



**Mask mandate starts Saturday**

mn.gov/covid19 m MINNESOTA

Story Online at [timberjay.com](http://timberjay.com)

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**Tracking COVID-19...** See /3  
**Breakfast with Bears...** See /1B  
**Trumpeter Swans...** See /4B

# the **TIMBERJAY**



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\$1<sup>00</sup>

## U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

# Biological threats targeted at border

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook/Orr Editor

### Damaging wild rice and timber pests found in recent shipments

**INTERNATIONAL FALLS** - As northern Minnesota moves expectantly toward another wild rice harvest, there is a group of people working to insure that the tiniest of foreign invaders that could wreak havoc with the crop don't breach this

country's borders.

Agriculture specialists with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection service don't have the same visibility as their counterparts in immigration, but their effort to find and eliminate threats to agriculture production

and consumption is vital to the protection of the nation's food supply and agriculture-related industries.

Gene Krause oversees agricultural inspections at a number of checkpoints along the U.S.-Canadian border and

he works out of the operation at International Falls. Krause said a number of recent discoveries in foreign shipments coming through International Falls could have had big impacts on agriculture in northern Minnesota.

"Some of the insects we've

found have really been potential threats to either cultivated wild rice or the wild rice industry," Krause said. "In the last month and a half we've found brown plant hopper, and this really

See...**BORDER** pg. 7

## NORTHERN LIGHTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

# Opera

### moves to the outdoor stage



## Annual music series adjusts to pandemic

by **JODI SUMMIT**  
Tower-Soudan Editor

**CHISHOLM** - There were some mosquitos, a rogue red squirrel that scampered all the way across row eight during the

first act, and intermission views of the comet from the hillside to the north.

The orchestra players were evenly spaced, wearing masks if they

See... **OPERA** pg. 8

**Puccini's "Tosca," featuring Leah Crocetto and Rafael Davila, was performed at the Discovery Center in Chisholm last weekend. Performers and orchestra took COVID-19 precautions.** photos by J. Summit



## DEVELOPMENT



# Tower Harbor: Where does it go from here?

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**  
Managing Editor

**TOWER**— There was plenty of optimism here 13 years ago, the last time the late Rep. Jim Oberstar paid an official visit to Tower. The longtime Congressman was on hand to help cut the ribbon on a new harbor project that city officials and residents hoped would represent an economic revival for this town of 500.

By restoring the historic connection between Lake Vermilion and the city's downtown, city officials hoped the project would spark new commercial and residential development along a newly excavated harbor, drawing both traffic and business from the lake into town. An artist's depiction from the time shows a busy hub of activity, with brightly-colored buildings, expansive docks, and dozens of pedestrians gathered

See...**TOWER** pg. 9

## SUMMER CELEBRATIONS

# Operation Blueberry replaces annual Ely festival this year

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**  
Ely Editor

### COVID-19 caution forces alternative celebration

**ELY** - Concern over the COVID-19 pandemic has forced Ely Chamber of Commerce officials to offer an alternative celebration of the annual Blueberry/Art Festival that typically would draw tens of thousands of visitors to the area this weekend.

"Operation Blueberry" is underway, according to event coordinator Ellen Cashman, as a way to give exposure to local businesses through special sales and promotions in an attempt to attract customers who may visit the Ely area



this weekend despite the cancellation of the festival.

"In a summer of unprecedented event cancellations due to the world-wide pandemic," Cashman said, "Ely area businesses along with the Ely

Chamber of Commerce have come together to create some new summer activities for people. It is an answer to the many inquiries we received from those who did not cancel their reservations despite our needed cancellation of this wonderful event."

This year, with the cancellation of nearly all the usual events that normally take place this month, the Chamber of Commerce devised "Operation Blueberry," which runs from Friday, July 24 through Friday, July 31, as a way to still offer some of the fun vis-

See...**ELY** pg. 10



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## Community notices

### U of M Extension offering free Food Preservation Webinars

REGIONAL- Were you one of the many people who decided to try your hand at gardening this summer? Whether you are a novice or an experienced gardener, or just interested in enjoying the freshness of summer all year long, we invite you to learn more about preserving your harvest. Please join Suzanne Driessen, University of MN Extension Food Safety Educator, as she presents free webinars on food preservation.

Dates, times and registration links to the free webinars are as follows:

► Pickling: It's Not Just for Cucumbers! Thursday, July 30, 2-3 p.m. Register: <https://z.umn.edu/homepickling>

► Preserving Tomatoes, Monday, Aug. 3, 4-5 p.m. Register: <https://z.umn.edu/preservingtomatoes>

► Dry it: You'll like it! Thursday, Aug. 20, 2-3 p.m. Register: <https://z.umn.edu/dryit>

► Preserving Fall Vegetables, Thursday, Sept. 10, 10-11 a.m. Register: <https://z.umn.edu/fallvegetables>

► Safely Fermenting Food at Home, Tuesday, Sept. 29, 4-5 p.m., Register: <https://z.umn.edu/fermenting>

Can't join the webinars? Check out the food preservation resources on the University of Minnesota Extension website at <https://extension.umn.edu/food-safety/preserving-and-preparing>.

### Vermilion Dream Quilters to meet Aug. 6

REGIONAL- Vermilion Dream Quilters will meet outdoors on Thursday, Aug. 6 at the Greenwood Town Pavilion, 3000 Cty. Rd. 77. Please make note of the COVID-19 adjustments. The main building will not be open. There is an outhouse available. There will be no potluck. To keep all of us and possible vulnerable family members safe, you MUST wear a mask. We will maintain safe social distancing.

In addition to a mask, it is recommended that you bring hand sanitizer, a lawn chair, bug spray, your own beverage and food, and a show and tell item.

We will start gathering at 6 p.m. and have a brief business meeting at 6:30 p.m. Nancy Andraea has a creative at-a-distance game for us. In order to know how many game sheets to print, please respond to Nancy Andraea, NOT "to all", at [alanancy526@gmail.com](mailto:alanancy526@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

Caution: The COVID-19 situation can change rapidly and we may need to cancel at the last minute.

The all-guild dinner and gathering is officially canceled. It is tentatively rescheduled for September 2021. Our own VDQ meeting may be held, possibly outdoors. That decision will be made mid-August.

### Managing chronic pain in the midst of a pandemic

REGIONAL- Support is available for people living with chronic pain, even during these difficult times. According to the National Institute of Health, chronic pain affects more Americans than diabetes, heart disease and cancer. As more people are staying home to reduce risk of COVID-19 infection, feelings of isolation and loneliness are increasing. Mental health is more important now, in this context, for the management of pain than it has ever been. If you or a loved one lives with chronic pain, and are feeling lonely or isolated, this online workshop is for you. Offered in partnership with local community organizations, Living Well with Chronic Pain is a six-week workshop that helps people deal with the ongoing issues associated with chronic pain. Participants learn strategies to overcome frustration, fatigue, isolation and poor sleep, exercises for maintaining and improving strength, appropriate use of medications, evaluating new treatment and the importance of good nutrition.

Virtual Living Well with Chronic Pain offerings are Mondays, Aug. 10 through Sept. 21 from 9 - 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays, Sept. 10 through Oct. 15 from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Register by calling 1-855-215-2174 or visit [www.yourjuniper.org](http://www.yourjuniper.org) and search for online workshops. Classes are offered virtually via HIPAA Secure Zoom. No Zoom experience is necessary, we'll teach you. This class is donation based and no one is turned away based on inability to donate.

Juniper is a program of Innovations of Aging, a nonprofit subsidiary of Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging

## SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

# Northern-Frontiers Thrift helps the troops



REGIONAL - Northern-Frontiers Thrift in Babbitt is preparing to send care packages to deployed military troops. Packages will be shipped by Saturday, Aug. 15 and anyone can participate.

Organizers said in addition to the items listed below, they are looking for letters and pictures.

"If you feel comfortable, accompany the letter (letters must be in an unsealed envelope for inspection) with any art, or something similar," Carly Ann Evancevich said in a Facebook post. "If you are willing to contribute financial items, \$25 VISA and MC gift cards (gives them maximum flexibility, for WIFI, etc), are welcome."

Please note that all liquids must be individually bagged.

Items to consider sending include: personal hygiene items (unscented whenever possible), wet wipes, disposable razors (men's and women's), lip balm, body wash, lotion, face wash, mouthwash, deodorant, Q-tips, shampoo, conditioner, foot powder, feminine products (unscented whenever possible), small packs of napkins and tampons, female versions of body wash, lotion, razors, face wash, hair de-tangler, face moisturizer, shampoo, conditioner, small grooming kits, laundry detergent pods packed in a sturdy plastic or metal container, sunscreen, magazines (clean content), fun

posters and calendars for dressing the place up, batteries (AA and AAA size), movies and music on thumb drives only (USB devices to send movies and current shows in digital form -- please keep them virus free; CDs, DVDs, and tapes are useless), 2 GB + USB memory sticks (blank), cards, letters, group photos (we want the troops to know real people did this for them), tobacco (smoke, dip, chew, and vape), food (cases of like-kind goods, not assorted), beef jerky, hard candy, chewing gum (all flavors), protein bars, protein mixer bottles/shakers, cross training shoes (men's sizes 11 or 12, women's sizes 8 or 9), cordless electric hair clipper, nose/ear hair trimmer, multi-tools, 3M sticky wall hooks, hand sanitizer, cookies, crackers, corn nuts, chocolate candy, beef sticks, snack bars, nuts other than peanuts in re-sealable containers, dried fruits in re-sealable containers, tins and packets of flavored coffee and cappuccino, breath mints, and liquid creamers in little plastic cups with a foil top packed in a sturdy plastic or metal container.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact Northern-Frontiers Thrift at 218-827-0777 or email [info@northern-frontiers.com](mailto:info@northern-frontiers.com).

Drop off or mail items to 31 Central Blvd, Suite 400, Babbitt, MN 55706. Deadline is Saturday, Aug. 15.

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION

### Hwy. 169 milling and paving now underway

REGIONAL- MnDOT contractors began milling and paving work on Monday, July 20 on Hwy. 169. The project area is located between Hwy. 53 and St. Louis County Hwy. 26. The milling operation will lead with a paving crew following behind. The start time of paving will be staggered so the millers have a head start. The contractor will not be paving on Fridays due to high traffic volumes.

Traffic will encounter a flagging operation at the location of milling and paving. Traffic will be led through the operation via pilot car. Traffic will periodically be driving

on a milled surface during the day. Overnight traffic will encounter a full-width milled area that will be paved within 24 hours.

For more project details and map, please visit the project page: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/hwy169resurfacing/index.html>

Important reminders for motorists regarding work zone safety:

► Slow down when approaching every work zone, then navigate through with care and caution.

► Stay alert; work zones constantly change.

► Watch for workers and

slow-moving equipment.

► Obey posted speed limits; fine for a violation in a work zone is \$300.

► Minimize distractions behind the wheel.

► Be patient; expect delays, especially during peak travel times.

For more information on projects in northeast Minnesota, follow us on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/groups/MnDOTnortheast> and Twitter at @mndotnortheast. For real-time traffic and travel information in Minnesota, visit [www.511mn.org](http://www.511mn.org).

### Hwys. 1, 53 and 73 construction began July 20

REGIONAL- MnDOT contractors started work on Hwys. 1, 53 and 73 in St. Louis and Itasca counties on Monday, July 20. The two-year project will resurface 21 miles on Hwy. 1 between Hwy. 53 and Hwy. 65, resurface five miles on Hwy. 73 between Hwy. 1 and Hwy. 53, replace 10 culverts, and realign the Hwy. 53 and Hwy. 1/Cty. Rd. 115 intersection north of Cook.

Initial project work will start with the intersection of Hwy. 53 and Hwy. 1. Motorists can expect

traffic lane switches on Hwy. 53 and single-lane closures on Hwy. 1 during construction hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Bridge work in Linden Grove on Hwy. 1 over the Little Fork River will require a single-lane road with temporary signal and 12-foot maximum width.

