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JUNE 25, 2026

Volume 20 • Issue 6

Guidance for One-time Increase to Homeowner Refunds Announced



The Minnesota Department of Revenue has announced guidance for homeowners for the one-time increase to 2025 Homestead Credit Refunds of nearly 15%. The one-time increase to 2025 refunds was part of the tax bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Tim Walz in late May.

“With Minnesotans feeling the impacts of rising property taxes across the state, we knew the importance of moving quickly to get the one-time increase to refunds implemented,” said Revenue Commissioner Paul Marquart. “We prioritized making sure that homeowners won’t have to take extra steps to get the increase and will see their refunds in late summer and early fall, like prior years.”

Already filed for your 2025 Homestead Credit Refund?

Homeowners who have already filed their 2025 Homestead Credit Refund returns do not need to take any action to receive the one-time increase. They should not amend their return to receive the increase.

(continued on page 15)

Announcements

- City Hall is closed July 3rd in observance of Independence Day.
- Save the date! 2026 Dennison Days August 7 & 8!

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

The Old Country Boys and Shane Martin to Headline Dennison Days August 7 & 8, 2026



Summer festival season is in full swing as area communities continue to celebrate their summer events and festivals.

Dennison Days takes place this year Friday and Saturday, August 7 & 8, 2026.

Final Events are being scheduled at presstime, but we do know there is a great line up of music this year, including Friday Nights Headliner, THE OLD COUNTRY

BOYS. Friday evening events will also include The Biggest Dip Contest, a Pie Eating Contest, and more. Hosted by Cattlemens Saloon and The Lions. Details will be posted soon!

Watch the Dennison Days website and Facebook pages in the coming days for entry details and event information!

A full schedule of events will take place Saturday.

Kicking off the days will be the annual pancake breakfast, hosted by the Nerstrand Fire Department and Dennison Church along with the medallion hunt. The Farmers Market is scheduled to return along with The Classic



Car Show and Kids Pedal Pull.

(continued on page 8)

Welcome to the Rice County Fair July 22-26



Courtesy of Rice County Fair

We are just about finished planning the fair for 2026 - July 22-26. Lots of exciting things, new stuff and free stuff as well.

Here are some highlights - please continue to check the website (www.ricecountyfair.net) and Facebook as we are adding lots of details over the next few weeks:

Wednesday July 22 - IMCA Old Timers in the Grandstand

Thursday July 23 - Two Safari Wildlife Shows and Two Alligator Wrestling shows - FREE - in the Grandstand

Friday July 24 - Big Air Motorcycle and ATV jumping show in the Grandstand

(continued on page 5)

Cannon Valley Fair July 1-4, 2026

The Cannon Valley Fair kicks off Wednesday July 1st at the Fairgrounds in Cannon Falls. Open Class and Exhibit Entry Day is Tuesday June 30th from 2-7 PM. The Goodhue County Commissioners meeting will kick off the days events at 10AM in the pavilion Wednesday.

Gold Star Amusements will be on the midway during the fair starting at 1 PM July 1st. Advance discount unlimited ride-wristbands are available for \$25.00 each at Cannon Belles Coffee & Ice Cream Shoppe until June 30th.

(continued on page 8)

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HAPPY 250TH ANNIVERSARY, America!

Have a Safe & Happy 4th of July!

Difficulties of the Secret Place



By Ashley Dudek,
founder of Isaiah Ministries, bringing
Biblical teaching to help overcome
life's everyday challenges.
www.isaiahministries.cc

Emotions got the best of me, yet again. Thoughts that I do not want echo in my mind repeatedly. Rumination has reared its ugly head. Annoyed eyes. Loose words spilling out. Jealousy. Comparing. Lost temper with hubby. Angry with self. These are just a few ways I am messy. The greatest thing for me to do in the midst of these “messes” is to go to the Secret Place, but at times that is easier said than done.

The best things for us can sometimes be the hardest things to do. The last two months I have discussed the topic of the Secret Place and the benefits of it. If you missed those articles or want a quick review, here you go:

The Secret Place is partially your one-on-one time with Jesus, with your Bible and perhaps journal out, and at a much deeper level, it is a life that remains in the hiddenness of the Lord. It means you dwell, abide, and stay in all of Jesus's promises, truths, direction, and love for you—no matter what. You talk to Him at your inner core, and you do not stop.

The benefits of the Secret Place are limitless! A few of them include working through conflict, overcoming fear, healing from trauma, and learning the Father's love. Last month we discussed how the Lord can guide, speak to, and protect us in the Secret Place as well.

Even though the Secret Place is the best thing for us, guess what? It can be one of the hardest things to actually enter into and stay in. There are numerous reasons why the Secret Place can be difficult, such as distractions, emotional or physical pain, lack of motivation, not feeling the Lord, not knowing what to say or do with Jesus, not being sure how to read the Bible, depression, or as alluded to earlier, feeling too messy to enter into the presence of the Lord.

In this article and the articles to come, I am going to address various difficulties of the Secret Place and some solutions around them. Go grab a cup of joe or some tea, and if you feel a little too messy for Jesus, by the time you are done with this article, you will have realized you are not, and I bet you will even be motivated to go talk to the big guy upstairs! Some may feel that they have messed up so

badly they cannot enter into conversation with Jesus.

Oh, my friend, if you believe this, you are mistaken. The Lord will take you in no matter what you have done. Did you know that the majority of the Bible is written about and even by people that messed up? That is right. A LOT of the people in the Bible screwed up—and screwed up bad!

I will give you one scenario of a man named David. David made an “oopsies” by committing adultery. Then he had the husband of the woman he committed adultery with killed. Yep. You can read the full story in 2 Samuel 11–12. What is amazing, though, is that he repented (see Psalm 51) and was known as a man after God's heart (see Acts 13:22). He was a man after God's heart not based on performance (things he did or did not do) but because of his personal relationship and adoration with God. Another person in the Bible that made some pretty big errors was Paul. Prior to Paul becoming a follower of Jesus, he even persecuted Christians!

Studying about these men's lives could be a good thing to do in the Secret Place and will probably make you not feel so bad about the things you have done wrong. Neither of these men let their identity fall under their “mess-ups,” but they knew they were sons of God and were loved by Him; therefore, they talked to the Lord and kept talking to Him. They remained in the Secret Place.

