke prevention, quality of care and health disparities.

Public Health Spotlight

25th Annual Lightning Safety Awareness Week June 21 – 27, 2026

The National Weather Service (NWS) is celebrating its 25th annual National Lightning Safety Awareness Week June 21 through June 27, 2026. Lightning is an underestimated killer. People think of trees being dangerous because they're tall but many deaths and injuries occur frequently in open fields, including ballparks and playgrounds, because then people are the tall objects.

Use the 30-30 rule, when visibility is good and there isn't anything obstructing your view of the thunderstorm. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within six miles of you and is dangerously close. Seek shelter immediately. The threat of lightning continues for a much longer period than most people realize. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky!

Lightning Facts

- The odds of becoming a lightning victim in the U.S. in any one year is 1 in 1,735,000. The odds of being struck in your lifetime are roughly 1 in 21,700.
- Lightning can kill people (492 deaths were recorded in the U.S. between 2006 and 2024) or cause cardiac arrest. Injuries range from severe burns and permanent brain damage to memory loss and personality change. About 10 percent of lightning-strike victims are killed, but 70 percent of survivors suffer serious long-term effects. About 400 people survive lightning strokes in the U.S. each year.
- Ice in a cloud may be key in the development of lightning. Ice particles collide as they swirl around in a storm, causing a separation of electrical charges. Positively charged ice crystals rise to the top of the thunderstorm, and negatively charged ice particles and hailstones drop to the lower parts of the storm. Enormous charge differences develop. A moving thunderstorm also gathers positively charged particles along the ground that travel with the storm. As the differences in charges continue to increase, positively charged particles rise up tall objects such as trees, houses, and telephone poles—and people.
- Most lightning deaths and injuries in the United States occur during the summer months, when the combination of lightning and outdoor activities reaches a peak. People involved in activities such as fishing, bicycling, golfing or working outdoors all need to take the appropriate actions quickly when thunderstorms approach.
- Victims of lightning do not retain the charge and are not "electrified" so it's safe to help them.
- Even inside homes people must avoid activities that put their lives at risk from a possible lightning strike. As with the outdoor activities, these activities should be avoided before, during, and after storms. In particular, people should stay away from windows and doors and avoid contact with anything that conducts electricity.

For interesting survivor stories and lightning photos, go to www.weather.gov/safety/lightning.





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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: *I am interested in getting an E-Bike, but I do not know what the laws are. Can you get me some more information?*

Answer: Under Minnesota law, a legal electric-assisted bicycle must meet all of the following requirements:

- The motor must not exceed 750 watts of power.
- The maximum assisted speed must not exceed 28 miles per hour.
- The bicycle must have fully functional pedals that can be used to propel the bike.

Any vehicle that does not meet these requirements is not considered an e-bike under Minnesota law. Any modification that increases speed or increased the motor output may be unlawful.

Age restrictions also apply. Even legal e-bikes may not be operated by anyone under the age of 15.

Additional information can be found <https://www.bikemn.org/initiatives/ebike/>

Question: *In my community and on my daily commute I encounter two roundabouts each morning, others that I work with will encounter three roundabouts in less than five minutes. Please use your platform to remind drivers how to safely and properly use a roundabout. I see, almost on a daily basis, drivers physically stop their vehicle for other drivers that have not even entered the roundabout. They'll allow multiple vehicles to traverse the roundabout before they even attempt to enter the roundabout. This creates a very dangerous situation as my assumption is that the vehicle will slow to begin entering the roundabout and then safely enter, but when they slam on their*

brakes, it then causes me the need to adjust and brake abruptly, even when slowing to 20mph or whatever the posted speed limit is. To cite Minnesota's own website... "Yield to vehicles already in the roundabout." Roundabouts are meant to keep the flow of traffic moving at a safe constant speed, not disrupt the flow with drivers stopping. If possible, please be clear about what is considered safe driving in a roundabout and what is not.

Answer: This is always a good topic for conversation and a reminder. To start with how do roundabouts work? Due to the curvature of the roundabout entry, drivers slow and check traffic coming from the left. A raised center prevents drivers from watching other traffic and only being concerned with yielding to traffic already in the circle. This prevents the intersection from "locking up," which could happen if the traffic in the roundabout had to stop for entering traffic. Pavement markings, curves at entry points, and raised islands direct traffic into a one-way counter-clockwise flow around the center island. The radius of the roundabout and the angles of entry slow the speed of all vehicles to around 15-25 mph.