For more project details, please visit the project page: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/hwy1resurfacing/index.html>.



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CITY OF ELY

# COVID-19 info proves difficult to find

MDH says data will soon be tracked by ZIP code rather than county

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY –Two weeks after Independence Day, rumors were flying around town about a potential increase in local cases of the coronavirus. Trying to get anyone to confirm the unsubstantiated reports proved challenging.

Following several inquiries, the *Timberjay* learned from the local hospital on Monday that there has been no increase in cases in the greater Ely community over the last two months, and that the Minnesota Department of Health will soon be presenting coronavirus case number information by ZIP Code rather than by county.

The initial search for answers all started last Thursday with an ominous email from a local business owner to the *Timberjay*: “Is a COVID surge underway in Ely? That’s the scuttlebutt our (deleted) staff is hearing around town, and so they contacted the mayor and hospital – no response. We asked a (local) nurse friend who said she can’t provide any details but that, yes, ‘it’s time to be very careful around Ely.’”

The email continued, “Rather disconcerting, especially given the lack of any public alerts about this apparent uptick and Ely’s concurrent tourism surge. Chamber of Commerce says all lodging is filled through August.”

The *Timberjay* started asking around.

As a reminder, symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus, according to the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss

of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

EBCH Marketing and Communications Team Leader Jodi Martin responded to questions about the potential “news tip” last Thursday.

“We’ve been getting a lot of emails regarding that, and actually I’m working with our CEO today to put out a press release regarding that. There is not much we can say with the HIPPA privacy laws.”

When asked if she was confirming an uptick of COVID-19 cases in the Ely area, she responded, “I’m not saying anything at this point. Everyone should continue to wear (protective) face masks.”

When pressed on the matter, Martin said, “I’m meeting with Patty (Banks, EBCH interim CEO) this morning. I have been getting emails all morning. The rumor-mill is going around town.”

Martin was unavailable Friday and a call to her voice mail was made first thing Monday morning.

As reported last weekend, all three taconite mines on the Iron Range confirmed at least one case of the coronavirus after two more facilities announced positive cases last week.

St. Louis County health officials said that more than 70 percent of the region’s cases are in Duluth but they are seeing increased transmission in the northern Minnesota communities that include the Iron Range.

Another rumor indicated that Ely Essentia Clinic, specifically Dr. Joe Bianco, was ready to provide a press briefing about the situation. An inquiry to him from the *Timberjay* confirmed that he was on vacation until the middle of this week and no such press conference was in the works. A nurse promised to get a message to Dr. Bianco about the

inquiry, but no call back had been received by the end of the day on Monday.

Another conversation, this one with Ely Mayor Chuck Novak, shed little light on the issue.

“I’ll tell you what I know,” he said. “The Governor’s office and St. Louis County won’t tell me a (expletive deleted) number. They won’t tell me anything, and I have to resort to hearing it on the street.”

Novak provided the telephone number of Gov. Walz’s assistant chief of staff for external relations. That attempted conversation went straight to voice mail.

Another call to Martin at EBCH resulted in another voice mail late Monday afternoon.

She forwarded a press release within the hour:

“Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH) officials announced today that despite an increase of COVID-19 cases reported by the county, there has been no increase in cases locally in the greater Ely community over the last two months.”

“Fortunately, our community and our providers and employees immediately responded and took necessary precautions. We must all stay vigilant in our efforts, though, and take nothing for granted,” said Patti Banks, Interim CEO of EBCH.

“Community members and media are advised to consult with St. Louis County or the Minnesota Department of Health officials for specific numbers, as that data is reported statewide and customarily released by government offices, and not individual hospitals.”

The press release included a description of COVID-19 precautions and protocols at EBCH.

See VIRUS...pg. 5

Briefly

## Five safe after boat capsizes on White Iron

MORSE TOWNSHIP – Five people escaped injury Sunday afternoon when the boat they were in capsized in gusty winds on White Iron Lake.

The St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office and Rescue Squad, along with the Morse Fire Department, were called around 2:30 p.m. to a water emergency on White Iron Lake south of Ely, according to an incident report from the Sheriff’s Department.

All five people aboard a 14-foot boat were wearing

life jackets when their craft capsized in gusty winds. Authorities said all five people aboard the boat were able to swim to a nearby island, where they were rescued and brought to shore. No one was hurt. Authorities did not identify those involved in the incident.

The St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office reminds the public to always wear life jackets and be prudent in deciding whether to venture out into the water in arduous conditions.

## Ely man hurt in four-vehicle crash

REGIONAL – A 23-year-old Ely man who suffered serious multiple injuries in a construction zone chain-reaction vehicle crash last Friday was released from a Duluth hospital on Monday.

Michael Douglas Johnson and passenger Gracie Sarah Hanson, 20, were northbound in a Toyota Corolla on Hwy. 169 near Door Rd. in Pike Twp. at about 4 p.m. on July 17 as they approached a construction area. The Corolla failed to stop and struck a stationary Toyota RAV 4 from behind, causing that vehicle to strike a Jeep Cherokee in front of it, and in turn the Cherokee struck a Ford Edge.

Johnson sustained what were believed to be life-threatening injuries and was transported to Essentia Healthcare

Facility in Virginia and then flown by helicopter to a Duluth hospital. He was wearing a seatbelt. No use of alcohol was reported. Hanson was not injured, according to the Minnesota State Patrol report. She was also wearing a seatbelt.

The driver of the RAV 4, Irene Johnson, 69, of Ely, was not injured. The driver of the Cherokee, Gracie Eleana Paulson, 19, of Virginia, was not injured. The driver of the Edge, Jon Philip Malek, 59, of Tower, was not injured. All were wearing seatbelts at the time of the accident.

According to a post on Johnson’s Facebook account, he suffered multiple fractures and received multiple surgeries, but his condition had improved enough that he was released from the hospital on Monday.

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# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

## Editorial

### Trump and his wall

Turns out the wall is keeping Americans in, rather than foreigners out

Could it be that Donald Trump has been playing twelve-dimensional chess after all?

During the 2016 campaign, the xenophobic Trump promised to build a wall at our southern border and get Mexico to pay for it.

Now, thanks to President Trump, there is at least a virtual wall around America— only it’s one designed to keep Americans in, rather than keep foreigners out.

At a time when most other developed countries in the world are more or less back to normal thanks to responsible, science-based responses to the COVID-19 epidemic, America has become the world’s cautionary tale about the effects of extreme government mismanagement of the pandemic. While we make up less than five percent of the world’s population, the U.S. is now comprising almost a third of all new COVID-19 infections worldwide. That’s not a testament to more testing, as President Trump likes to falsely claim. Many other countries have higher rates of testing than the United States, with far fewer positive results.

At a time when tourists are returning to the European Union from many countries, Americans are barred from travel to most of Europe. In fact, these days a U.S. passport isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on. Americans can still fly to Mexico and Turkey, but the rest of the world is virtually off limits as other countries justifiably fear that Americans will bring disease to their shores. Under the Trump administration, Americans are now getting a feel for what it’s like to be international pariahs.

And while it’s tempting to put the onus for America’s public health failure solely on a historically incompetent president and administration, the fault ultimately rests with the self-indulgent nature of far too many Americans. President Trump is the ultimate symbol of the fall of a nation that used to actually do great things. Today,

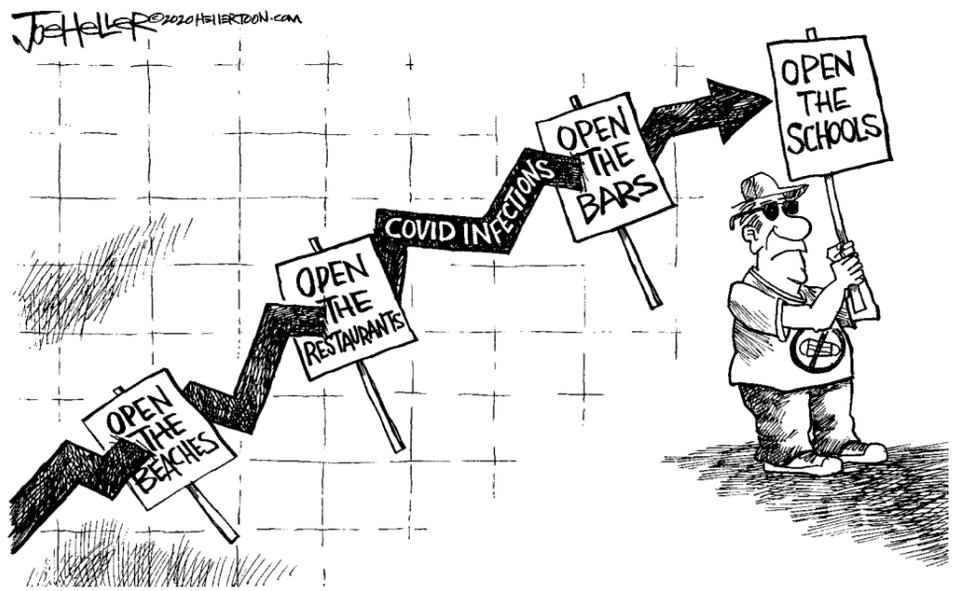
we can’t even be asked to do the easy things, such as donning masks to help bring a dangerous pandemic under control.

The Greatest Generation survived the Great Depression and actually fought for liberty in World War II. They gave up their freedom temporarily to join the war effort in countless ways. They sacrificed, in some cases everything, for the good of their country and its people. And yet today’s generation can’t be bothered to even wear a mask— in part to protect the health of the Greatest Generation. And they call themselves patriots? They seem only to recognize their rights as Americans, without recognizing the obligations and responsibilities that also come with living in a free nation. Fortunately for America, prior generations better understood the concept of citizenship and duty.

Because too many Americans see “liberty” as the right to act like undisciplined children, we are, in fact, no longer free to leave our own country in most cases. We’ve been made to go sit in the corner, because nations with more mature leadership recognize the risk that the pandemic poses to their people, and they understand the degree to which the United States has failed to protect its own public.

Perhaps Donald Trump has simply given his supporters what they wanted from the start: a backward and inward-looking country with no interest in the outside world. Perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic, fueled by Trump’s ignorance and incompetence, has, in the end, given his supporters their beloved wall. It’s just that in this case, it’s a wall that’s keeping Americans inside— just as the Berlin Wall used to deny East Germans the right to travel.

In truth, America won’t have actual liberty or an improving economy until we get the pandemic under control. And that will require that we start acting like a mature and responsible nation once again.



## Letters from Readers

### The Stink Meter is nearing its limit in Greenwood

At the recent Greenwood Town Board meeting, the board decided to slash the town clerk’s hours and pay. The board claimed the Breitung Township Clerk gets her work done in 12 hours because that is what is posted as public office hours. If they had made one call to the Breitung Clerk, she would have enlightened them to the fact she works other hours outside the posted ones, but they were not interested in that truth. They only wanted a small truth that could be woven into a larger lie in order to achieve their goal of removing our clerk.

If you remember, the board placed Option B on the ballot in our last election, and if it passed, Option B would have removed the clerk from office and replaced her with a board-appointed clerk. Thankfully, the citizens voted, by a two-to-one margin, not to have an appointed clerk and also re-elected the clerk by an overwhelming margin.

Having failed in that effort, the Greenwood board moved on to passing ordinances that fine or imprison the clerk if she releases data that other townships would regard as “public” and just release.

These ordinances eliminate the transparency we should expect and were passed with no public input under the streamlined pandemic rules, under which the board has chosen to operate.

So here we are today, with the clerk having run for an office with hours and compensation that she was elected under for four years. Then the board plays a bait and switch, and she is left with too few hours to complete her work. If the clerk should choose to resign, the board will have taken away your right to elect your clerk and simply appoint one they like.