If you believe that you are too messed-up to spend time in the presence of the Lord, that is one FAT LIE from the enemy. I think this verse might help you out a little too. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

As you read 1 John 1:9 above, do you see the word all? That means no matter what you have done or said, if you repent, you are forgiven! Don't let shame keep you away. Come out from the bushes as Adam and Eve did, and let Father God clothe you with love and compassion. Understand your identity in Him and remain hidden in those truths.

Perhaps you are asking yourself, “But what if I am in the midst of making mistakes, sinning, and messing up?” The same principle holds true: go running to the Lord in the midst of the screwups. Any good parent would want their child to go to them when they are struggling, right?! What makes our heavenly Father any different? Again, do not let shame keep you away. Go talk to Jesus about whatever it is you're struggling with.

(continued on page 3)

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.

CANVAS CHURCH

404 Schilling Drive, Dundas, MN

Lead Pastor: **Jed McGuire** • www.canvaschurchmn.com

507-301-7500 call • **507-800-0187** text

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

YTH Wednesdays at 6:00p.m. Canvas Recovery Group meets Thursdays at 6:30p.m.

LITTLE PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST 2980 130th St. E., Dundas, MN

Pastor **Penny Bonsell** • pastor@littleprairieumc.org

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

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

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

Pastor **Gary Gilbertson** • **507-645-8829** Call for service times

LIFE21 CHURCH 2100 Jefferson Road (just north of Target)

Pastor **Danny Lewis** • **645-7730** life21church.com

10:00a.m. Worship Service

NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

Pastor **Andy Clare** • **663-0133** • northfieldefc.org

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

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Pastor **Nathan Hillman** • **952-435-3332** • www.hosannalc.org

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Fellowship time with refreshments between services.

Wednesday: Middle School Ministry at 6p.m. & High School Ministry at 7:45p.m.

GOSPEL OF LIFE FAMILY CHURCH

Pastor **Steve Roberts** - srobertsds1@frontiernet.net

2140 Highway 3 South, Northfield • **507-259-2644**

Facebook: [calvarychapelnorthfield-jesus saves](https://www.facebook.com/calvarychapelnorthfield-jesus-saves)

Website: calvarynorthfield.org

Sundays 1:00 pm

NORTHFIELD COMMUNITY CHURCH

Pastor **Josh Koehn** - 713 Division St S, Northfield, MN 55057

Contact Us: hello@northfieldcc.org

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

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9:15am Sunday School



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Difficulties of the Secret Place

(continued from page 2)

Ask Him the roots to why you are doing what you are doing, strategy to overcome it, and strength in the midst of it. Another comforting verse to help you not feel so alone is “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (Romans 7:15).

Solution:

- If you have repented for your sins, know YOU ARE FORGIVEN!

- If you have sinned and not yet repented, then I would suggest you do. Remember, in a nutshell, repenting is telling the Lord you are sorry, and turning away from whatever it is you did.

- If you feel shame or guilt, I would recommend looking up various verses on forgiveness. Read them over and over. Renew your mind to the fact that you are clean. Yes, YOU ARE CLEAN. What a beautiful gift! You can look up verses by doing a simple internet search or even looking in the back of your Bible at the concordance (most Bibles have this). I’ll get the ball rolling by giving you a few Scriptures on forgiveness right now that you can go look up: Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 86:5,

and Colossians 1:13–14. Understand that condemnation is not of God either. Here are a couple verses around this topic as well: Romans 8:1 and 1 John 3:20.

4. If you are still feeling stuck in shame or guilt, I would also encourage you to talk with the Lord about these feelings. Sit down, go for a walk or a drive, or whatever it is, and pour out your heart to Him. The other day I messed up bad. Like if it was a test, I would have gotten an F minus. I would have been so embarrassed if anyone heard how I spoke to and treated my husband. Geez! I was completely in the wrong. I felt so ashamed and was starting to spiral down into that dark pit of self-anger and even depression. Therefore, I went to the Lord and we talked about it. All of my anger “toward my husband” was not even about him. It was rooted in trauma from my past, not feeling physically good, my cup being drained, and what I believe to have been some spiritual warfare too. Talking with the Lord is so good. There is a reason why I did what I did. There is a reason why you did what you did or are doing what you are doing; the Lord will show it to you. He will do this with kindness and love; you need to just give Him a chance.

5. Understand your identity in Christ. You are NOT YOUR MISTAKES. You are a child of God, redeemed, strong, and a conqueror! You can look up verses on identity in Christ by doing a simple internet search as well. The first part of the book of Ephesians is loaded with them.

You are NOT too messy for Jesus. I promise. You are loved. — Ashley

Third Thursday Schedule Released by Friends of Downtown Northfield

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Friends of Downtown Northfield have announced the return of the popular Third Thursday Street Dance series, bringing live music, food, and family-friendly entertainment to Bridge Square throughout the summer of 2026.

The free monthly events will take place from 5 to 8 p.m. on July 16, August 20, and September 17, inviting residents and visitors to gather downtown for an evening of community celebration.

This year’s lineup features a mix of local and regional talent. The season opened in June with the Northfield Community Band and The Main Thing, followed in July by Jivin Ivan and the Kings of Swing. Los Rebeldes will headline the August event, and September will showcase bands from St. Olaf and Carleton College.

Music will be performed on a showmobile stage set up in front of the post office in Bridge Square, with attendees encouraged to bring chairs or use seating provided on-site. Food trucks and local restaurants will offer dining options, while a group of area beverage makers—known as the “Fermentation Friends”—will serve drinks during the festivities.

Organizers emphasize that Third Thursdays are designed as an all-ages event centered on accessibility and community connection. The series is supported by local sponsors, including Age Friendly Northfield, which helps fund musicians during the summer months.

A new addition this year is the September event hosted by Northfield’s two colleges, aimed at welcoming students into the broader community alongside local residents.

The series is organized by volunteers from the Friends of Downtown Northfield and remains free to attend.

SUMMER CELEBRATION

HOSANNA NORTHFIELD | 5-8 PM

JULY 21

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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 assess-

ing 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 shoestring 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



Benya Kraus, SMIF president and CEO, visits her cousin, Jason Kraus, at his farm in Waseca County

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.