For Drivers:

- Slow down when approaching a roundabout. For multi-lane roundabouts, get into the appropriate lane.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk when entering and exiting the roundabout. It's the law.
- Yield to vehicles already in the roundabout. Merge into the traffic flow when it is safe.
- Continue through the roundabout until you reach your exit. Do not stop or pass in a roundabout.
- Exit the roundabout immediately if an emergency vehicle approaches and then pull over. Do not stop in the roundabout.
- Give large trucks extra space in a roundabout. Large trucks may straddle both lanes while driving through a multi-lane roundabout or use the truck apron on the center island if needed.

For Pedestrians:

- Cross only at crosswalks and always stay on the designated walkways.
- Never cross to the central island.
- Cross the roundabout one approach at a time. Use the median island as a halfway

point where you can check for approaching traffic.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson – Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848 (You can follow him on "X" @MSPPIO_SOUTH or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

Question: *Like most people I travel everyday for work and I know that construction season is upon us. Can you write about getting people to understand the zipper merge? I still see a lot of people that can't seem to figure this out.*

Answer: The zipper merge is a driving strategy that requires drivers to change their mindset about merging. Traditionally, drivers have been taught to merge early when a lane is ending. Early merging leads to longer backups, more crashes and road rage incidents.

Zipper merge procedure

- When you see the "lane closed ahead" sign and traffic is backing up, stay in your current lane until the point of merge.
- Take turns with other drivers to safely and smoothly merge into the remaining lane.
- When traffic is heavy and slow, it is safer to remain in your current lane until the point where traffic can take turns merging orderly.

Benefits of the zipper merge

- Reduces the difference in speeds between two lanes, making lane changes easier and safer.
- Reduces the overall length of traffic backups by up to 40 percent.
- Reduces congestion at freeway interchanges, especially in metropolitan areas.
- Creates a sense of fairness when all lanes are moving at the same speed.
- Reduces incidents of road rage.

Question: *I know you talk about the importance of tires when it comes to the winter months but I think it's just as important to talk about it in the spring with rain and wet roads. Thank you.*

Answer: It is always a good time to talk about tire safety. Tires must support your vehicle's weight and grip the road properly. Inspect tires regularly for cuts, cracks, uneven wear, bald spots, bulges and punctures. Always carry a good spare tire and check its

pressure often. Tires have less traction on gravel or dirt roads than on concrete or asphalt.

Tires can lose up to 1 PSI of pressure every month. Check your tire pressure often and never drive with under-inflated tires.

- Find your vehicle's recommended tire pressure on a sticker inside the driver's door or in the owner's manual.
- Check tire pressure before driving or at least three hours after driving.
- Insert a pressure gauge into the valve stem on your tire. The gauge will show the measured PSI.
- Compare the measured PSI to the PSI on the sticker inside the driver's door or in the owner's manual, not the PSI on the tire's sidewall.

• If the measured PSI is above the recommended number, let air out until it matches. If below, add air until it reaches the proper number.

• Check your tires often for wear and damage. A tire is illegal if the tread is less than one-sixteenth inch deep.

Question: *In last week's article you wrote about e-bikes. Can you also just provide a reminder on all around bicycle safety? Thank you.*

Answer: If you're riding a bicycle, you must:

- Obey all traffic control signs and signals, just as you would when driving.
- The only exception is that bicyclists may treat stop signs as yield signs when the intersection is clear.
- Use signals, if able, to let people behind you know when you're turning.
- Use good judgement. Remember that you are sharing the road, and it is important to be predictable to avoid a crash.
- Use a headlight and rear reflectors when it's dark.

If you are driving near a bicyclist: Stay three feet away when passing. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson – Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

100 Deadliest Days

Summer is calling, and that means epic road trips, weekend getaways, and quality time with family and friends. However, because the 100 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day are historically the most traveled – and the most dangerous days on roads, law enforcement is stepping up patrols through the summer. They will be heavily targeting the "Big Four" behaviors that contribute to the most crashes: speeding, distracted driving, driving while impaired, and not wearing a seat belt.

It's easy to treat the daily commute or weekend drive as routine, but the reality is that the road can be unpredictable. According to safety experts, most crashes are the result of choices made behind the wheel. Last year alone, between May 26 and September 1, there were 111 fatalities on Minnesota roads.

The breakdown reveals the tragic truth that these 111 fatalities were preventable.

- Never drive impaired: 37 deaths involved alcohol.
- Slow down: 31 deaths involved speeding.
- Buckle up: 16 deaths involved a victim not wearing a seat belt.
- Stay focused: 5 deaths involved a distracted driver.

Making the conscious choice to slow down, buckle up, stay focused, and drive sober can mean the difference between life and death – for you, your loved ones, and everyone else on the road. Together, we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.

Safe Actions Save Lives

With construction season kicking off it's time for an important reminder to motorists to slow down and stay alert behind the wheel.