If she stays, who knows what scheme the board will cook up with their attorney to

force our elected Clerk Sue Drobac to resign. Observing how this Greenwood board secretly operates, the day will come when they give their appointed clerk more hours and pay and that’s when the “Stink Meter” will max out.

**JoAnn and John Bassing  
Greenwood Twp.**

### Accountability in the Tower Area Ambulance Service

In response to the “Editor’s Note” that was attached to my letter last week concerning the Tower Area Ambulance Service accounts, I stand by what I wrote. Facts are facts, and I will certainly take Interim Clerk/Treasurer Lamppa’s statement in the 7-25-19 *Timberjay* that “even that fund [the ambulance subsidy account] had been drained almost entirely at various points.” And I do believe the city’s professional audit firm when it states that the ambulance service fund is short \$697,299, “Due From Other [City] Funds”. A forensic audit, which was recommended by St. Louis County investigators when the city council asked them to investigate the former clerk/treasurer was never accomplished by the city. Why not? That would have led to needed transparency. The townships deserve some answers, and at least a “thank you” for persevering in this mismanagement by the city.

And I’m not impressed with the Editor’s view of the ambulance service account, profits that are generated from ambulance runs. The Editor states: “The city has tapped those funds for other city expenses, but no township funds were involved in those transactions under the current administration.” Notwithstanding that those ambulances were purchased with significant township money, and that township residents are members of the ambulance crew, the idea that it’s apparently OK for the city to use those profits for city expenses is incredible. Money earned by the ambulances needs

to be used in the ambulance service. And I’d sure like to see the state statute that says a new city council is not responsible for past city debts. Wouldn’t that be something? The city needs to make good on the \$697,299 and the city needs to pass a formal resolution preventing future TAAS profits from being diverted to cover city expenses.

**Lee Peterson  
Greenwood Twp.**

### Thanks for the good laugh

After reading Marilyn Mueller’s letter last week, I broke out laughing. Not about her saying that we as taxpayers should see all politicians’ tax records, because I believe we should, but about the way she colors Donald Trump and about not needing to see his. She said, we as taxpayers don’t need to see the tax records of a highly motivated [clearly self-centered motivated], hard-working billionaire [prove it, as he plays another round of golf on our buck], who became a public servant [why take a “pay cut” and work for free? Think about it harder]. I could go on and on about those statements.

I think Marilyn should read Donald Trump’s own book “The Art Of The Deal,” because I can easily tell she has not. It will explain in his own words why she is blind to the truth about him and his con game. I do thank her, however, for the good laugh!

**Barry W. Tungseth  
Fall Lake Twp.**

### We welcome your letters

The *Timberjay* encourages letters to the editor. You can submit letters by mail at PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790, or email letters to [marshall@timberjay.com](mailto:marshall@timberjay.com).

Letters are subject to editing, primarily for length and clarity.



# Don’t ask me - I’m still wondering about Lee

Prediction: If a certain candidate doesn’t win the Presidential election in November, members of his party in Congress will support a military coup to make him President anyway.

Reality: We’ll never know, because Andrew Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams in the 1832 election. However, conspiracy theorists were certain



**DAVID COLBURN**

that if Jackson had lost he would have been “placed in the Presidential Chair, at the point of fifty thousand bayonets!!!”

Surely even the most ardent of Trump detractors couldn’t believe I was talking about the current occupant of the Oval Office – or could they? After all, no less than Democratic candidate Joe Biden is already

on record as being convinced Trump will try to “steal” the election and will refuse to leave if he loses. Right?

And while Democrats can’t seem to contain their glee over Trump’s sinking poll numbers, they consistently fail to account for the intensity of those voters who know that electing Biden virtually assures that billionaire investor George Soros will be free to consolidate his plans for a new world order, providing he has enough money left after paying to buy all the bricks and bus in all the protesters for all

the violent civil unrest in our cities. This huge “silent majority” surely will ride to Trump’s rescue in November. Right?

Conspiracy theories are as American as apple pie, and our appetite for the former is as voracious as it is for the latter. They’re more visible and more dangerous than ever in the digital age, but to suggest that Americans on both the right and the left have suddenly become suckers for a good conspiracy theory is ludicrous. We’ve always been suckers for wild flights of fantasy and deception,

right down to believing that P.T. Barnum actually said, “There’s a sucker born every minute.” He didn’t.

My first foray into the realm of conspiracy theory came when I dove headlong into all the theories about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in a Dallas motorcade in 1963. Although I was just a month shy of turning six years old, it made a huge impression on me. As I grew into my late teens and twenties, I read most everything

See **CONSPIRACY...pg. 5**

## Letters from Readers

### Twin Metals mine plan is unacceptable

I'm the son and grandson of iron and taconite miners on the Iron Range and hope that copper-nickel mining can go ahead because our economy needs these good, high-paying jobs. I am, however, deeply disappointed to see the new Antofagasta mining plan which does not meet the high bar of doing this right.

I have long held that the one, non-negotiable, environmental standard that must be met here is simply stated as follows: Mine the ore where it is found but process the ore south of the Continental Divide, outside the Kawishiwi drainage. Ironically, the original Twin Metals mining plan did just that, taking into account the basic reality that mining itself entails little environmental risk while all the steps in processing the ore are extremely hazardous. But no, Antofagasta apparently decided we are just one more indigenous tribe to be exploited for profit as mining companies have done around the world. This will not stand.

The mining industry and the men and women working in the ferrous mines in Minnesota have been doing a wonderful job for over a hundred years of providing this nation the raw materials to make steel, and have done so while keeping our lakes and streams clean. But copper-nickel mining is something else, far more dangerous, and requires a new vigilance. And know this: mining is no walk in the park. Here are four basic facts about mining that must be considered.

- Stuff Happens.
- Stuff Breaks.
- Operational managers are only about half as smart as they think they are.
- Shift Supervisors bucking for promotion cut corners.

Knowing these basic facts of the mining world, no responsible mine owner would put copper-nickel processing facilities on the shores of Birch Lake, which drains directly into Basswood and on into the heart of the Boundary Waters. This is insanity. This is not a new mine plan—this is a declaration of war, economic war against the people of northeastern Minnesota. So, let me offer a little friendly, constructive advice.

First to Antofagasta: Go back to some version of your original mine plan which moved ore processing near where PolyMet is. That was a defen-

sible mining plan. This is not. This new plan will never be built in the face of determined public protest, in my judgment. Please reconsider.

Second, to Minnesota officials: Here are the specific environmental mining standards you need to uphold, if you are serious about protecting the Boundary Waters.

➤ Oppose any copper-nickel mining plan that includes processing these ores in the Kawishiwi basin. That is simply non-negotiable.

➤ Allow Antofagasta to be a mine operator but not a mine owner or lease owner. They are legally untouchable if things go wrong, and by submitting this revised mine plan, they have demonstrated bad faith on an epic scale. Deal with them as they are, not as who you wish they were. Your choices here will be vividly clear to Minnesota voters.

➤ Include a lease requirement that all Information Technology-related jobs for these mines must be held by employees living within reasonable driving distance of the mines. By the time this mine is built, there will be no need for a single miner to work underground and all those trucks and other heavy equipment will be largely self-driving. The jobs to operate all that equipment could just as well be in Santiago, Chile, as in Ely, Minnesota, and will be, unless you make this a lease requirement. Do not ignore this reality. You must not take environmental risk for jobs that turn out to be just ghosts in the machine we call the Internet.

➤ If Antofagasta insists on this mine plan, these leases must be denied even in the face of great controversy. And if you are one of those politicians who has been riding the fence on this issue, now is the time to climb down off that fence and take a stand. This is one place you could take that stand.

Finally, to my good old boy friends who support this mining and who also like to fish Basswood and especially to old timers who used to take 19-foot square sterns with a ten-horse Johnson all the way to Thursday Bay of Crooked Lake, now is the time to go down to the Twin Metals building, pound on the door, ask to see the management and tell them they can't put this operation on the shores of Birch Lake. Tell 'em so they know you mean it. That is what I am trying to do here. Please help me.

**Hans Olsen  
Ely**

### Enough nonsense from Greenwood

I was shocked and really upset when I read the news in *The Tower News* and *The Timberjay* papers about Greenwood's supervisors slashing our clerk's hours. Sue Drobach has been a wonderful addition to Greenwood's office. She is friendly, knowledgeable, and willing to help. She assisted me with our 40th anniversary party for the township. I know for a fact that if Sue has to leave the office for any reason, she always leaves a note on the door saying where she can be reached. And to my knowledge, she always notifies the chairman or another supervisor where she can be reached, if her assistant cannot come to the office.

The board stated that the Township of Breitung's clerk kept their office open only 12 hours a week and that there is no reason for us in Greenwood to be open for 20 hours. They then reduced our clerk's salary to \$27 per hour and gave her 12 hours a week to complete her work. THIS IS NOT A TRUE STATEMENT! The clerk of Breitung asked her board if the hours between 12 noon to 4 p.m. each day could be the time when the public can come in and get their questions answered and business done. After talking to Jorgine Gornick, who has been Breitung's treasurer for many years, she stated that, most days, they both come in and start working around 8 a.m., until 5 p.m.

Chairman Mike Ralston stated that the board wanted to be more fiscally conservative. Really. MIKE, WHY THEN DIDN'T YOU CUT YOUR AND THE OTHER SUPERVISORS' SALARIES? I found out that Greenwood's supervisors get \$179 per hour when they have a meeting and that he as chairman gets \$191 per hour....The supervisors get their monthly pay even if they are not present at their monthly meetings. The supervisors can miss up to three months before this is brought up to the board. I FEEL THIS IS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN. I am shocked and very disappointed in our supervisors! Why have they not made the public aware of this practice?

Chairman Ralston also stated that Breitung Township has many more services than Greenwood is responsible for, but Mike failed to state that Greenwood has twice as many people. In another decision, when Greenwood's treasurer resigns at the end of July, Chairman Ralston has asked the board to

vote to appoint Belinda Fazio as interim treasurer, without asking for a background check of her, as well as Tammy Mortaloni, who Belinda Fazio had asked to be appointed as assistant to the treasurer.

As a voting resident of the township of Greenwood, I object to both appointments. There appears to be a conflict of interest involved in these appointments. I recently found out that Fire Chief Fazio, who is Belinda Fazio's husband, works for Mike Ralston. This is a conflict of interest. Why didn't Chairman Ralston ask permission to post these positions in our local papers and SEE if we have other candidates in our township who might want the job and maybe be more qualified? This has been the practice in the past when there is a vacancy.

In closing, I really feel all of us residents of Greenwood Township should become more observant to what is going on in our township. We supposedly have more residents with degrees from bachelors to doctorates than any other township, but we don't have more than one who is on our town board. We need all of us to start rethinking who we place on our town board. This is not the "good old boys" club. This is serious business when we elect supervisors who do not know their responsibilities. It has become very obvious to me that Chairman Mike Ralston does not know rules and order and how to conduct a lawful meeting.

**Pam Lundstrom  
Greenwood Twp.**

### Greenwood board's arguments on clerk don't hold up

In response to the arguments that the Greenwood Town Board made in justifying their decision to cut the clerk's pay, "Breitung Township offers so many services that Greenwood doesn't." Yes, they maintain roads (with a staff and a supervisor to direct them). They have a water and sewer plant they share with Tower (with staff to maintain it) and a police department (with a chief to oversee it). This would seem to indicate that the Breitung clerk's main "duty" over the various departments is to record the report they give the town board at their meetings.

When I was Planning Director, I heard that if everyone was at their cabin and the resorts in Greenwood were filled at the same time, the population would swell to over 10,000! Greenwood is

more than twice the physical size of Breitung and has greater population. I checked--Breitung population was 575 as of April 1, 2019, while Greenwood's population stood at 896.

The other reason for cutting our clerk's hours and pay was "because we are trying to be fiscally conservative here." If that were the truth, the supervisors would have cut their own pay by 40 percent also.