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

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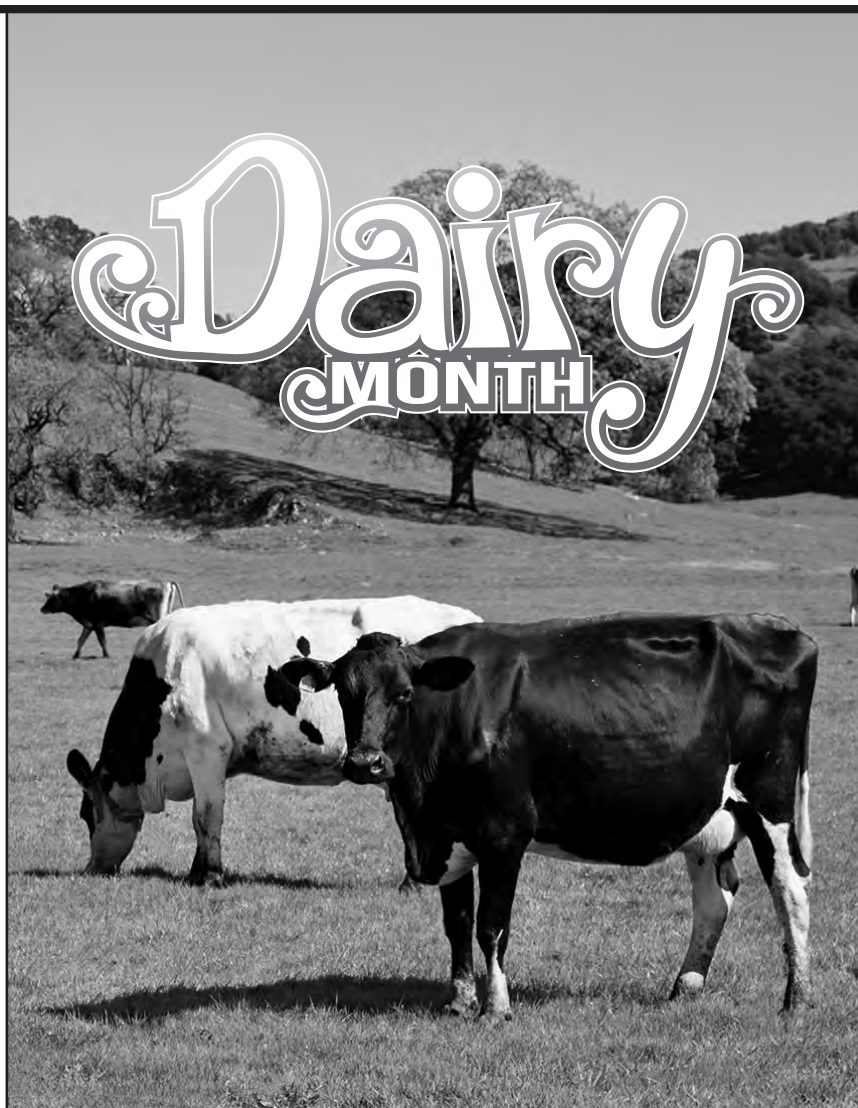
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Welcome to the Rice County Fair July 22-26

(continued from page 1)

Saturday July 25 - in the morning - FREE - antique tractor pull in the Grandstand - Tractor pull in the evening

Sunday July 26 - Enduro Races in the Grandstand

FREE Family Fun at the Rice County Fair

We know times are tough for many families right now, and this year we made it a priority to add even more FREE activities and entertainment so everyone can enjoy the fair without breaking the bank.

When you visit the Rice County Fair, you'll find fun around every corner, including:

FREE Live Music

Enjoy great local bands and musicians throughout the fair on the Seller Stage, Cannon River Stage, and inside our newly re-

vamped Beer Garden!

FREE Face Painting

Daily from Noon – 5:00 PM

FREE Mini Golf

Daily from 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

FREE Antique Tractor Pull

Start your Saturday morning off right! Watch antique tractors compete and see these historic machines in action.

FREE Livestock & Animal Viewing

Visit the barns, meet farm animals up close, and watch livestock shows featuring the hard work and dedication of local youth and exhibitors.

FREE Family Entertainment

Catch multiple performances by Tuey the Juggler and Brodini the Magician on the Cannon River Stage throughout the fair. Their interactive, family-friendly shows are sure to entertain kids and adults alike!

FREE Safari Show & Alligator Wrestling – Thursday Kids Day!

Located in the Grandstand:

- Safari Shows at 2:00 PM & 6:00 PM
- Alligator Wrestling at 4:00 PM & 8:00 PM

FREE Kids Tractor Pedal Pull

Kids can test their strength and have some friendly competition during the Kids Tractor Pedal Pull on Wednesday at 6:00 PM!

There's something for everyone—from toddlers to grandparents—and many of the best



fair experiences won't cost you a dime!

And NEW - Dunk tank with your favorite people you like to dunk (3 balls for \$1).

Bring the family, make some memories, and enjoy everything the Rice County Fair has to offer. We can't wait to see you there!



Grandstand Wednesday July 22 - IMCA Oldtimers

IMCA Old Timers was formed to promote and preserve IMCA (International Motor Contest Association) history, including the preservation and excellent restoration of former IMCA race cars; to maintain records and documents of IMCA history; recognition of former drivers, owners, mechanics and others involved in IMCA history; and provide an opportunity for the social and technical interchange of members interested in auto racing history.

We will be presenting no less than five classes:

IMCA Sport/Wissota MOD/USRA Micro Sprint

Legends Class

Vintage Open Wheels

Vintage Full Body

Tickets: Adults: \$15; Kids (6-11): \$5; Kids 5 and under are free.

Thursday July 23 - Sustainable Saferi

2:00 PM - Jungle Safari show

4:00 PM - Alligator Wrestling show

6:00 PM - Jungle Safari Show

8:00 PM - Alligator Wrestling Show

All shows are performed on the platform at the bottom of the grandstand.

FREE admittance to all shows

Friday July 24 - Big Air

Big Air ATV and Motorcycle Jumping

Tickets: Adults: \$15; Kids (6-11): \$5; Kids 5 and under are free.

Saturday July 25 - Tractor Pull

9:00 AM - Antique Tractor Pull - FREE admittance

7:00 PM - UPM Tractor Pull

Tickets: Adults: \$15; Kids (6-11): \$5; Kids 5 and under are free.