Share these work zone safety tips with friends and family to help them understand the dangers road workers face every day. Understanding that the risks are real can change the way people drive.

Eyes up, phone down: Distracted drivers are the biggest threat; maintain constant 360-degree awareness and face traffic whenever possible.

The "Exit Plan": Always have an escape route in mind and stay alert for screeching tires and horns.

Be seen: Ensure your high-vis PPE is clean, in good condition and worn correctly.

Park smart: Use work vehicles as a buffer between the crew and traffic and keep all activity and equipment within the designated work zone whenever possible.

Whether you earn a living on the roads or travel them to get home, it is vital to stay focused – especially in work zones. Your life and the lives of others depend on it. Together we can drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.



Heartbreaking Stories: The Human Side of Fraud



Rep. Pam Altendorf (R)
District: 20A

An estimated \$9 billion in fraud has been stolen from Minnesotans. It's a staggering number. We hear this total and are outraged that we've been swindled out of our hard-earned money. We pay our property taxes knowing the impact this theft has had on taxpayers.

Minnesota became a fraud magnet. We know people come from outside of Minnesota - other states and countries - because word had spread about how easily you could manipulate the government systems for profit.

We are compassionate people; we have always prided ourselves on taking care of our neighbors and those in need. When "shell" companies are set up "for profit," dollars are going out, but the real tragedy are those dollars are not going to the people in need: the elderly or disabled.

A recent Minneapolis StarTribune report once again confirmed what many of us have said all along: your government knew fraud was taking place, but refused to step in. One whistleblower called the Feeding our Future scandal - where \$250 million was lost - an "open secret."

From the article: "State education officials repeatedly raised concerns about possible fraud in the federally funded meals program during the pandemic, but their supervisors stopped them from taking more aggressive action."

Why? They feared potential lawsuits and being called racist.

An employee was "told by management at MDE to stop digging into things because it will appear as if she was targeting certain

groups," and was "warned not to do anything that would be considered targeting or discriminating against certain diverse communities."

If the fear of being called racist was happening within the Department of Education, then it was happening elsewhere and fraud was being allowed to fester. But what about the human cost of these decisions and the complete mismanagement of our state government?

A family from Lake City could not find an assisted living facility with an opening nearby for their elderly father. This led to family members unknowingly placing him in a shady Metro Area facility. When they came to visit, they found he hadn't been showered or fed. Alarmed, they tried to pull him out of the facility, which led to management threatening to call the police and have him arrested. By the time they got him out of there, he was filled with bed sores, had lost 50 pounds, and was nearly dead.

This facility missed all the very basic expectations of care for an elderly man. But they certainly didn't miss charging hundreds of dollars per day to Medicare for services they claimed but never performed.

Fraud should not be a political football. Investigations should not be shut down nor whistleblowers retaliated against. This is just one example of a human tragedy due to the blatant mismanagement of state government programs.

There are others. I have connected with a local autism center and multiple disability

homes - all with real people needing care and services. Yet, they are all facing significant challenges due to Minnesota's bungling of this fraud epidemic.

Outside of the fraud arena, local business owners have contacted me about this state's anti-business policies and over regulation. Multi-million-dollar projects growing our local economy getting caught up with this state's cumbersome permitting process. One investor fears he is heading towards bankruptcy, not because of anything he has control over, but by waiting on the state. He told me this week, "I would never have built my business in Minnesota if I knew it was going to be like this." I find this tremendously awful.

If state government is considered a three-legged stool, with the governor, House and Senate serving as the three legs, House Republicans had one-half of one leg this session. The other 2 1/2 legs are controlled by Democrats. With that in mind, I am proud of our accomplishments this session: \$400 million in tax relief, creating a fraud investigation office, updating outdated human services technology for counties, and preventing billions of dollars in new tax increases from becoming law.

But just imagine what could be done if the public realized that their state government is beyond dysfunctional and demanded change. Stories of human suffering due to purposeful government mismanagement and neglect are unacceptable. We must find the will to do better.

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Kevin Dather Announces Candidacy for Goodhue County Commissioner Representing District 4

Zumbrota, MN — Kevin Dather today officially announced their candidacy for Goodhue County Commissioner representing District 4, pledging to bring practical leadership, fiscal responsibility, and a strong voice for local residents and communities across the district.

A resident of District 4 he has built a reputation through small business ownership, public service, farming, education, and by asking others for ways to make the economy more sustainable at the local level. Through this experience, he has developed a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Goodhue County residents.

"Our county is a great place to live, work, and raise a family," Dather said. "But we face important decisions about infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and responsible budgeting. I'm running to ensure that District 4 has a clear, steady voice focused on common-sense solutions and long-term stability."