A portion of the clerk's duties include not only helping folks who come to the office but also answering telephone calls, which the supervisors don't deal with.

Make no mistake about it: Our national and state capitals are not the only places where politics are corrupt. Pay attention to who you vote for! Even Jesus had harsh words to say to the corrupt leaders in their nation.

**Marilyn Mueller  
Greenwood Twp.**

### Groceries, not COVID

Tuesday, July 21, was a gloomy day of rain. Grocery shopping was a good idea. I put on one of my masks and stepped into an Ely grocery store that was crowded with people of all ages. Squeezing past so many folks, I paused to compliment one woman on her very unusual mask and paused again to give a thumbs up and express "You are wonderful" to a masked mom and her four young masked companions. Three un-masked young adults about two feet away from me said they were social distancing.

I applaud all of the folks who are wearing masks in Ely! But some still do not. Shopping in Ely's two busy grocery stores puts everyone into spaces with narrow aisles and—especially on rainy days—into close proximity with each other. I know. In the past, we liked it this way!

Would our grocery stores follow the lead from a growing number of large retail stores? You could show us all the Ely pioneering spirit and could dare to step up in a time of need as leaders.

Please. Could you require masks of all adults and children entering the store?

**Phyllis Ryan  
Ely**

Where the  
North Country  
Sounds Off!

### CONSPIRACY...Continued from page 4

that was written about the assassination. When I lived in Dallas briefly in 1987, I simply had to visit Dealy Plaza to look at the "grassy knoll" and the former Texas School Book Depository building to see the area for myself.

To this day, the possibility of conspiracy still intrigues me. Was it really Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone to kill Kennedy, or were there others? Was the CIA involved? How about the Russians or the Cubans or organized crime? If there's a new documentary that attempts to focus the latest in forensic technology on proving or disproving the "single bullet theory," I'm

### VIRUS...Continued from page 3

#### MDH to change data reporting

The phone call to the governor's office apparently was forwarded to the Minnesota Department of Health. Julie Bartkey, MDH media relations specialist-COVID, told the *Timberjay* late Monday that indeed all coronavirus

going to tune in.

So why do conspiracy theories develop, why do they take root and flourish, particularly on the extreme left and right sides of the political spectrum? I personally chalk it up to two things: feeling powerless and being intellectually lazy.

Pick any conspiracy theory running rampant today and you're likely to find an element of power at its root, driven by either the belief that someone is trying to take power away from you or trying to keep you from having it. If I had a nickel for every Facebook meme I've seen touting a conspiracy with power at its root, I'd own Rupert

Murdoch's media empire instead of working at the *Timberjay*. Memes are proof positive that people have become intellectually lazy—people read them, and if they agree, they share them, without ever taking even 30 seconds to do a Google search for some fact-checking. Someone posted it, it must be true. For posts about coffee addiction, perhaps that's OK. For conspiracies, it's not.

As regards conspiracies surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, some conspiracy theories have cost people livelihoods, health, and lives. That's not acceptable in any way. If one personally wants to believe in a conspiracy, that's their right, but

Bartkey said she was surprised by the lack of information available locally.

"It is really unfortunate that your local public health has not been able to clarify anything. That really surprises me. Usually they are pretty good about that unless that don't have the information either," she said.

She said that one can assume

to turn that belief into actions that we now know can harm others is not.

When it comes to dealing with conspiracies, perhaps the best personal tool one can have to assess them is Occam's Razor. A problem-solving technique developed in the 14th century, it boils down to a simple phrase that most Facebook meme writers couldn't screw up: "The simplest explanation is most likely the right one."

Which is more simple: a) Democrats wanting to oust Trump from office have concocted a COVID-19 hoax that involves top-level officials in every state of the union, both Republican and Democrat, and

there would be an uptick in coronavirus cases in the Ely area. "That is just where it's going everywhere else in the state," Bartkey said. "But to actually point to a city, not unless it is tied into a workplace that has specific public health interests."

She added, "The message for your readers is the same thing we've been saying for a

have enlisted the aid of doctors, nurses, first responders, and countless others to distort all the case and death numbers to outrageous levels; or b) we really do have an out-of-control virus that poses a serious health threat to millions of people? B is the most simple by far. Particularly because it amazes me that anyone could call Democrats "libtards" in one breath and accuse them of brilliantly masterminding a worldwide pandemic on the other.

"The simplest explanation is most likely the right one." Ancient advice for a modern-day crisis that should be contemplated by all. Conspiracy theories aren't exclusive to either party

very long time. Even though it is greater Minnesota, and people have the assumption that COVID isn't there, it is everywhere now and (is spread) by community transmission. Just taking our recommendations is going to help slow that down and mitigate it.

Week of July 27

**Monday**  
TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m. Canceled until further notice.

Embarrass Al-Anon Family Group- Hope Lutheran Church, 5088 Hwy. 21, 6 p.m.

**Tuesday**  
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:30 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is August 18.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (business meeting) and third (drill) Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

**Wednesday**  
Tower AA- Open Basics- 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. Questions, call 753-2332.

**Thursday**  
AA Meeting- Lake Vermilion 12x12 (Open). 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, use the rear side door entrance.

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at [vermilioncountry.org](http://vermilioncountry.org).

**Tower Food Shelf**

TOWER- The Tower Food Shelf is not able to increase its hours on a regular basis, but anyone needing an emergency visit can contact Food Shelf Coordinator Marge McPeak at 218-753-3503.

# Critics misunderstand the city's finances

COMMENTARY

Based on comments in local media from a number of critics in recent months, it is apparent that some in the public have a misunderstanding of the terminology used by auditors as it pertains to city financing.

As we have reported, the city of Tower's auditors have frequently cited budget deficits in a number of project accounts dating back several years. And several critics have wrongly assumed that these deficits are evidence that the city is in debt. In fact, debt and deficit mean different things.

The city has taken on debt for some projects, such as the sewer extension to the Hoodoo Point Campground or the construction of the new Lamppa Manufacturing facility. These debts typically have an identified means of repayment and the city continues to meet its debt obligations. Suggestions by some that the city is facing bankruptcy because it has debt are inaccurate and alarmist. Almost every city has debt and Tower is no exception.

As for deficits, the city has experienced deficits in several project accounts over the years, which means the city spent more for things like road repairs or harbor work than they had revenue to pay for. In those cases,

the city tapped other available funds to cover the expenses associated with those projects. To compare this to a household, the city essentially transferred funds from a savings account to its checking to pay some unexpected bills. For most families, such transfers are routine money management.

It's the same for the city except, in the case of a public body, these transfers are supposed to be authorized and documented in official minutes. The city of Tower ran into difficulty under the prior administration because the former clerk-treasurer made a very large number of transfers in and out of numerous accounts without the knowledge or authorization of the city council, which is improper.

When most of us move money from our savings to our checking to pay bills, we don't think we're incurring debt... we view it simply as paying our bills with available resources. But city auditors, because they are also accountants, talk about it differently. To them, such transfers don't just pay the bills, they incur a debt to the account that the money came from.

This isn't a debt in the way we normally think about it, because it's a debt the city owes to itself. If we move money from our personal savings to checking, most of us don't think of

our checking account as being in debt to our savings, but that's how an auditor for the city would look at it.

Even so, just as your personal checking account is under no obligation to recoup the funds it received from your savings to pay the mortgage last month, the city is under no legal obligation to repay funds it borrowed from its own accounts, unless those accounts were restricted in some way, such as was the case with the ambulance replacement account, which receives contributions from neighboring townships. While the city certainly could restore unrestricted funds if it had the ability to do so, it is not required. In the case of Tower, some have suggested that the city is somehow failing to pay its legally-obligated debts because it has not restored funds that were transferred from the city's ambulance operations account, which is unrestricted. Indeed, in recent letters, one critic suggests that the city may be violating state law if it fails to restore funds to that account. It's true that cities are required to pay their bills and make their actual debt payments, but that's not what we're talking about here. Repayment of funds to any unrestricted city account that the prior clerk-treasurer transferred elsewhere is entirely optional on the part of the city. And just to be clear, we're talking about multiple accounts in this case. As we've previously reported, the former clerk-treasurer, rather

than addressing the city's prodigal spending under the prior administration, simply drained almost all of the city's unrestricted accounts to cover bills. That, along with a major miscalculation on the harbor walkway and lighting project (that was supposed to cost the city nothing but ended up costing well over \$100,000) put the city's finances in a real mess.

Which is why it's unlikely that any of the city accounts that were drained nearly dry will be restored any time soon, no matter how many times certain individuals demand it.

The city is on a path to eventual recovery, with a tighter rein on spending and much greater financial transparency. Any fund transfers are now being handled properly, with full authorization and a clear paper trail. Even so, it's going to take years to get the city back where it was before the unchecked bleeding began. The city can't print money and it certainly can't generate the funds needed to restore these accounts from its tax levy — it would take a 200-percent levy increase just to cover the transfers from the ambulance operations account, not to mention all of the other city accounts that were drained as well. Obviously, that's not feasible.

In other words, people can demand these funds be restored all they want. But, as the old saying goes, they're just beating a dead horse.



MARSHALL HELMBERGER

COMMUNITY NEWS

**Heiam Medical Foundation hosting online auction fundraiser**

COOK- Many things have changed since the foundation began in 1992, but our commit-

ment to supporting local health care continues! Over \$658,000 has been given in support, along with growing an endowment for the future. The foundation has recently updated our logo, mission statement and website. Check out the changes at [www.heiam-foundation.org](http://www.heiam-foundation.org).

The WC Heiam Medical Foundation has decided to not hold a live benefit this summer. In its place we invite you to check out our virtual event and auction online at <https://cbo.io/bidapp/index.php?slug=heiam.io>. You can register for a sponsorship, donate an item, or check out the items that will be in

the auction. The online auction is set to open on Aug. 1 and will close on Aug. 15. Items include golf packages, aerial trips, spa baskets, and gift certificates to local businesses with more being added daily.

Sponsorships are available at six levels this year: \$100 Bronze, \$250 Silver, \$500 Gold, \$1,000 Platinum, and \$2,000 Diamond. Each level of sponsorship includes a special gift. Check out the event link for more information or contact Tiffany at 218-750-1352.

Thank you for showing your continued support for the WC Heiam Medical Foundation and

helping us to uphold our commitment to local health care.

**Terry Defoe named to Spring President's List at Bemidji State University**

BEMIDJI- Terry Defoe, from Tower, earned President's List honors from Bemidji State University in Bemidji, at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester. To be eligible for the President's Honor Roll, BSU students must be enrolled for at least 12 credits and earn a perfect 4.0 GPA during the semester.

**Molly Vagle named to University of Minnesota Twin Cities Dean's List**

MINNEAPOLIS/ ST. PAUL- Molly Vagle, of Tower, has been named to the 2020 spring semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Vagle is a junior in the College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.



**the TIMBERJAY**

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Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$29.95/year; details at [www.timberjay.com](http://www.timberjay.com).

**Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.**

## Tower-Soudan Historical Society seeking new members; join today

TOWER-SOUDAN- The vision of Tower-Soudan Historical Society (TSHS) is "to bring alive the rich history of the Tower-Soudan area through people, artifacts,

and stories." Membership in the society is a way to support this vision. Annual dues are only \$10 individual or \$20 family. TSHS is looking

for new members. The group applies for several grants through the year, and many of these grants are based on membership numbers. Please help increase the membership by joining.

Some of our current projects are:

- Restoration of the Tower Historic Firehall to house new displays and events.
- Maintaining our depot-museum and train, which is a popular tourist attraction at the west end of Tower.

- Interviewing people in the area who were a part of Tower-Soudan history.

- Updating the Cemetery Online project.
- Gathering information for the Soudan Mine Memorial.

Please send dues to: Tower-Soudan Historical Society, Box 465, Tower, MN 55790. Be sure to include your name, address, email, and phone. Thank you for your support.