Sunday July 26 - Enduro Races

2:00 PM

Tickets: Adults: \$15; Kids (6-11): \$5; Kids 5 and under are free.

Pre-Sale Discounted Vouchers for Carnival Wristbands Price \$25 – During Fair \$30



July 22-26, 2026. Fun, Food, and Friends in the mix for '26'

Good for one **daily** wristband for one person.

Redeem at Ticket Booth at the Carnival.

Wristband Hours:

Wednesday and Thursday: 1pm – 9pm

Friday and Saturday: 12pm – 9pm

Sunday: 1pm – 7pm

The wristband is good for unlimited rides **on the day it is redeemed** and during the session times posted.

The person receiving the wristband must be present at time of redemption to receive the band.

Buy multiple vouchers and redeem each day at the fair.

Available at Hy-Vee or Fareway in Faribault and also at the Fair Office.

Roaring '20s Fundraiser

Dress up in your 1926 best – think the Roaring '20s, prohibition, and jazz – and celebrate 100 years of the Rice County Historical Society on June 27, 2026 at 7pm! We'll have live music and dancing, a silent auction, a cash raffle, cork pulls, food, and great company down at Corks & Pints.

In 1926, the Rice County Historical Society was formed from the Old Settler's Society and the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter. From a small office in the County Courthouse to 8 historic buildings and over 120,000 items, RCHS is dedicated to preserving the history and culture of the peoples of Rice County. Help us continue to serve our mission and community for the next 100 years!

This is an 18+ event, and IDs will be required to order drinks. Tickets are \$50/person; get them online or in person at the Rice County Historical Society. Call 507-332-2121 with any questions.



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 fa-

vorite insect, yup the fly. The livestock stand in the middle of the field acting majestic until a fly lands on them and suddenly, 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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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.

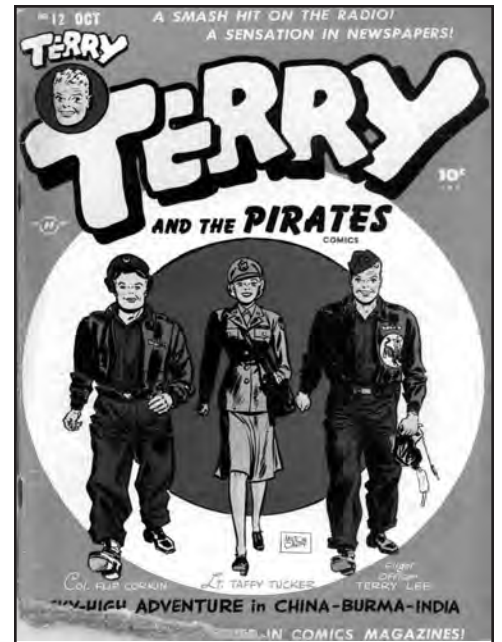
My mom said I was kind of a hefty baby and already had curly hair when I was born. The nurses nick-named me Gorgeous George after a pro wrestler in the 1950's. George Raymond Wagner (Gorgeous George), was quite a celebrity and turned pro wrestling into the showmanship sport it has become today. Muhammed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

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

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.

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Cannon Valley Fair July 1-4, 2026

(continued from page 1)

Saturday is Veterans & Senior Citizen Day and Free Grounds Admission Day. The 4th of July Grand Day Parade will be at 11 AM on Saturday with the annual fireworks display at

dusk on Saturday night. This years grandstand highlights include the Wednesday night rodeo, Thursday night is the Adam Calvert concert, Friday Night is the Demo Derby and Saturday afternoon is harness horse racing.

Music on the free stage from DJ "CHOPPER" music will round out each days events Wednesday and Thursday. Friday night there will be with Live Music on the Free Stage, with the band to be announced.

Check out the schedule in this issue of the Messenger and watch for any updates on the fairs website, www.cannonvalleyfair.org along with their facebook page.

The Old Country Boys and Shane Martin to Headline Dennison Days August 7 & 8, 2026

(continued from page 1)

The Truck and Tractor Pull, Parade, Bingo and more are part of the days line up Music from Shane Martin will return this year to wrap up the days events Saturday Night!

Also watch for any updates on the website and on Facebook! All the details will be posted at www.dennisondays.org soon.



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Citywide Garage Sales

Classic Car Show on Mainstreet

Euchre

Kids Pedal Tractor Pull

Parade Downtown

Be in the Parade! \$300.00 Prize for Best Parade Entry! Call 507-645-9992

Watch for more events to be added!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7 FROM 7:00-11:00 PM

LIVE MUSIC BY THE OLD COUNTRY BOYS



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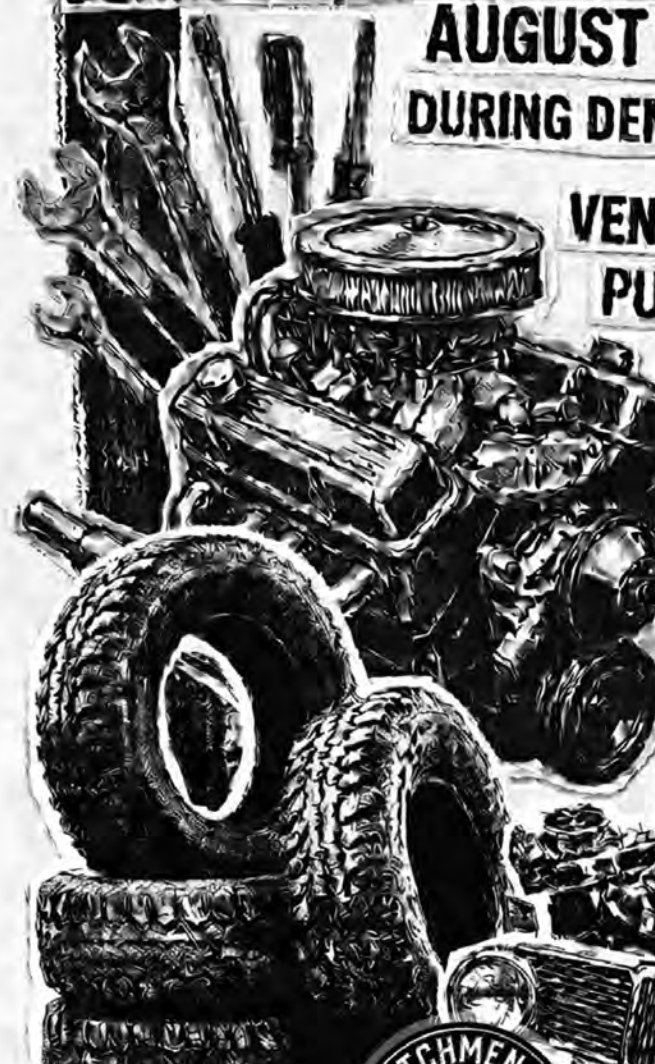
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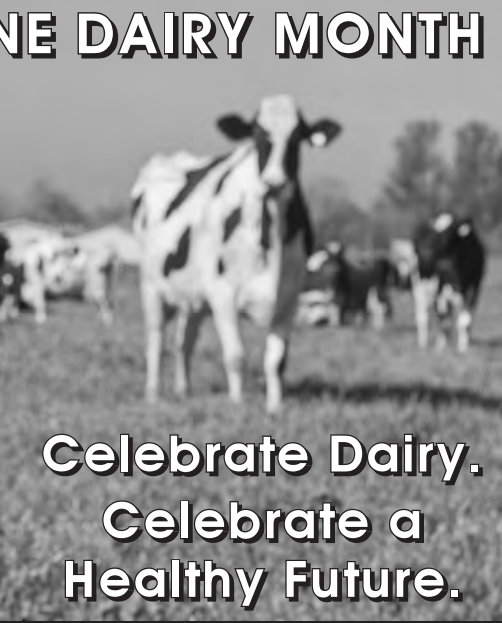