If elected, I will prioritize:

- Responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars
- Support for local roads, bridges, and infrastructure
- Maintain public safety and emergency services
- Encouraging economic growth while preserving the character of our communities
- Transparent, accountable county government

He emphasizes a commitment to listening to constituents: "Good decisions start with hearing from the people affected by them." I plan to be accessible, responsive, and grounded in the needs of our communities."

The campaign will focus on connecting directly with voters throughout District 4 in the coming months through community events, local meetings, and door-to-door outreach.

For more information or to get involved, contact:

Datherforcomm4@gmail.com

Ph# 651-380-5761

Kevin Dather resides near Lake City within District 4 with his wife and 3 adult children and 1 child in ISD 813. He works in agricultural sales. They are actively involved in 4-H and FFA and support other local organizations. Kevin has reached a point where he knows he can commit the time needed as a Commissioner. He is able to put in the necessary time and is committed to maintaining what the residents of Goodhue County have come to expect.



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Goodhue City Council Work Meeting Minutes

City Hall ~ April 8, 2026 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Chris Schmit, Council Members Michael Brunkhorst, Eric Brandt, Katie Kurtti (arrived at 6:19 p.m.)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Lisa Redepenning, City Administrator, Lori Luhman, Administrative Assistant/City Clerk, Jason Mandelkow, Public Works Director, Earl Merchlewitz-Goodhue County Emergency Management Director, Reese Sudtelgte-Engineer (ISG)

Remote: Jeannine Nagel

Call to Order

Mayor Schmit called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approve or amend Agenda

Council agreed to adjust the agenda as needed for Red Wing Computers to present after Council Member Kurtti

arrives. Motioned to approve flexible agenda made by Brunkhorst, seconded by Brandt, motion carried 4-0-0.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 25, 2026, work meeting minutes made by Nagel seconded by Brunkhorst, motion carried 4-0-0.

Approval of Bills

After clarification on Office 365 renewal, Goodhue County billing, and Public Works truck door replacement, a motion to approve the bills made by Nagel, seconded by Brunkhorst, motion carried 4-0-0.

New Business

Codification of Ordinances Proposal

A proposal was received from the League of Minnesota Cities along with their codification consultant American Legal Publishing to assist in codifying and updating city ordinances, using MBC (Minnesota Basic Code) as a base for \$7,900 (approx. 660 pages) with additional optional services such as searchable formats and online access. Concerns were about relevant ordinances, replaced by state law, or unique to Goodhue.

Council requested clarification on what is included for the \$7,900 such as potential legal fees, copyright/ownership and online searchability for staff and residents before committing. Council member Brunkhorst found where the City would own the copyright but grants the publisher rights to reproduce and host ordinances online.

Council requested that Administrator Redepenning request detailed breakdown of what you get for the \$7,900 and what additional fees may be incurred and try to arrange a presentation from the codification company.

Council member Kurtti inquired if the company can add bookmarks so we could mark certain chapters for easy reference.

Recording of meetings

Reviewed pros and cons of recording meetings (YouTube, Teams audio recordings) for transparency and accessibility. Discussed privacy and subpoena risks when using personal devices, closed captioning/ADA accessibility, and retention policies for transcripts. Encouraged use of Teams transcription for official record.

Red Wing Computers confirmed that they provide 3 hours/month after hours and unlimited during business hours. Thoughts of recording were shared. Decision was to continue recording and use Teams transcription.

Staff were directed to investigate YouTube

for closed captioning and monitor transcript retention.

Red Wing Computers manages the Facebook page for the City of Goodhue and the Goodhue Pool. Public Works Director can post on the city Facebook page, but most are sent to Red Wing Computers to add and monitor.

Emergency Operation Plan

Earl Merchlewitz spoke about the Emergency Operation Plan updates and what they had originally suggested for changes to the plan, especially contacts and titles instead of individuals' names. Discussed mutual aid agreements and the need to update fire/ambulance service listings. Coverage is determined by their type of coverage area and when an ALS rig is out, then the next mutual aid ALS rig is dispatched. Council thought there should be more mutual aid agreements than those listed in the plan so staff will confirm items listed on page 19 of the plan with Fire Chief Weckerling. Biggest change on our behalf was Police Department to Goodhue County Sheriff Office. Council members found some items for staff to update and will add Emergency Operation Plan to the consent agenda for approval at the next meeting.

Countryside Manor Concerns

Both the Goodhue County's Emergency Management Director, Earl Merchlewitz and city staff recognize the need for safety for the residents of Countryside Manor. The trailer court was established before 1988, and they are responsible for having a compliant plan. The state statute is very clear and specific on mobile home parks.