**Tower Cemetery Association**

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN.  
*Thank you to ALL who donate.*

**We still need your support and the support of others.**

**Checks are to be made out to:**  
**Tower Cemetery Association**  
**PO Box 874, Tower, MN 55790**

Thank you,  
The Tower Cemetery Board



**VISIT Bear Creek Acres under the yellow tent for fabulous pork products or an Adirondack chair!**

**Fridays 4-6 PM**

Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday — Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Saturdays — 8 a.m. to noon  
Closed on Sundays  
Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday Noon-6 pm  
Tuesday Noon-6 pm  
Wednesday Noon-6 pm  
Thursday Noon-6 pm  
Friday Noon-5 pm  
Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

**AA - Alcoholics Anonymous**  
AA - 7 p.m. Mondays, and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely  
**ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA** - Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church. 231 E. Camp St., Ely. Enter through side door.  
**WOMEN'S AA** - Noon Mondays, St. Anthony Church basement, Ely  
**BABBITT AA** - 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church  
**AL-ANON** - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend.  
**BABBITT AL-ANON** Thursdays, 7 p.m., upstairs at Woodland Presbyterian Church.  
**CO-DEPENDENTS'** 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.  
**ELY FOOD SHELF** - Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St.

Tuesday Group schedule

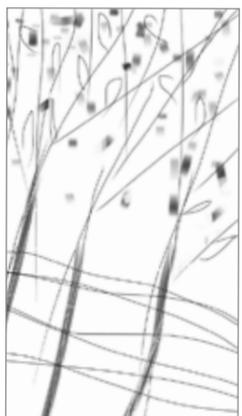
ELY - The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesdays. All presentations are administered in a virtual presence until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic. Send email to stevie-schon@gmail.com for more information.  
**July 28** - Kathryn Hoffman - PolyMet Update

Slovenians cancel 'Taste'

ELY - The Ely Chapter of Slovenian Union of America will not be having the "Taste of Slovenia" this year due to public health caution concerning the coronavirus pandemic. Organizers thank past supporters. They look forward to returning the popular ethnic celebration next year.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2020



await the berries ripening and picking time  
relishing beauty

ELY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL TEAM



CAR WASH FOR A CAUSE



Lakeshore Liquor hosted a fundraiser earlier this month for the Ely Memorial High School girls volleyball team. The sudsy session raised \$535. Three car washers, at left, are Clare Thomas, Lilli Rechichi, and Charly Flom. Rachel Coughlin, above, details a bumper. photos by K. Vandervort

OUR COMMUNITY

Ely Police Report - July 1-15, 2020

Arrests/Citations:

- Loud Party. Officers were called about a loud party. One individual issued a citation for underage consumption.
- Domestic Assault. Officers arrested an individual for Domestic Assault, Terroristic Threats, Criminal Damage to Property, and Possession of a Legend Drug.
- Domestic Assault. Officers arrested an individual for Domestic Assault and Second Degree Assault.
- Traffic Stop. Individual was issued a citation for speeding.
- Traffic Stop. Individual issued a citation for speeding and driving after revocation.

Complaints:

- Animal Disturbance. Officers were called to a property about a dog that chased an individual. Officers educated the dog owner on proper leash laws.
- Fireworks. Officers were called many times early in the month to locate the source of illegal fireworks. Two out of 10 times, officers located the individual(s) and issued warnings. In the other incidents, officers were unable to locate the sources of fireworks. In one disturbance report, officers were called to a verbal altercation between two individuals over fireworks and a cat. Officers mediated the situation for the night.

- Disturbance. Officers were called to mediate a dispute between a landlord and tenant.
- Motor Vehicle Crash. Officers responded to a two-vehicle crash. Minor damage to both vehicles with no injuries.
- Counterfeit Currency. Officers received a counterfeit currency complaint from a local business. This case is under investigation.
- Parking. Officers were called to a vehicle parked in an alley. Officers located the owner of the vehicle and they removed the vehicle.
- Motor Vehicle Crash. Officers were called to a vehicle hitting another vehicle. One vehicle towed for damage. One individual was transported to the hospital as a precaution.
- Disturbance. Officers were called to two individuals arguing. Officers mediated the situation.
- Public Assist. Officers were requested to assist an individual while he cleaned up garbage by a neighbor's residence as they did not get along.
- Parking Complaint. A local business requested information on how to remove a vehicle that was parked on their property. Officers assisted the business owner.
- No Pay. Officers were called to a local business for an individual that did not pay for their gas. This case is under investigation.

- Check Hazard. Officers located a street light that blew over due to high winds. Officers contacted Public Works to assist.
- Check Hazard. Officers were contacted about a power line down near a residence. Officers contacted Public Works to assist.
- Motor Vehicle Crash. Officers were called to a two-vehicle crash. Both vehicles had minor damage.
- Disturbance. Officers were contacted about two individuals that were in an altercation. This case is under investigation.
- Suspicious Activity. Officers were called about a local business that was closed early and shoppers were concerned. Officers located employees inside the business that closed early for the night. There were no issues.
- Loud Music. Officers were called to a residence that was playing loud music. Officers determined that the music was at a low level and the individual agreed to turn it off for the night as a courtesy to the neighbor.
- Theft. Officers were called by an individual that reported several items that were taken. This case is under investigation.
- Scam. Individual contacted officers about a scam on the internet.
- Animal Disturbance. Officers were called about a bear in town. Officers asked the bear to go back

- to the wilderness. The bear decided to listen to officers.
- Civil Matter. Officers were contacted by an individual about a malfunctioning device. Officers advised the individual to contact the manufacturer.
- Loud Party. Officers were called to a loud party. Officers located the party and the individuals agreed to call it a night.
- Order Violation. Officers were called about an individual who violated a harassment restraining order. This case was referred to the County Attorney's office.
- Damage to Property. Officers were called by an individual that had a window on their house broken. This case is under investigation.
- Animal Disturbance. Officers were called about a bear being in town. The bear enjoyed some birdseed and was asked to leave the area.
- Public Assist. Officers were called by an individual looking to go somewhere while he waited for a ride home.
- Scam. Officers were contacted by an individual that reported a phone scam.
- Motor Vehicle Crash. Officers were called about a two-vehicle crash. Vehicles received minor damage.
- Disturbance. Officers were contacted about a barking dog. Officers were requested by the individual to just have this on record.



**the TIMBERJAY**  
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Three seats open on Ely School Board; candidacy filing opens Tuesday

ELY - The Ely School District's School Board affidavit of candidacy period begins on Tuesday, July 28 and closes on Tuesday, Aug. 11 at 5 p.m. The general election will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 3 for three members to be elected to the ISD 696 school board for four-year terms. Those seats are currently occupied by James Pointer, Heidi Mann and Tom Omerza. Affidavits for candidacy are available by calling 218-365-6166, ext. 1727, emailing mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us, or by downloading the form from the school website (www.ely.k12.mn.us), or the Secretary of State website (www.sos.stat.mn.us). The filing fee for this office is \$2. To be eligible, candidates must be at least 21 years of age on assuming office, must have been a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to the election, and must have no affidavit on file for any other office in the same election.

# “Warrior Spirit Rising” is story of redemption

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Listening to Gene Goodsky and his daughter, Dianna, exchange playful teases and laughter over breakfast at T. Pattenn Café in Orr on Sunday, seeing the loving gazes and affectionate touches they shared, it's nearly impossible to imagine a time when Dianna didn't want anything to do with her father at all.

But there was such a time, decades ago, when, as Dianna says in the opening line of her new book, Gene was “the town drunk.”

“He said, ‘Well it’s the truth,’” Dianna said. “I said, ‘Dad, I only want to tell the truth.’ He said, ‘Yes, you can only tell the truth.’”

Diana Good Sky's book, “Warrior Spirit Rising,” relates the truth behind Gene's transformation from a man tormented with post-traumatic stress disorder from his days in Vietnam, and consumed by demon liquor, to a widely respected and beloved teacher, healer, and spiritual adviser, a change triggered by a remarkable spiritual journey taken on one night that began in despair.

But “Warrior Spirit Rising” is about much more than Gene. It's about the history of Native Americans being forced to abandon their cultures and the impacts that had on generations of the Goodsky family

and others. It's about successfully challenging the local norms of racism to create a more accepting and unified community.

And it's about a daughter's journey, too, from a place of a child's angst and disgust to a place of loving admiration and respect for the man her father has become.

“To go from hiding from him to being so proud of him – I could cry, but I won't,” Dianna said. “I knew the stories I wanted in there. I started putting them together, but they were lacking something. I realized what was missing – it was my story inside of his. We had his stories, we had the history, and what I needed was to put me in it.”

It was 1980, when Dianna was ready to leave home to join the Navy, that Gene told her he was going to give up drinking. It wasn't the first time he'd made that promise, and Dianna had good reason to be skeptical.

But as time passed, Dianna saw that this time was different, that Gene Goodsky was indeed a changed man. She also grew in her understanding of Gene's story about his lifechanging spiritual journey when he was barely clinging to life, and from those things the idea of writing a book was born.

She started keeping notes about their conversations, but they just sat in a folder for years. The hurdle to overcome

in getting started on the book was Gene.

“It took years to get him to give me permission,” Dianna said. “He always said, ‘You'll know when it's time.’”

That time finally came about three years ago during a phone conversation right after Gene's position as spiritual adviser for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa was eliminated.

“It was a shock,” Dianna said. “I said, ‘Dad, would you please let me tell your story?’ He took a breath and said ‘Yes.’”

The introduction came to her while she was driving from California to Salt Lake City; she recorded herself and transcribed it later. She sent that and a second chapter, about Gene's role in the healing of Orr native Ryan Holman after a terrible snowmobile accident, to friends for their reactions. The feedback she received was so positive that she found it momentarily daunting.

“I felt like I had this super high bar that I set for myself, and that I was afraid of falling short. It was hard for me,” Dianna said.

Writing worked best for Dianna when she was alone in nature, and she split her time between a Costa Rican retreat and a cabin in the Virginia mountains. It was only after she started writing that the larger theme about history emerged, prompted by her editor, who was startled to learn about the laws and



Karen Hannah Keenan, left, was the first in line at T. Pattenn Cafe in Orr on Tuesday for a reception and book signing for “Warrior Spirit Rising” by author Dianna Good Sky, right, about her father Gene Goodsky.

Submitted photo

schools that were intended to eradicate Native American culture. And as she wrote about Gene's decades of service as a cultural teacher at Orr High School, the theme of racism and resolution became apparent as well.

“I felt a responsibility to do a little bit of education, and it's in our nature – I'm a teacher, dad's a teacher. I want to foster better understanding. I feel like the narrative was very important for helping people understand why Natives are the way they are.”

## Self-publishing

One thing Dianna said she hopes will come from the book is getting enough money to build a new house for Gene, although she acknowledges that will likely take much longer than she originally hoped. When she started looking at what it would take to get the book into

print and online, self-publishing appeared to be the best route to take.

“I found out how much it costs to do a book, and how little you actually make,” she said. “If you find a publisher, even if they sell it for \$20 we'll make \$4.”

So, instead, she turned to self-publishing and Amazon, and got a shock when the sign-up process suggested a promotional pre-sale prior to the book's June 21 release date.

“Amazon suggested \$3.69 for the price and I was offended,” Dianna said. “All this work and you want me to sell it for \$3.69? But I also know to listen to the experts, so I hit the OK button. I don't intend to ever put it that low again because that story is valuable.”

There were 178 pre-orders, and then came the reviews.

“Five-star reviews

started coming in on Goodreads and Amazon, and then I started getting private messages almost every day,” Dianna said. “I'm moved to tears by their response.”

“Warrior Spirit Rising” is available on Amazon in both print and Kindle versions. Dianna said she also plans to make copies available at several local businesses.

“That's until I get picked up by a big publisher and it's made into a movie,” she laughed.