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Cannon Falls, Minnesota

www.cannonvalleyfair.org 507-263-3548



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- 2026 SCHEDULE -

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	4H, FFA Horse Show and Open WSCA Games Show - Horse Arena
2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Open Class Exhibit Building Entry & 4H Building Exhibit Entry and Judging
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Livestock Entry
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Goodhue County Commissioners Meeting - PAVILION
11:00 a.m. - Noon	Canvas & Carnival Painting - FREE STAGE
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Minnow Races - By PAVILION
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Pan for "Gold" - By PAVILION
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	The Fire Fighter Training Show - GROUNDS
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Gold Star Amusements OPEN - Wristband Special All Day
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Basketball Challenge - GROUNDS
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Meat Goat Check-In and Weigh-In - SHEEP ARENA
5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Bull Riding & Gyro Ride - By PAVILION
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Rodeo Gates Opens - GRANDSTAND
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Meat Goat Show - SHEEP ARENA
	Rodeo Starts - GRANDSTAND
	DJ Chopper - FREE STAGE
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	4H & FFA Rabbit Show Followed by 4H & FFA Poultry Show - ARENA
11:00 a.m. - Noon	Yoga hosted by Snap Fitness - FREE STAGE
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Canvas & Carnival Painting - FREE STAGE
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Scout Rockets - GRANDSTAND
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Girl Scouts Art Project - Legion PAVILION
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Minnow Races - By PAVILION
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Steve Solkela's Overpopulated One-Man Band - FREE STAGE
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Pan for "Gold" - By PAVILION
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	4H & FFA Goat Show - ARENA
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	The Fire Fighter Training Show - GROUNDS
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Gold Star Amusements OPEN - Wristband Special All Day
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Basketball Challenge - GROUNDS
9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Steve Solkela's Overpopulated One-Man Band - STROLLING THE GROUNDS
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Beef Check-In & Weigh-In - ARENA
11:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Just 4 Kix - FREE STAGE
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	4H Demonstrations - 4H BUILDING
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Bull Riding & Gyro Ride - By PAVILION
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	4H & FFA Beef Show - ARENA
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Beef Show - ARENA
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Adam Calvert Concert Gate Open - GRANDSTAND
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Adam Calvert Concert Starts - GRANDSTAND
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	DJ Chopper - FREE STAGE
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	4H & FFA Dairy Show - ARENA
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	4H & FFA Sheep Show Followed by Open Class Sheep Show - SHEEP ARENA
9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Bird Houses - FREE STAGE
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Minnow Races - By PAVILION
11:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Steve Solkela's Overpopulated One-Man Band - FREE STAGE
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	District VI Holstein Show - ARENA
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Pan for "Gold" - By PAVILION
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	The Fire Fighter Training Show - GROUNDS
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Gold Star Amusements OPEN - Wristband Special All Day
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Kids Tractor Pull - By GRANDSTAND
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Balloons by Solan
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Demo Derby Pit Gate Opens
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Steve Solkela's Overpopulated One-Man Band - STROLLING THE GROUNDS
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Basketball Challenge - GROUNDS
9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Market Sheep Check-In & Weigh-In - ARENA
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Demo Derby Gate Opens
11:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Bull Riding & Gyro Ride - By PAVILION
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Demo Derby Starts - GRANDSTAND
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Cannon Valley Youth Jackpot Market Sheep Show - ARENA
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Muddcat Melby - FREE STAGE
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Barbeque Competition Check-in
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Grande Day Parade starts
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	The Fire Fighter Training Show - GROUNDS
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Gold Star Amusements OPEN - Wristband Special All Day
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Basketball Challenge - GROUNDS
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Harness Horse Racing - GRANDSTAND
9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	4H Dog Project Demonstration - ARENA
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Barbeque Competition Judging Starts
11:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Livestock & Building Exhibits Released
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Barbeque Competition Public Wing Sales (while supplies last)
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Fireworks Show

JULY 4th FIREWORKS AT DUSK

DJ CHOPPER
JULY 1 & 2
 9PM-Midnight

MUDCAT MELBY
JULY 3
 8:30 & 11:30PM

GRANDSTAND



Rodeo

Wednesday, July 1 - 7 p.m.

Gate Opens at 5:30 p.m.
 \$25.00 per person
 5 and under FREE



Adam Calvert Concert

Thursday, July 2 - 7 p.m.



Gate Opens at 6:00 p.m.



Scan QR code to buy tickets

\$25.00 per person VIP Pass \$50.00

Demolition Derby

Friday, July 3 - 6 p.m.

Pit Gate Opens at 2:00 p.m.