Countryside Manor is unique in that manner. It comes down to the manager and how much engagement they have there. Merchlewitz states that the emergency shelter needs to be accessible within a timely manner according to the state statute. Shelters are supposed to be open 24/7. The council's consent is to have staff send a quarterly reminder to Countryside Manor management requesting a compliant safety plan so we can show the city is trying its due diligence to get Countryside Manor to implement a compliant plan.

Asset management plan for sewer and water facilities

The City Engineer, Reese Sudtelgte, of ISG presented to council a detailed update on the North Zumbro

Sanitary Sewer District project history, timeline, funding, and city's proportionate share of approximately 11%.

He also stated that Goodhue cannot expand until the new plant is online as there is a state moratorium in place due to maxed capacity. If the city were to build its own new plant, it would cost around 18 million dollars.

Connecting to the sanitary district, the Goodhue share is around 11% or 11-12 million of the total project. Pros and cons of the shared plant were discussed. He also reviewed need for ongoing sewer/water rate increases to match future costs. The new plant is to be bid in early 2027.

Reese also discussed the need for a capital improvement/asset management plan covering 5-10 years for infrastructure, equipment, and future projects. He presented a sample plan from another city and discussed formation of a committee to get started. Staff will finish up mapping assets. Creation of Capital Planning Committee to be added to next

meeting agenda.

Moving funds to higher interest accounts

Council asked staff to explore moving city funds to higher-yield savings/CDs to maximize interest while retaining liquidity for emergencies. Council confirmed they wanted to consult with their local bank about the best investment options and to continue with the regular monthly fund balance reporting.

Committee Updates

Council member Brunkhorst updated council on the discussion from the fire meeting held April 6th. The ongoing revisions were voting thresholds, signature lines and consistency across versions. City needs to clarify appointees who sign/vote on agreement. Consensus was Brunkhorst and Schmit as appointed for Fire Truck Association assignments. Council now waits for revised agreement to be brought to council for approval at next opportunity.

Council Comments

Council member Kurtti alerted that there was interest from Dollar General that they questioned if we allowed chain retail. Council asked staff to review the ordinance and if needed prepare an amendment to the ordinance on chain businesses.

Mayor Comments

Mayor briefly commented about council member representation and recommending city logo apparel. Question was, should it be self- or city-funded, and it was decided to choose and pay individually if such apparel was desired. Mayor also asked about reimbursement for councilmembers' internet, if required for city issued devices. Item referred to staff to research.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:36 p.m. by Council Member Kurtti, seconded by Brandt 5-0-0. Respectfully submitted, Lori Luhman, Administrative Assistant/City Clerk

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(continued on page 23)

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ZZ TOP 7:00 PM

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Confederate Railroad 7:00 PM

Saturday, July 11



Pam Tillis 9:00 PM



Bree Morgan 3:00 PM



Cory Waller & The Wicked Things 5:00 PM



Mark Wills 7:00 PM

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Goodhue City Council

(continued from page 22)

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Asset management plan for sewer and water facilities

The City Engineer, Reese Sudtelgte, of ISG presented to council a detailed update on the North Zumbro Sanitary Sewer District project history, timeline, funding, and city's proportionate share of approximately 11%.

He also stated that Goodhue cannot expand until the new plant is online as there is a state moratorium in place due to maxed capacity. If the city were to build its own new plant, it would cost around 18 million dollars.

Connecting to the sanitary district, the Goodhue share is around 11% or 11-12 million of the total project. Pros and cons of the shared plant were discussed. He also reviewed need for ongoing sewer/water rate increases to match future costs. The new plant is to be bid in early 2027.

Reese also discussed the need for a capital improvement/asset management plan covering 5-10 years for infrastructure, equipment, and future projects. He presented a sample plan from another city and discussed formation of a committee to get started. Staff will finish up mapping assets. Creation of Capital Planning Committee to be added to next meeting agenda.

Moving funds to higher interest accounts

Council asked staff to explore moving city funds to higher-yield savings/CDs to maximize interest while retaining liquidity for emergencies. Council confirmed they wanted to consult with their local bank about the best investment options and to continue with the regular monthly fund balance reporting.

Committee Updates

Council member Brunkhorst updated council on the discussion from the fire meeting held April 6th. The ongoing revisions were voting thresholds, signature lines and consistency across versions. City needs to clarify appointees who sign/vote on agreement. Consensus was Brunkhorst and Schmit as appointed for Fire Truck Association assignments. Council now waits for revised agreement to be brought to council for approval at next opportunity.

Council Comments

Council member Kurtti alerted that there was interest from Dollar General that they questioned if we allowed chain retail. Council asked staff to review the ordinance and if needed prepare an amendment to the ordinance on chain businesses.