Future literary plans for Dianna include writing another book, “Blue-eyed Chippewa,” about her own life experiences, and finding ways to help other Native American writers tell their stories and get published.

“There are so few Native American authors out there, but we're natural storytellers and we have so much to tell that isn't being shared.”

## COOK AREA FARMERS MARKET

# Online sales working well for customers and vendors

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK – It's definitely outside of the norm, but this summer's online version of the Cook Area Farmers Market is finding fans among consumers and vendors alike.

“It's going very smoothly,” said Aspen Falls Farm co-owner and market organizer Kelly Dahl. “A lot of people who are participating say they really like this option because they know they're going to get what they want. There are lots of people who are just excited to get their items, whether it be produce or honey or homemade jam and soap. Usually I'm too busy to shop when I'm there, so now I can buy stuff.”

Pre-ordering has been a boon for people who couldn't come to the market due to scheduling conflicts, and for those who couldn't get there early enough to compete with other shoppers for the best produce. By pre-ordering, all customers are getting quality produce, Dahl said.

“It looks as fresh as if it came out of the ground that morning or the night before,” he said.

And order pickups in the city park on Saturdays give people the opportunity to socialize.

“It is a fun atmosphere because people are showing up and respect the social distancing, but folks show up, pick up their order, then

they're able to talk, and a lot of people want to come out and visit,” Dahl said. “Everybody's preference would be to have the market open for people to wander through and have the big crowds. Every vendor misses the socializing. Most of our vendors value that above all else. We pride ourselves in drawing people to Cook, to businesses in Cook to benefit everybody. But we're living in a very unusual time.”

The Cook market decided to go online after determining that they didn't have adequate space or volunteers to accommodate the health and safety precautions necessary to adequately protect customers and vendors from possible exposure to the coronavirus, Dahl said.

“If everybody had a uniform set of rules for wearing masks, washing their hands, staying six feet apart, and were willing to comply with that, we'd probably have a live market. But without that it's just not safe,” he said.

Not surprisingly, sales overall are down from last year, and the online format doesn't work for vendors who have the type of products, such as certain crafts, that “people need to touch and feel,” Dahl said.

Still, the shift online has been an overall success.

“It's led us to what is a virtual cooperative,” Dahl said. “There's no brick and mortar, but you

can go to our website, you can scroll through and it's just like going through Natural Harvest or some other co-op, with the exception that you can't actually pick up the produce.

“This has turned out to be a good thing in the sense that it allows us to provide the community with our products, have a presence, keep our market going, have an outlet for our farmers for their produce, and provide food security from disruptions in the food supply. Having a local food source and food security is important and it's one of our missions, and it's good to be out there and provide this.”

The end of September is the traditional end for Cook Area Farmers Market but being online will let vendors continue selling homemade goods and crafts and late season produce beyond that, Dahl said. The enthusiastic response of those who have been using the platform likely means that it will continue to be an option next year when the in-person Saturday market returns.

Dahl noted that the

market accepts customers who participate in SNAP, the federal supplemental nutrition program. The market provides a \$10 match that allows SNAP recipients to get \$20 of produce for \$10. Customers should identify themselves as SNAP participants when ordering so that vendors are set up to receive their payments, Dahl said.

“The first coronavirus relief bill contained added SNAP benefits to help the unemployed and working poor through this difficult time, and we are there to help with additional benefits so everyone can have fresh and nutritious locally-produced food,” he said.

Customers can access the market website at <https://www.localline.ca/aspen-falls-farm-1>. Flyers are posted at numerous businesses around Cook with information on how to contact vendors directly. Orders must be placed by Thursday to be available for pickup on Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon at the gazebo in the Cook City Park on River Street next to City Hall.

## Heiam opts for online auction

COOK – In response to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, the WC Heiam Medical Foundation is changing its annual in-person benefit to a virtual event and auction online, beginning Aug. 1 and closing Aug. 15.

By going to [www.heiam.cbo.io](http://www.heiam.cbo.io), patrons can register for a sponsorship, donate an item, and view the auction items which include golf packages, aerial trips, spa baskets, and gift certificates to local businesses, with more being added daily.

Sponsorships are available at six levels this year: \$100, Bronze; \$250, Silver; \$500, Gold; \$1,000, Platinum; and \$2,000, Diamond. Each level of sponsorship includes a special gift.

The Foundation also has recently updated its logo, rewritten its mission statement, and redesigned its website. Check out the changes at [www.heiam-foundation.org](http://www.heiam-foundation.org).

For more information about the virtual auction or the Foundation, check out the links above, or



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CITY OF ELY

# Ely approves new commercial refuse collection contract

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – Council members here approved a revised commercial waste disposal contract on Tuesday night, but not before airing some grievances that have been festering for many months as the matter was negotiated.

Issues arose last year after a local business complained to the city’s sanitation committee that Sunday garbage pickup was not available from the city’s current vendor. Members of the committee were tasked with revising the contract. After lengthy negotiations, a new commercial garbage contract was brought to the council for approval.

Council member Heidi Omerza, the lone dissenter of the motion, reiterated her disapproval. She started with her issue on the size of

the commercial canister being eight yards or less under the new contract. “Some current businesses will not be able to use the canisters they have,” she said. “Does that mean the burden falls on the business owner to get new Dumpsters?” she asked. “We are possibly opening a whole can of worms. I don’t think this is what’s best for Ely.”

Sanitation committee member Al Forsman responded, “To assume that any contractor is going to use an eight-yard dumpster for regular collections would not make any sense. There is a possibility that some contractor has some customer that they are servicing on a Sunday only and will use a truck for that sized dumpster. It is not for us to decide what size truck they use.”

Sanitation committee member Paul Kess added, “We are not requiring anyone to use an eight-

yard truck. If they have a customer and a truck, they are allowed to use that under this proposal. There is some flexibility to provide different levels of service to their customers. That is the intent here.”

Former council member and sanitation committee member Warren Nikkola noted that the former sanitation committee made certain agreements with the current contractor that were broken.

“How many vendors down the road, when they get wind of actions like that, are going to want to do business with this council?” he asked. “I’m disappointed with how things went.”

Forsman said a discussion was held with the current commercial refuse hauler to extend their contract for a year while a new contract procedure was developed.

“Our intent was to

maintain the standards of service that we held,” he said. “What we have brought forth maintains our standards that we had prior to this, with changes concerning the size and the age of the trucks, and the specs of the cart. I stand behind what we are presenting.”

The contract allows for the request for proposals for the collection and disposal of garbage and refuse for commercial customers within the city. Residential customers are not affected by the action.

Mayor Chuck Novak reminded the council that the main charge of the committee was to set the contract to allow for competitive bids.

“But the changing of the language that allows for competitive bids is something that I find unpalatable,” he said. “The startup to all this was a little rough. The windage wasn’t nice and all parties got a little

heated.” He noted that at the public hearing on the matter no one spoke for or against it.

“The three council members on this committee seemed to have a personal agenda interjected in this,” Novak said.

Forsman objected. “I find it interesting when I hear our mayor state that we need to have committees, and then they do all the hard work. As a council we need to support our committees. Then we are accused of having a personal agenda in supporting a particular vendor and he knocks them.”

Novak responded, “I don’t support any vendor. You don’t even know how I’m going to vote. I do respect our boards and committees. To accuse me of playing favorites to a vendor is wrong and I do not accept that.”

Omerza said she could not recall any

complaints about garbage service in the city during her tenure on the council.

“And it is really easy for people to complain in Ely,” she said. “That’s why I am so outrageously upset by this and confused by this. We have had someone who has been a willing partner. I am more than a little frustrated by this whole process. I’ll vote no. This is not right in my gut.”

Kess closed out the discussion. “The fact is, not much will change. People who like it will continue to contract with G-Men. People who wish to search out competition, this (contract) makes it available to them. The only thing this does is open up the competition for commercial disposal.”

Council members approved the contract on a 6-1 vote with Omerza voting against the measure.

## BORDER...Continued from page 1

damages the rice. It can reduce the yields of a rice crop or even in the wild almost 60 percent. It can be very destructive.”

Both the brown plant hopper and the zig zag leaf hopper, which Krause said was found in a shipment from Vietnam, pose dual threats to rice and other crops. Not only do they destroy by eating, they also carry harmful viruses that infect crops.

Timber harvesting is also part of agriculture, and boring Asian longhorn beetles can attack and devastate stands of dozens of species of trees, including maple, beech, birch, elm, ash, and cottonwood.

“Just in July we’ve found two or three shipments with longhorn beetles,” Krause said. “It’s very destructive to orchard plants, landscape trees, and forests. It’s considered one of the most destructive beetles in the U.S.”

### Low tech, high efficiency

Ag specialists are tasked with inspecting all private and commercial traffic coming into the U.S., whether by road, rail, air, or sea.

“We’re involved with the processing of traffic from off the bridge, although it’s been greatly reduced this year from COVID-19,” Krause said. “Usually in the summertime you have lots of tourists, people going camping or vacationing, coming back and they still have a lot of food with them in their coolers. We’re looking for suspect insects or disease associated with those food items.”

Krause noted that while the risk in these situations is relatively low, there are still threats in Canada that make the vehicle inspection process necessary.

Logging trucks and train cars are scrutinized for any signs of wood-boring pests and diseases, including the notorious emerald ash borer that has been a concern for the past 10 to 15 years, Krause said.

When it comes to checking containers carried by train, the port has an ally in Canadian National Railway, which allows inspections to

begin as they unload containers.

“At other locations, the cargo is placed out on the dock prior to the inspector getting there,” Krause said. “A big part of our success has been being there during that offload. You often see some movement (of insects) on those pallets.”

Krause’s steam doesn’t use high-tech forensic investigation equipment to do inspections. Invaders are usually revealed by tools as common as a flashlight, a funnel, a bucket, and old-fashioned bug nets.

“It’s more on how we do our inspections rather than the tools that we’re using,” Krause said.

Something as simple as holding a flashlight at an angle will reveal otherwise unseen noxious weed seeds clinging to wooden pallets that shimmer brightly in just the right light, Krause said.

Another simple but more intricate technique involves suspending a funnel over a five-gallon bucket, with a dish full

of soapy water below and a warm light above. Inspectors put leaves or wood into the funnel, and the heat from the light drives insects toward the funnel spout and a dive into the water dish to be collected for investigation.

Container floors and walls are swept and the residue is microscopically examined for possible threats.

“Our efficiency rate is one of the best in the nation as far as the amount of containers we target and the number we’ve found that I call positive,” Krause said. “Other ports across the nation have called on us to ask, ‘What are your ideas, what are your best practices,’ so we’ve certainly shared a lot of what we’ve done with other ports.”

### Paperwork

However, Krause and his team don’t have to inspect every commercial truck and container, thanks to a rigid system of shipping permits and health inspections that have to be obtained before

an international shipment ever reaches the border.

“We’re looking at paperwork all the time,” Krause said. “We’re looking for fraudulent certificates. We have to verify that a certificate meets all the requirements, that the safety and security features are on them. If we feel that’s ok, then we’re not so skeptical.”

For well-known shippers with good track records, the paperwork is often enough, Krause said. New shippers get greater scrutiny, including full inspections of their loads.

“Shippers improve themselves over time,” Krause said. “Their products are clean over time. That’s why we can rely on those certificates. If we can eliminate the lower-risk stuff, that allows us more time to focus on higher-risk shipments.”

Most of the time these tiny invaders are “hitchhiker pests” that manage to find their way into containers of all manner of goods. Other times, as in the case of rawhide

dog chews, they may be present in the product itself. Krause said they get over 120 shipments of dog chews and rawhide products through International Falls each month, and they have to be sure the paperwork certifies that the original hides were not from diseased animals or from areas where diseases such as swine flu or “mad cow” disease are present.

And threats sometimes come from unexpected sources.