- Mega Stock Mid Size Car (Youth)
- Mega Stock Mid Size Car (Adult)
- Mega Stock Mini's
- Mega Stock 80's & Newer
- Mega Stock Full Size Truck
- Limited Weld Mid Size Car
- Limited Weld Mini's
- Limited Weld Full Size Car
- Limited Weld Full Size Truck



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ADULTS: \$20 • CHILDREN 12 & UNDER: \$10 • PIT PASS: \$30

Backyard Boys BBQ Bonanza & Harness Horse Racing

Saturday, July 4th



FREE ADMISSION

BBQ Check in
 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
 BBQ Judging starts
 4:30 p.m.
 Harness Horse Racing
 starts at 2:00 p.m.

Facts from the Speaking of Cannabis Campaign

By Ella Slade

Cannabis is a species of plant that contains chemicals that can affect the brain. The plant contains over 125 different cannabinoids, which are chemicals that may affect the body. Hemp and “marijuana” both come from the cannabis family, but they have different amounts of cannabinoids. The plant contains over 125 different cannabinoids, which are chemicals that may affect the body.

Hemp is a cannabis plant used to make things like fiber, seeds, and hemp seed oil and contains much lower amounts of THC, the part of the plant that causes a “high.” Hemp is often used in products like foods, personal care items, and fabrics. However, hemp-derived THC edibles and THC beverages can be intoxicating and may have mind-altering effects similar to cannabis products. In contrast, cannabis (marijuana) is mind-altering and is used for medical or recreational reasons.

The primary mind-altering cannabinoid found in cannabis is THC. Cannabis typically contains more THC, while hemp contains more Cannabidiol. CBD is a chemical in the cannabis plant that does not cause a “high.”

Cannabis-based products are available with differing cannabinoid combinations; some cannabinoids occur naturally, while others are manufactured and added to products, the health effects of which are not yet fully understood.

Today's cannabis products are often much stronger than in the past. Between 1995 and 2022, the delta-9 THC potency in illegal cannabis products quadrupled from 3.96% to 16.14%, and cannabis flower and concen-

trates in dispensaries can have THC concentrations of more than 40%. Today's products can possess over three times the THC potency compared to thirty years ago, which increases the risk of addiction.

Regular cannabis use during the teenage years and early twenties, when the brain is still developing, can cause physical alterations to the brain and negatively affect memory, concentration, and learning. It is also linked to mental health issues, with approximately one in ten users becoming addicted, a rate that increases to one in six if use begins before age 18.

Cannabis comes in many forms, which is why people use different names for it. Each form affects the brain and body differently, and some are much stronger than others. The consumption method, amount taken, THC potency, and prior experience all play a role in how cannabis impacts the body and brain.

The Speaking of Cannabis campaign aims to empower trusted adults with facts and communication tips to discuss these risks with youth. Adults are encouraged to:

- Understand how cannabis can affect the developing brain.
- Talk with teens about not using cannabis.
- Store cannabis products safely in their original, labeled, child-resistant or locked containers, placed high up and completely out of reach and sight of children and pets.

The Speaking of Cannabis initiative is supported by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health Health Improvement Bureau and is featured as part of the Preferred Busi-



Speaking of Cannabis can help you explore additional resources to stay informed, along with trusted tools and guides.

ness sponsored content program.

Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona counties are partnering to inform adults through the website, speakingofcannabis.org.

This activity is made possible by a grant

from the Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention program of the Minnesota Department of Health Health Improvement Bureau.

The Regional Cannabis Communication Campaign is part of the sponsored content program called Spotlight.

DUNDAS DUKES

2026 SCHEDULE



Wed, June 24
Fri, June 26
Sun, June 28

St. Paul Mudhens
Lakeville Loonatics *#
St. Anthony Hogs

Home
Home
Home

7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
2 p.m.

Farm Animal and Tractor Day,
Presented by Merchant's Bank

Wed, July 1
Fri, July 3
Sat, July 4
Wed, July 8
Fri, July 10

North St. Paul Snowmen
Minnetonka Monarchs
@ Northfield Knights *
@ Faribault Lakers #
Miesville Mudhens *#

Home
Home
Northfield, Minn.
Faribault, Minn.
Home

7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
2 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

Beach Night,
Presented by Baird Koenig Jones

Sun, July 12
Wed, July 15
Fri, July 17
Sun, July 19
Wed, July 22
Fri, July 24
Sun, July 26
Fri, July 31
Sat, Aug 1
Sun, Aug 2
Sat, Aug 8
Sun, Aug 9
Fri, Aug 14
Sat, Aug 15

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Hamel Hawks
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Section 1A Playoffs
Section 1A Playoffs
Section 1A Playoffs
Section 1A Playoffs

Lakeville, Minn.
Home
Miesville, Minn.
Home
Home
New Ulm, Minn.
Home
TBD
TBD
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TBD

2 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
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7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
2 p.m.
8 p.m.
TBA
2 p.m.
TBA
2 p.m.
8 p.m.
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DANCE: 8 PM - 12 A.M.
\$10 AT DOOR 21+
\$5 AT DOOR 12-20

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With State OK, County Mental Health Court Prepares to Launch

By Rice County

When Rice County launches its Mental Health Court next month, it will be Minnesota's sixth.

But while there are few programs in the state specifically for justice-involved residents with serious mental health concerns, county officials say the need locally is substantial and growing.

The increase began following the pandemic, says Community Corrections Manager Angela Brewer who oversees the county's probation and behavioral health staff. But it wasn't just the increase, it was the impact and severity of the issues and the need for long-term solutions that got her, County Attorney

Brian Mortenson and District Court Judge Christine Long working toward a Rice County mental health court.

Brewer applied for a federal grant in 2023, but the submission wasn't selected. Last year, she discovered Minnesota's adult-use cannabis law provides funding for new treatment courts, and following months of work by an 18-member multi-disciplinary team to assess local needs and develop policies, procedures and goals and the formation of a second 13-member team that will oversee the program, the county received approval from the Treatment Court Initiative Advisory Committee and the Minnesota Judicial Council earlier this spring.

Long, who leads the court, Brewer and Mortenson are confident the program will not only benefit participants, but as the state's other treatment courts have done, improve public safety.

Its structure is similar to the county's existing drug treatment court in that it's overseen by a district court judge and a team of professionals, and that participants receive intensive supervision and needed treatment, have curfews and attend regular court sessions as a group.