Mayor Comments

Mayor briefly commented about council member representation and recommending city logo apparel. Question was, should it be self- or city-funded, and it was decided to choose and pay individually if such apparel was desired. Mayor also asked about reimbursement for councilmembers' internet, if required for city issued devices. Item referred to staff to research.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:36 p.m. by Council Member Kurtti, seconded by Brandt 5-0-0. Respectfully submitted, Lori Luhman, Administrative Assistant/ City Clerk

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**Bellechester City Council/Board of Equalization Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2026 @ 4:00 PM**

Call the meeting to order. Meeting is recorded, and the recordings belong to the City of Bellechester.

Open Board of Equalization Meeting – 4:02
The council in attendance: Mayor Jody Gordon, Council Member Mark Gerken, Jake Gilsdorf, Rich Majerus, and Nick Keller, as well as City Clerk Lisa Redepinning. Also present from Goodhue County was Lavon Augustine, Kurt Funk, and Joe Hile. Rich Hepplemann, Bellechester resident, was also present.

The meeting opened and Lavon Augustine addressed questions from Mr. Heppelmann. She then presented information on the one sale that occurred in Bellechester and answered questions from council. There was an average of 6% increase for residential properties across the cities/towns in the county. 12-15% average for commercial properties.

Close Board of Equalization Meeting – 4:41

Open City Council Meeting – 4:41
Amend and/or Approval of Agenda

Roll call was taken: The council in attendance: Mayor, Council member Mark Gerken, Jake Gilsdorf, Rich Majerus, and Nick Keller as well as City Clerk Lisa Redepinning and Treasurer Kyle McKeown. Absent was City Engineer Matt Mohs.

Approve or Amend of Agenda – Motion was made by Mark Gerken with a 2nd by Rich Majerus to approve the agenda with noted changes. Motion carried.

Minutes of the March 18, 2026 meeting were reviewed and motion was made by Nick Keller with a second by Jake Gilsdorf to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Bills were reviewed with a motion by Mark Gerken with a second by Nick Keller to ap-

prove and pay the bills as presented holding back 2 checks until purchased items are received. Motion carried.

Review the Bills & Approve Old Business:

• **Update on Consideration of Requested Use of Remaining Grant Funds** – fence request was not accepted as allowable reimbursement. Waiting on invoices for ADA improvements.

• **Law Enforcement Contract Expectations** – trying to follow up with violation from last year that was dismissed so we know moving forward.

• **Extra funds/pay loan or saving accounts**

• **Tree Trimming – update.** Discussion on should we hire this out or do it internally. Council will look at the trees and come up with a plan.

New business:

• **Fire Truck Joint Powers Association Agreement** – Rich discussed the current status of the agreement. There may be more changes.

• **Pond fence concerns** – Received a bid for \$3500 to replace a section of the fence. Motion was made by Rich Majerus with a 2nd by Nick Keller to approve the bid to fix the fence. Motion carried.

• **Community Center Inspection Report** – Report was distributed with concerns noted. Some areas noted are the empty lot next to the building slopes toward the building and causing issues with the sill plate. The floor in the small area of the center is rotting. There was discussion on the building’s future.

• **2nd page of Building Permit** – Nick has a document that we can add to the building permit if we want to implement.

• **Playground Work** – Woodchips are needed. Discussion on where the city can get

this in bulk.

Engineer Report – still working on lead pipe project.

Clerk Report – quarterly reports have been done and filed.

Treasurer Report – None.

Water/Wastewater/Facility Report – Gravel is needed for several city properties in town. Motion was made by Mark Gerken with a 2nd by Jake Gilsdorf to approve the purchase of needed gravel. Motion carried. Flow were high at the ponds last week. Structure leaks on homeowner, services getting bad or sump pump use may be the causing this. Kyle will discuss with Matt for a smoke test and get a quote to have this done to try to determine what is going on. Discharging of ponds is now occurring.

Mayor Concerns: None

Council Concerns: Council reimburse-

ment for performing work around the city - \$25-\$30/hour was given as an example that was provided by a township.

Adjourn - Motion was made by Rich Majerus with a 2nd by Jake Gilsdorf to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 5:47.

Closed meeting - Personnel concerns – Motion was made Rich Majerus by with a 2nd Nick Keller by to open closed meeting. Motion carried. At 5:50.

Motion was made by Rich Majerus with a 2nd by Jake Gilsdorf to close the close meeting. Motion carried. At 6:26.

Regular meeting reopened. Motion was made by Nick Keller with a second by Jake Gilsdorf to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. At 6:26.

Submitted by Lisa Redepinning – City Clerk

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Goodhue Pool

Goals of Each Swimming Lesson Level

Level 1 goals: The students should be comfortable in the water, get their heads wet, successfully doing their front and back floats by themselves, getting a fully submerged object 2 times, and making combined arm and leg actions making forward motion on both front and back.