“Another big one we found was the khapra

beetle; this is found primarily over in the Middle East,” Krause said. “It’s not really known to be found in China, but we’ve had two shipments since January that we’ve found khapra beetles in that came out of China. This is considered one of the world’s most destructive pests to grain and seeds. This could potentially lead to more emphasis on China’s goods because this beetle is such a huge threat to grain storage across the world.”



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Due to the COVID-19 our 78th Annual Meeting will be a business-only meeting. We will be holding our 78th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at the Timber Hall in Embarrass MN. This meeting will begin at 5:30 and will be a business-only meeting. Attendees will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing.

We Have Locations in Embarrass, Tower, Aurora Lake Vermillion (Fortune Bay) and Nett Lake

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# OPERA...Continued from page 1

didn't need to blow into their instrument, and separated with plexiglass screens. The chorus members, who had pre-recorded their pieces prior to the show in small groups, wore masks on stage. But the principals, who had been quarantining in place with each other and wearing masks for the first few weeks of rehearsals, were in fine form on stage, with voices so strong they didn't need the special sound system that had been rented to amplify the singers into the back rows of the outdoor seats.

This wasn't your traditional venue for opera, but these are not traditional times.

"This is the first opera that has been produced since the March shutdown," said Northern Lights Music Festival Artistic Director and Founder Veda Zuponic. "It has garnered so much international attention."

The amphitheater at the Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC) in Chisholm had been suggested as a musical venue for the festival before, but Zuponic said they had always depended on the auditoriums at area schools.

"I had always steered away from it," she said. "I was worried about the mosquitos, the cold, and the rain."

But when local schools all closed to the public, Zuponic needed some options if the planned performances were to go on.

After a quick tour, she realized the stage could

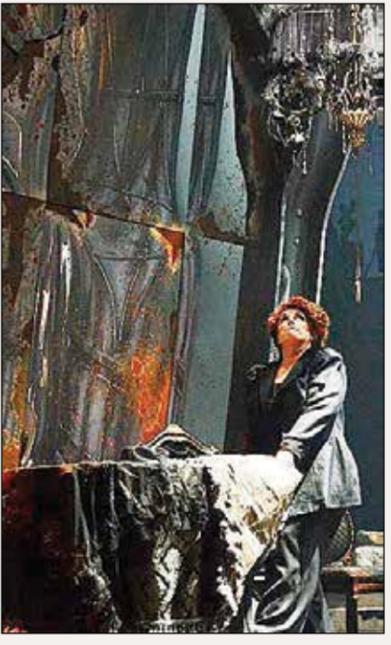
## 'The Medium' at Ely

A second shorter opera will be performed at Ely's State Theater on July 26 at 4 p.m. and July 27 at 7 p.m. A maximum of 70 tickets are available for each show, but tickets, as of press time, were still available.

"This opera was supposed to be performed at Mesabi East," Zuponic said.

The Medium is one of the most popular American operas. It premiered in 1947, and later ran on Broadway. Metropolitan Opera Diva Barbara Dever is playing the lead, with students from the festival's Opera Apprentice Program taking other roles. The opera tells the story of Baba, a fortune-teller, who begins to believe in her phantoms. This is a short opera and runs about 50 minutes.

Tickets are available online at <https://www.northernlightsmusic.org/>.



work, there was adequate protection from any rain, and with social distancing guidelines followed, the venue would hold up to 250 audience members.

"There were a lot of changes needed though," she said. "More money was spent on the sound system and lighting."

Rehearsals began indoors at Mesabi East.

The school was able to host rehearsals, but not a public performance. But once they started working at MDC, they realized there was one other big problem – the sunset.

"The sun glare was so strong right at 8 p.m.," she said. "The conductor said we couldn't do it."

The start time of the opera was changed from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Northern Lights board member Ryan Bajan figured out a way to string a large tarp across the back of the amphitheater, blocking most of the glare.

### Tosca in the time of COVID-19

The cast was international, but the audience was mostly local.

"Attendance was a little less than ideal," said Zuponic, noting that in past years, many had driven from as far as Duluth to an afternoon performance, but weren't willing to come to an evening show with such a long drive home.

The festival had sent out an online survey, trying to see what options previous audience members were comfortable with. The top choice, she said, was an open-air setting.

"Most of the audience at the two shows came from within 30 miles," she said. And on the bright side, she said they saw more younger people in the audience than in past years.

The opera was also livestreamed to over

125 people from around the world, including the brother of the opera's stage director Chia Patino. He was able to watch the show from his home in Ecuador.

Chia Patino recently moved from Ecuador to Texas, teaching and producing opera at the University of Texas, Austin.

"Right now, the world is kind of closed," Patino said. "It would have been impossible for me to get here if I was living in Ecuador."

Patino got a real taste of the northwoods, spending a couple of weeks at a cabin outside of Biwabik, and then a week at a cabin on Lake Vermilion.

"I am completely in love with the nature up here," Patino said. "And the stars are so impressive." The bugs, on the other hand, were not a highlight.

Patino said there were some challenges with moving the opera outdoors, and it required a lot of flexibility from the singers and the crew.

"We needed to keep it dramatic, and keep the story clear, while still maintaining social distancing."

There were a lot of behind-the-scenes changes that the audience wouldn't notice, Patino said.

"There was no crossing on stage of the characters," she said. "Singers never went in and out of the same door together, and singers never shared the same prop. There was one prop for each character that would be switched behind the stage."

A dance scene was reworked to keep the singers at a safe distance. Rehearsals were done wearing masks, but during the performance, all the singers except the chorus sang without masks.

"The flight back home will be the most dangerous thing I've done the last three weeks," she said.

Social distancing was

also a challenge for the orchestra musicians, who are used to being seated close together.

In addition, the musicians stayed as isolated as possible during the three weeks up north.

"This was not the most social time," she said.

"It was hard to do," said Zuponic, "but we can do it."

The opera provided musicians and singers with some of their only paid work since March.

"One after another," Zuponic said, "all of their contracts were canceled, all the way into the fall."

### Future plans

The music festival, which includes a camp for young musicians, was much smaller this year since the students needed to be housed in single rooms.

Luckily for the festival, this year's group of students was incredibly talented, and every one of them was able to be part of the festival performances.

Zuponic said plans for next summer's festival will depend on what level of grant funding they receive. The festival receives major funding from Explore Minnesota Tourism and the Minnesota State Arts Board. Zuponic said there might be some changes to these grant programs, to focus on smaller events, which would impact the festival.

"Everything we do depends on grant money," she said.

Zuponic said the festival lost out on some private foundations that shut down spending this spring.

But Zuponic is confident they will figure out a way to bring music to northern Minnesota in the years to come.

"I think we may be in a very similar situation next year also," she said. "But we will figure out a way to make it work."

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If the township is in dire need to be fiscally responsible, they could do an overall 10 percent pay decrease, which would include the clerk, treasurer, supervisors, and four employees from the fire dept.

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# TOWER...Continued from page 1

around the site.

Yet more than a decade later, having spent approximately \$6.5 million in public funds for a new highway bridge, for dredging, and for docks, walkways and lighting around the harbor, the lack of private development has left many in the community wondering where the original vision went awry and what it might take to turn hopes for harbor development into reality.

Despite the delays and false starts, some of the initial optimism surrounding the harbor's prospects still remains. "The harbor sure looks nice right now," said Tim Kotzian, the former city clerk-treasurer who invested many hours promoting the project to potential funders. He said he's been pleased this summer to see the significant number of boats that use the harbor on a daily basis, even without any new development in place.

Mark Phillips, commissioner of the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, remains bullish on Tower's future. "I think Tower has a lot of potential," he said. "I think Tower and Vermilion really haven't been discovered yet."

## A long and winding road

Back when city officials talked of the harbor development in terms of a "renaissance," the original harbor committee had proposed mixed development around the harbor, which would attract a wide range of users. Shops and restaurants would draw transient foot and boat traffic, while second story, residential apartments overlooking the harbor would help to ensure the financial viability of the entire enterprise, either through the purchase or rental of apartments.

Docking for residents in the harbor, or at the refurbished marina located just downstream, could make the harbor highly attractive for residents wanting access to Lake Vermilion without the hassles of owning a cabin or lake home—at least that was the concept that the city began to pursue.

But the 2008 financial crisis put a pause on such development and city officials soon realized that the road to their renaissance would be a long one. As time has revealed, the road has included more than one wrong turn or false start.

An initial Request for Proposals, or RFP, issued by the city nearly a decade ago attracted no response from potential developers, other than the advice that the project was not yet far enough along to bring a developer on board.

The original harbor committee, which had broad community membership, was eventually discontinued, and was replaced a few years later by a three-person committee, comprised of the new mayor, Josh Carlson, then-clerk-treasurer Linda Keith, and then-fire chief Steve Altenburg, with consulting from Gary Lamppa and Dick Grabko, of Community Resource Development.

Over the next four years, the group met regularly to discuss options. In 2014, they signed a development agreement with Cobblestone Hotels, which would have consumed most of the harbor zone with a 35-unit hotel. That project, due to questions about the company's business

model, never advanced, sending plans back to the drawing board. The committee, in 2015, considered handing harbor development over to the Tower Economic Development Authority with the intent of developing a mixed commercial and residential project. That idea drew support from both Lamppa and Grabko, who noted that TEDA would have the advantage of obtaining lower interest rates than a private developer as well as potential grant funding to assist in advancing such a project.

In the end, however, the city kept the reins in the hands of the three-person harbor committee, which issued a new RFP for the construction of town homes around the harbor in December of 2015. That RFP, which attracted several responses, included the proposal from Tower Vision 2025, which the harbor committee eventually selected to pursue. The city and Tower Vision, which later spun off Tower Harbor Shores to advance the project, signed a development agreement for 20 town homes in early 2016. The project faced delays from the start, as the harbor committee sought a sufficient number of pre-sales before committing to extending water, sewer, and streets to the city-owned site.

Tower Harbor Shores also struggled to attract investors for the project, although it did eventually raise a few hundred thousand dollars, including a \$125,000 loan through the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation.

Phillips said he doesn't regret making the grant to TEDA for the loan to Tower Harbor Shores,

even though the prospects for the town home project appear to have dimmed. "It was part of the process of figuring out what will work there," he said.

But the biggest challenge that Tower Harbor Shores faced was the city's lack of clear title to some of the land that the city ultimately incorporated into its harbor plat. All parties learned in mid-2017 that the land would need to be platted, which began a more than three-year process to unwind an ownership mess that one experienced state of Minnesota title attorney called "one of the most convoluted" plat histories he had ever seen. As of this writing, that process has yet to be completed, although city officials now hope the plat will be finalized by the end of the summer.

Under state law, Tower Harbor Shores has been unable to execute purchase agreements with any potential buyers until the platting process is complete. That's left the company and its investors stuck in neutral for more than four years, which has all but sapped the initiative behind the Tower Harbor Shores project. Tower Mayor Orlyn Kringstad, who had initially spearheaded the Tower Harbor Shores project, expressed frustration that the city had signed a development agreement with Tower Harbor Shores without clear title to some

of the affected lands. "I am extremely disappointed in the lack of sophistication of both the former harbor committee and their engineering advisors in causing the delays that occurred over the past five years," he said. "However, I am extremely impressed with the newly developed cooperation with TEDA and grateful to the IRRR for understanding and staying with us."

In recent months, Tower Harbor Shores representatives have suggested they wish to hand the project over to TEDA, although the parties have yet to determine the details of how that might happen.

## Back to the future?

The lack of development at the harbor to date appears to have some residents in the community willing to throw in the towel. Increasingly, some in the community have talked openly of turning the area into permanent green space, perhaps with a pavilion for picnic tables or small events.

While some green space at the harbor could be a possibility, former mayor Steve Abrahamson believes it would be a mistake to give up on the vision for development that would create jobs, create new housing, and help local businesses at the same time.

The city's credibility is another factor, he said, particularly considering

the sizable investment in the project that's already been made by the IRRR and other government funders based on the city's commitment to pursue significant economic development. "We could never go back and ask for money [for anything]," said Abrahamson.