The program differs in that participants must be diagnosed with what state statutes define as a serious and persistent mental illness and their criminal behavior must be tied to their mental illness.

"They must acknowledge their criminal behavior, seek professional help, get on medication to stabilize or minimize mental health issues, address any chemical health concerns and learn basic life skills," said Long.

As with the Drug Treatment Court, participants must be over 18 and a county resident. Completing the program will be a condition of their probation.

The new court is strengths-based and tailored to the individual. Progress made toward goals and program compliance is incentivized. If rule violations occur, they are handled through sanctions or service adjustments.

Like all treatment courts, the Mental Health Treatment Court Team, which includes county social workers, a probation officer,

prosecutor, law enforcement, defense attorney and treatment and mental health professionals will meet regularly to review participants' progress and are available to provide support and assistance in areas such as housing and food if needed.

The idea, says Brewer, is to have "everything in one place," allowing participants to focus on regaining stability and getting well.

Mortenson sees a time when participants complete the program and have reintegrated into society.

"It will give a family their family member back," he said. "The goal is to return function to where they can care for someone who depends on them. When you can do that, that's huge."

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Dunn Reflects on the push to build the Rice County Public Safety Center

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

Former Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn, was in town to tend to some personal business. While here, he took some time to reflect on the campaign to build the new Rice County Public Safety Center. He said the completion of that project, just about 18 months ago, represented more than a new building—it marked the culmination of years of persistence, collaboration and community debate.

Dunn, along with current Sheriff Jesse Thomas, played a central role in advancing the project, which faced significant hurdles from the outset. During his tenure with the Sheriff's Office, Dunn said, the county conducted six separate jail studies. Ultimately, after the Minnesota Department of Corrections informed the county in 2019 that the old facility was inadequate and would be reclassified as a 90-day lockup, momentum finally

built toward constructing a modern facility. "It was an uphill battle from the beginning," Dunn said. "We had to get the motion started and explain why we needed this."

County commissioners, staff and residents all contributed to the process, asking tough questions about cost, need and scope. Dunn credits that dialogue with shaping a project designed not for excess, but for long-term sustainability.

"We built it to meet today's needs and the next 20 years," he said. "It wasn't about adding unnecessary space—it was about doing it right."

The difference between the old jail and the new facility is striking. Dunn recalled past inspections when Department of Corrections officials expressed concern about outdated features, including barred cells and patchwork fixes that had accumulated over time.

"We had put a lot of band-aids on that facility," he said. "This is what we had until we could build something better."

Walking through the new Public Safety Center during its ribbon cutting in November of 2024 left a lasting impression. Dunn described a sense of pride seeing staff embrace a modern workspace designed for efficiency, safety and improved services.

Yet Dunn emphasized that even a state-of-the-art facility cannot solve every challenge, particularly when it comes to mental health.

"Jails have a place, but they're not the end-all cure," he said. "People with mental health issues don't get better in a jail cell."

While the new center allows for better care and management of inmates, Dunn said broader solutions—such as increased access

to crisis beds—remain essential.

Even so, the building stands as a symbol of progress, teamwork and remembrance, with spaces honoring deputies lost in the line of duty.

"It turned out really well," Dunn said. "I hope the citizens appreciate what it represents."

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Guidance for One-time Increase to Homeowner Refunds Announced

(continued from page 1)

The department will adjust their returns and add the increase to their refund.

Their refund will be about 15% larger than the amount they originally filed. The department will not send letters to impacted taxpayers for this change.

Still need to file for your 2025 Homestead Credit Refund?

The department is working to update the

free online filing system for homeowners to reflect the one-time increase. During this time, homeowners can still file their 2025 returns.

Qualifying homeowners who have not yet filed their 2025 Homestead Credit Refund return can file for the 2025 refund until Aug. 16, 2027. Homeowners can file for free using the department's online filing system.

Homeowners filing between now and mid-July will have their returns adjusted and the one-time increase automatically added to their refund by the department.

Homeowners filing after mid-July will see the one-time increase already included in their refund when filing. No adjustments will need to be made to these refunds.

Plan to file for your 2025 Homestead Credit Refund on paper or with a software

provider?

The department has updated paper forms to include the one-time increase. Tax software providers that include Homestead Credit Refund filing in their offerings will be updating their systems to reflect the increase by mid-July. Questions about a software provider's product should be directed to their customer support.

Not sure if you qualify for the Homestead Credit Refund?

You may qualify if you are a Minnesota (full- or part-year) resident with household income under \$142,490, you owned and lived in your Minnesota homestead on Jan. 2, 2026, the property is classified as your homestead (or your application was approved), and you have no delinquent property taxes.

Learn more about the Homestead Credit Refund and how to apply on the department's website. (www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund)

Need more information on recent tax law changes?

The one-time increase to 2025 refunds is one part of a larger tax bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature and signed into law by Walz. The department is working to implement the provisions that impact Minnesota's tax code and the tax filing system.

Learn more about that work and the other tax law changes in the bill by visiting the tax law changes webpage. (www.revenue.state.mn.us/tax-law-changes)



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Legitimate Medicaid providers being cut off due to Gov. Walz mismanagement

Friends and neighbors,

Thousands of Minnesotans who depend on disability services, autism therapy, addiction recovery care, and in-home support are at risk of losing their providers because the state abruptly terminated the Medicaid enrollment of more than 3,400 service organizations.

I have spent the last several days fielding frantic calls and emails from providers across the district and throughout Minnesota who are confused, angry, and scared about what is happening. Many of those providers say they did everything right and got cut off anyway. They don't know what comes next for them and for the people they serve, but they need help.

Minnesota's Medicaid programs have been plagued by fraud for many, many years. Federal investigators have estimated that as much as \$9 billion may have been stolen from state programs since 2018. For years, the Walz administration downplayed the problem and resisted accountability even when many of us tried to raise concerns. Whistleblowers from within the Department of Human Services were ignored and retaliated against. When the Trump administration finally threatened to withhold up to \$2 billion in annual Medicaid funding unless Minnesota cleaned up its act,

the state found itself having to do in four months what should have been done years ago.

The state reviewed 5,583 providers enrolled in programs considered high-risk for fraud. Of those, 2,061 were approved and kept enrolled. Another 3,411 had their Medicaid enrollment terminated by the May 31 deadline. Only a handful of these -- 59 -- were due to possible risk of fraud. Most of those terminations, nearly 2,500 of them, were due to incomplete paperwork issues.