Level 2 goals: The students should be able to tread for 15 seconds along with having the basic movements of the front and back crawl at least half way down the length of the pool.

Level 3 goals: The students should be able to make it down one length of the pool doing their front crawl, back crawl, and elementary backstroke along with treading for 30 seconds. Students should also be able to make a head-first entry into deep water in kneeling position.

Level 4 goals: The students should feel comfortable swimming from wall to wall in the deep end. They should start to develop their strokes and swim for longer periods of time.

Level 5 goals: The students should be able to swim both the distance required for level 5 and have all of the swimming strokes of the front crawl, backstroke, elementary backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and sidestroke perfected.

Level 6 goals: The students should be able to swim the distance required to become a fitness swimmer mastering all of the swimming strokes learned previously for the front crawl, back crawl, elementary backstroke, breaststroke, sidestroke, and butterfly. Students should be able to tread for 5 minutes.

2026 SWIMMING LESSON SCHEDULE

GOODHUE POOL

Session 1: June 1 - 12
9:45 – 10:15 Level 1, Level 3, Level 5
10:30 – 11:00 Level 2, Level 4, Level 6
11:15 – 11:45 Level 1, Level 3, Level 4
12:00 – 12:30 Level 1, Level 2, Level 5
Session 2: June 15 – 26
9:45 – 10:15 Level 1, Level 3, Level 5
10:30 – 11:00 Level 2, Level 4, Level 6
11:15 – 11:45 Level 1, Level 3, Level 4
12:00 – 12:30 Level 1, Level 2, Level 5
Session 3: July 6 – 17
9:45 – 10:15 Level 1, Level 3, Level 5
10:30 – 11:00 Level 2, Level 4, Level 6
11:15 – 11:45 Level 1, Level 3, Level 4
12:00 – 12:30 Level 1, Level 2, Level 5

2026 Goodhue County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Dates

Tuesday, May 5	Kenyon Goodhue Co. Shop 1005 Hwy 60	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday, May 19	Wanamingo Casey's - Hwy. 60	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday, June 30	Zumbrota Park-N-Ride Parking lot	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday, July 7	Pine Island Pine Island High School	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday, July 14	Goodhue Community Center	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesday, July 21	Cannon Falls Lake Byllesby Park	2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

2026 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Do's and Don'ts

DO BRING:	DO NOT BRING:
Paint/Stain/Thinner Etc.- Bring unusable paint products to the collection.	Business or Agricultural Hazardous Wastes- Business wastes will be refused. Businesses should contact the Olmsted County Hazardous Waste Facility at 507-328-7078.
Pesticides/Herbicides (Non-Agricultural, Non-Commercial Grade) - Products designed to kill weeds, bugs, rodents, mold and fungus.	Electronics- City of Red Wing Waste Campus 651-385-3658
Automotive Products- Bad gas, cleaners, anti-freeze, fuels, grease, lead-acid batteries.	Prescription Drugs- Contact: Goodhue County Law Enforcement Center 651-385-3155
Household Products- Drain opener, strong cleaners, spot removers, adhesives, acids & bases.	Empty Containers- If a container is empty and dry, it is no longer hazardous. Recycle or dispose of in trash.
Exotic Batteries- Ni-Cad rechargeable, Button, Lithium, Mercury, other unusual batteries.	Fluorescent Tubes- Bring them to the Goodhue County Recycling Center.
Mercury Devices- Thermometers, thermostats, mercury switches.	Non-Hazardous Products- Soaps, regular light bulbs, broken glass or ceramics, recyclables, trash.
Aerosol Cans- Partial or plugged pressurized spray cans of all types. Empty, depressurized cans can be disposed of in trash.	Waste Oil, Oil Filters- Engine oils and filters can be recycled through local sources.
	Medical Wastes/Sharps- Contact your local clinic or hospital for disposal information.
	Explosives and Ammunition- Contact local law enforcement on their non-emergency number.
	Appliances- No appliances.
	Solar Panels- No solar panels.

COMPLETE HHW INFO ONLINE: <http://www.co.goodhue.mn.us>
HHW HOTLINE: 651-385-3107

We will NO LONGER be collecting Fluorescent Bulbs at the Hazardous Waste Collections. The Goodhue County Recycling Center accepts fluorescent bulbs Monday-Friday, year-round. We are very sorry for the inconvenience.

A Household Hazardous Waste drop-off is available at the Goodhue County Recycling Center in Red Wing, from the first Monday in May through the last Friday in October. Hours of operation for the drop-off will be Monday through Friday (except holidays), from 8am until 3pm. Please utilize the drop-off as much as possible to prevent large crowds at the collection events listed above. There is a 20 gallon per person per day limit at the Red Wing drop-off. Thank you for your cooperation.