But I have been taking a lot of calls from providers who say their paperwork was complete. They submitted everything they were asked to submit. The missing pieces were site visits -- these providers tried to schedule them, but the agency did not conduct them.

The stakes are urgent. Fraud is pervasive in Minnesota, for sure, but that is not who these providers are. These are legitimate organizations providing round-the-clock care for people with spinal cord injuries. They are clinics providing autism therapy to children. They are addiction recovery programs where patients have nowhere else to go. They are desperately trying to make payroll. Some are preparing to furlough staff. The people receiving these services, some of the most vulnerable Minnesotans in the state, are now caught in the middle of a mess the Walz administration created and then failed to manage.

All terminated providers have the right to appeal, and I strongly encourage anyone in that situation to do so immediately. Here are

the resources DHS has made available:

Weekly roundtable calls every Thursday from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Email mhcp.roundtables.dhs@state.mn.us to be added.

General Revalidate 2026 information: Minnesota Revalidate 2026 / Minnesota Department of Human Services

Provider FAQ: Minnesota Revalidate Provider FAQ / Minnesota Department of

Human Services

The department has also created a video about the appeals process

If you or someone you know has been affected by this, please contact my office. I will do everything I can to help legitimate providers get their licenses reinstated so they can get back to serving their patients.

A bad deal: \$600 million in cuts to vulnerable Minnesotans

By: Senator Bill Lieske

I have been vocal against the Democrats' tab fee increases of 2023. I support broad tax relief. Yet, I voted against an end of session budget agreement that included tab fee relief. Let me tell you why.

First, let's start at the beginning. In 2023, Democrats used their total control of government to raise tab fees, along with about \$10 billion in other taxes and fees at the same time. I said raising taxes (with an \$18 billion surplus!) was bad, I spoke against it, I voted against it, and I urged my colleagues not to do it. Democrats did it anyway.

Now there's been a large amount of public outcry. People are right to be angry, and so am I. I want those tab fee increases repealed, all of them, permanently.

Part of the end of session deal was a one-year, temporary reduction in tab fee rates. Not a repeal. A one-year pause. Which I guess would be better than nothing, except attached to it was \$600 million in cuts to some of the most vulnerable people in Minnesota, which is a trade I could not make in good conscience.

I want to be clear about something, because people who know me already understand where I come from. I am a limited government, small business guy who believes government takes too much of your money and does too much with it, often foolishly. Keeping money in people's pockets is something I believe in deeply. Tab fees are too high, just as many taxes are in Minnesota. But I also know a bad deal when I see one, and this was a bad deal.

The human services budget cuts \$300 million in state dollars over four years, and because almost all of these programs are matched by the federal government dollar for dollar, the real-world reduction in dollars flowing to patients and providers comes out to around \$600 million total. The people on the receiving end of those cuts are people who cannot advocate for themselves: children with autism receiving therapy, disabled adults who need overnight supervision, people who cannot cook their own meals or get to their own appointments or safely shovel their own sidewalks, family caregivers who need a break, and kids in mental health treatment. Those are the people we cut funding for in exchange for a one-year tab fee reduction.

And then there is the Family Residential Services crisis. This is one piece that I have been working on for nearly a year, and it genuinely breaks my heart that it was removed from the final agreement at the 11th hour.

Most people have never heard of Family Residential Services, and I completely understand that. It sounds like government jargon. In simple terms, it is a type of home-based care. These are regular homes, with real families, where a person with a significant disability lives alongside the people caring for them. Homes where caregivers share meals with the people they serve, celebrate birthdays together, and provide around-the-clock support for people who often have no other family who can.

In 2023, when Democrats had total control of government, the legislature switched how these providers get paid. Instead of payments based on each person's actual level of need, they moved to a flat rate system that, for many of these homes, meant a pay cut of 50 percent or more.

The results have been devastating. Between last fall and April of this year, 65 of these homes have already closed, eliminating 161 beds, and up to 29 children have been displaced from the only homes they have ever known. Some ended up in crisis care and some ended up in hospitals, and one expert says we could lose 80 percent of these homes statewide, meaning roughly 3,300 vulnerable Minnesotans would lose their living situations and be pushed into institutional care that costs the state three to five times more than keeping them where they are.

I authored a fix, it passed the Senate with bipartisan support, and Governor Walz and House leaders refused to include it in the final agreement. It is an unconscionable travesty that will have terrible consequences.

I support cutting tab fees, just as I support tax relief more generally. I always have, and I always will. But I will not trade a temporary one-year pause for \$600 million in permanent cuts to people who cannot come to the Capitol and fight for themselves. A man called my office the day we were debating this on the floor, and his caregiver told me there are days he does not remember his own name. He is the reason I cannot make that trade.

With as much waste and abuse and fraud as there is in our state government, there is no excuse for this bad deal to be on the table. We should be able to cut tab fees and help those who need it.

If you have any questions about the final deal or any of these issues, I'm happy to chat any time. It is a privilege to serve you.

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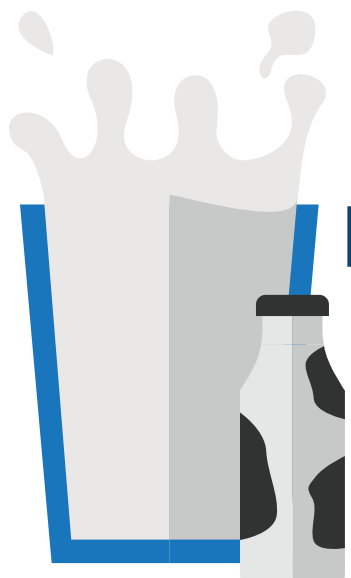
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3. Capital of Norway
4. Amazon offerings, originally
5. Spoiled, in U.K.
6. Nest material
7. Even, poetically
8. 70s dance joint
9. Capone's shoe cover
10. *Twice-done greeting move, in Italy
11. Creative
12. PGA peg
15. Bacterial throat infections
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!"

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



Serving Up THANKS

to Our Dairy Producers



Rice County Dairy Princess



Rice County Dairy Court

During June Dairy Month, we celebrate all that you bring to the table. From fresh products that nourish our bodies to the jobs and revenue generated for our communities, dairy farms are essential in keeping our community healthy and strong.



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