The Goodhue County Recycling Center is located at 3745 Highway 61 N in Red Wing (across Highway 61 from the Red Wing Shoe Factory).

For safety, place waste products in a box when transporting
Questions? Call the HHW Hotline: (651) 385-3107
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1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
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16						17				18				
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71						72				73				

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- THEME: GREETINGS
- ACROSS
1. Shapeless masses

6. RFK's brother

9. German card game

13. "The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" author

14. Ancient Chinese dynasty

15. Top of a steeple

16. Ice house

17. Not outs

18. Gustatory sensation

19. *What's cooking, good ____?"

21. *Greeting aimed at a king

23. Like a fox

24. Easy run

25. "Harper Valley ____"

28. Off-limits

30. Daryl Hannah/Tom Hanks movie

35. Snaky swimmers

37. Coal unit

39. Vigorous fight

40. Done before dealing

41. Walk leisurely

43. Like certain food trend

44. Raccoon's South American cousin

46. Dano or Rudd, e.g.

47. Deep-red variety of chalcedony

48. Straying, as in baseball

50. FBI agent, slangily

52. It's the limit?

53. Alex Honnold's "Free ____"

55. Long Island iced ____

57. *Military greeting

60. *____ greetings, in December

64. Last test

65. Had a meal

67. Ilya Rozanov to Shane Hollander, e.g.

68. Take puppy from a pound

69. Hemingway's "____ Whom the Bell Tolls"

70. Bodily swelling

71. Hibernation stations

72. Pampering spot

73. Extend subscription

- DOWN
1. Leave without farewell, slangily

2. Kids' construction set

3. Capital of Norway

4. Amazon offerings, originally

5. Spoiled, in U.K.

6. Nest material

7. Even, poetically

8. 70s dance joint

9. Capone's shoe cover

10. *Twice-done greeting move, in Italy

11. Creative

12. PGA peg

15. Bacterial throat infections

20. Spiral-horned antelope

22. FedEx competitor

24. Lower back pain, in the olden days

25. *Salaam, in English

26. Operatic voice

27. Hitching post?

29. *Bro fist motion

31. Smaller in amount

32. Road-tripping guide

33. Baby carrier?

34. *Cowboy's greeting

36. Bristle

38. Little Jack Horner's treat

42. Fill with happy spirit

45. Injury's painful partner

49. Toddler

51. Closer

54. Toronto Maple ____

56. Comment to the audience

57. Fries, e.g.

58. At another time, to Romeo or Juliet

59. Swimming lengths

60. Doris Day's "Que ____..."

61. Kitchen appliance

62. Given at birth

63. Cabbage dish

64. Temporary craze

66. *"____ of the morning!"

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

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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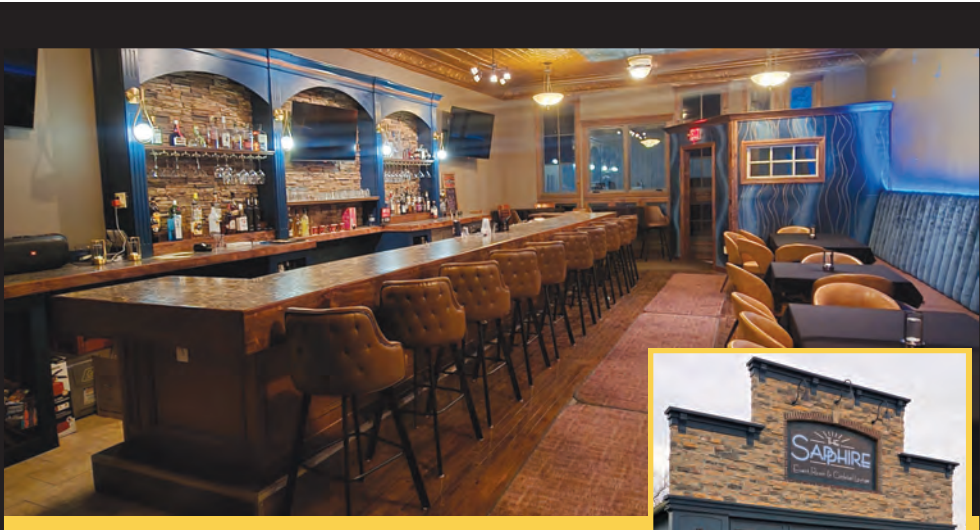
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	4		8				1	
			1	3			5	9
		6			5			
6						8	1	2
1			7		6			8
7		9	1					6
				8			2	
3	9				5	7		
	5				3		8	

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