Phillips also remains in favor of a development project, and he said it's a question of finding the right fit for the location. "The most successful developments at Giants Ridge were the villas which people put in a rental pool," said Phillips. "What you need is a business model that works for people," he said.

Phillips questions whether the expensive town homes originally proposed by the city's three-person harbor committee were the right fit. "I think some people who want out of their lake cabin might not want to buy a \$350,000-400,000 condo," he said.

Abrahamson agreed, and said he always worried that buyers would face sticker shock from their property tax bills as well.

Kringstad said he has long favored mixed devel-

opment at the site and notes that it was the city's harbor committee that had sought a developer for a town home project, instead.

While a 2015 market study by Maxfield Research suggested potential demand for as many as 145 town home units in and around the harbor zone, it also indicated that the site would support at least 7,000 square feet of new retail space.

The mixed commercial-residential model originally envisioned for the harbor did not include town homes, at least not immediately surrounding the harbor. Instead, second- and possibly third-story apartments were a key part of that equation and could be again depending on discussions expected to take place over the next few months. TEDA now plans to engage with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission on a planning effort to explore next steps at the harbor, and TEDA could well take the lead in advancing development there. An initial planning session is now set for mid-August.

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ISD 696

# Update from Ely Public Schools Superintendent Erik Erie

The \$10 million bond referendum being proposed by the Ely School District will address safety and security issues by joining our buildings together with a new building between them.

The new building will house a state-of-the-art industrial technology (shop classes) complex along with a music suite, media center, cafeteria with commons, and multi-purpose gymnasium.

With all that is being offered in the new building, it is important to note that we plan to "honor the past" by allocating the majority of the \$19.65 million project to our present historic buildings.



The Ely Public Schools campus. photo courtesy of ISD 696

These historic buildings require significant updates to their infrastructure, such as plumbing, electrical, and heating/ventilation systems, along with classroom renovations.

Election Day for the bond referendum is Tuesday, Aug. 11.

In order for our citizens to be informed and provide feedback, we have been

holding public forums in a virtual format using Facebook Live, where the public can ask questions through a chat feature. You can go directly to our "Ely Public School District" Facebook page or our District website to connect. The remaining public forum is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 5 at 6 p.m.

The District has also compiled information about the bond referendum on our District website: <https://www.ely.k12.mn.us/>. Or visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ely.k12.mn.us/>.

The Ely Public Schools are planning for the next school year and are in the process of

soliciting input from stakeholders.

A survey was recently sent to parents of students in Ely Public Schools to gather feedback about Distance Learning. We expect to gather more information from stakeholders throughout the summer, in order to make informed decisions on how we accommodate students, families, and employees for a return to school.

You can contact me for more information by calling 218-365-1725 (school) or 218-750-4564 (cellular). My email address is [eerie@ely.k12.mn.us](mailto:eerie@ely.k12.mn.us).

## ELY...Continued from page 1

itors and residents have come to expect during this time of year.

Cashman said the Chamber of Commerce remains hopeful that "perhaps thousands of visitors" will flock to Ely this weekend. She reported that many area resorts are booked through August, with local lodging establishments having only limited availability through the end of the month.

"Many area businesses have signed on to Operation Blueberry to offer opportunities for people to get out and about while still adhering to public health guidelines put in place by the CDC," she said. While social distancing and the use

of protective face masks are encouraged, no state or local mandates, as of presstime, were in place to enforce those common-sense behaviors for the health and well-being of the community and visitors.

"Visitors and residents can stroll the streets looking for surprises around each corner," Cashman said. "People may find games and puzzles on the sidewalk, a sidewalk sale, or maybe even a business garage sale. How about a blueberry popsicle or blue yarn and a knitting kit?"

She said the list of participating businesses continues to grow, and live music will be heard around town.

"Visitors can stop

and take a minute to listen to live music at the Tiki deck or have a cup of Wild Willy's Blueberry punch at Rockwood's patio lounge," Cashman offered.

The Northern Lakes Arts Association will conduct its second "drive-by" art show of the summer.

"Visitors and residents are encouraged to be on the lookout for artists displaying their work on porches, front lawns, clothes lines and gardens all around town," Cashman said.

A special golf scramble will be held at the Ely Golf Club. For baseball fans, Veterans Memorial Field, just a long home run distance from Whiteside Park, will be the site of

a youth baseball Legion Alumni game at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Kids can grab a sheet for a kids' coloring contest. "Maybe there is a mini-Monet out there," Cashman speculated.

Local artists as well as familiar and popular artists from the Blueberry/Art Festival will be showing their works at participating local businesses.

"People don't have to miss out on purchasing a piece from a favorite artist," she added.

"At one Ely store, there will be a chance to pick a blueberry discount from a basket and look for the blue tag," Cashman teased.

Businesses are also encouraged to create and

display a banner advertising their special events that is part of a Chamber-sponsored contest where the winner will receive a free membership.

The Chamber of Commerce posted a map and list of participants with business hours on their Facebook page and the "Ely MN Events" Facebook page. Maps are located in the outdoor brochure rack at the Ely Chamber of Commerce, 1600 East Sheridan St. For more information, call Cashman, 218-365-6123.

The chamber's "virtual festival," that allows people to purchase items from typical festival vendors online, started June 15 and concludes on Sunday, July 26.

In a "normal" year, Ely would hold small events every week and major events each month. The fate of the chamber's other major event, the Harvest Moon Festival, usually scheduled for after Labor Day, will be determined by the end of the month, according to officials.

The Ely Marathon, Boundary Waters Blues Festival and Ely Watercross Races have all been shut down this year. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a statewide all-terrain-vehicle association convention, and the Forsman Burnout scholarship event, remain on the Ely events calendar for later this fall.

## ELECTION INFORMATION

VOTE ON ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

Hours: 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM

<b>City of Ely</b> Ely Senior Citizens Center 27 S. First Avenue East Ely, MN 55731	<b>Town of Morse</b> Morse Town Hall 911 S. Central Avenue Ely, MN 55731	<b>City of Winton</b> Winton Community Building 102 N. Main Street Winton, MN 55796
<b>Unorganized Township 61, Range 12 &amp; 13</b> (North One-Half) - Precinct 9 Mail ballot from St. Louis Auditor's Office, Duluth	<b>Unorganized Township 64, Range 12 &amp; 13</b> Morse Town Hall 911 S. Central Avenue Ely, MN 55731	

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Spring 2019  
A community-based task force helped identify the deficiencies in our existing school buildings.

Fall 2019  
Community-wide survey was conducted.

March 2020  
\$7 million (IRRRB grant) was secured (contingent on a successful referendum).

May 2020  
School Board adopts formal resolution calling the election.

August 11, 2020  
Referendum election date.

Spring 2021  
Construction begins (pending successful vote).

Fall 2022  
Construction completion.

ELY SCHOOL DISTRICT WOULD GET A \$19.65 MILLION PROJECT FOR \$8 MILLION FROM HOME, BUSINESS AND TIMBER LAND OWNERS

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- State Aid (Ag2School) - \$600,000
- State of MN Grant: Safe and Secure Schools - \$500,000
- Investment Earnings - \$50,000

59%

Other Sources (\$11,650,000)

**Home, Business and Timber Land Owners (41%)**

- Residential Properties - \$4,700,000
- Commercial/Industrial Properties - \$900,000
- Facilities Maintenance Bonds - \$1,600,000
- General Fund - \$500,000
- Timber Land and Buildings (Agricultural) Levy - \$300,000

TAX RELIEF MEASURES

Residential Property Tax Refunds

Regular Residential Property Tax Refund (Annual Refund): A homeowner with a household income of up to \$115,020 is eligible for a property tax refund of up to \$2,820. A renter with a household income of up to \$62,340 is eligible for a property tax refund of up to \$2,190.

Special Residential Property Tax Refund (One-Time Refund): If you are a homeowner, you may also be eligible for a special property tax refund. This refund has no income limit and the maximum refund is \$1,000. You qualify if you have lived in your home from January 2, 2020 to January 2, 2021, your net property tax increased by more than 12%, and the increase is at least \$100.

Sample Home Value (market value)	Annual Household Income	Tax Impact Before Regular Property Tax Refund is Applied	Regular Property Tax Refund (without Special Refund)	Net Impact After Regular Property Tax Refund is Applied
\$75,000	\$30,000	\$34/year	\$23/year	\$11/year \$0.92/month
\$75,000	\$40,000	\$34/year	\$22/year	\$12/year \$1.00/month
\$100,000	\$50,000	\$54/year	\$35/year	\$19/year \$1.58/month
\$100,000	\$60,000	\$54/year	\$35/year	\$19/year \$1.58/month

\*Property Tax refund examples are for homes located in the City of Ely. Calculations are based on the regular residential property tax refund only and do not consider the special residential property tax refund, for which residents are also eligible. For several additional property tax refund examples in Winton, Ely and throughout the school district and for a specific estimate of your tax impact, visit the tax calculator page on the District's website at [www.ely.k12.mn.us](http://www.ely.k12.mn.us).

Owners of timber land/timber production land will pay less in taxes in 2023 than in 2017 due to the Ag2School Tax Credit

Due to Ag2School Tax Credit phase-in, annual debt taxes on a \$2,000 homestead acre in 2023 is \$0.05/acre LOWER than taxes paid in 2017 even with the approval of the new bonds.

\* Estimates assume no changes in property values or state law. "Ag Land & Buildings" excludes taxes on the house, garage, and one acre of land.

TAX IMPACT WITHOUT TAX RELIEF MEASURES

**Residential:**  
Does not take Residential Property Tax Refunds into Consideration

Property Type	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact
Residential	\$50,000	\$22
Homestead	\$75,000	\$34
	\$100,000	\$54
	\$200,000	\$135

**Commercial/Industrial:**

Property Type	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact
Commercial/Industrial	\$100,000	\$112
	\$250,000	\$317
	\$500,000	\$690

**Timber Land (Agricultural) Homestead:**

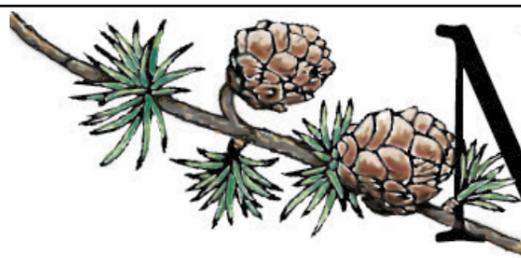
Property Type	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact
Agricultural Homestead	\$1,000	\$0.17
	\$2,000	\$0.34
	\$3,000	\$0.50

**Timber Land (Agricultural) Non-Homestead:**

Property Type	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact
Agricultural Non-Homestead	\$1,000	\$0.54
	\$2,000	\$0.67
	\$3,000	\$1.01

For a specific estimate of your individual tax impact, visit the tax calculator page on the District's website at [www.ely.k12.mn.us](http://www.ely.k12.mn.us)

Prepared and paid for by Ely Public Schools, 600 East Harvey Street, Ely MN 55731



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## PUBLIC RESPONSE

# Area's census participation below state average

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

**REGIONAL-** The U.S. Census Bureau will begin following up in August with households that have not yet responded to the 2020 Census. Based on the current response rate of 62.3 percent, the Census Bureau estimates it will need to visit approximately 56 million addresses to collect responses in person. So far, households have

## Minnesota still tops the nation in response rate

had the opportunity to respond by mail or online. Most census offices across the country will begin follow-up work on Aug. 11 and will conclude work no later than Oct. 31.

The state of Minnesota currently has the highest response rate in the nation at 71.8 percent. Some of the cities and townships in our area have rates nearing that percentage, with Cook at

63.4 percent, Ely at 64.2 percent, Embarrass at 68.8 percent, and Angora at 59.8 percent. But the response rate in most of the cities and townships in our area has been significantly lower. Tower has only 41.8 percent responding so far, Breitung Township (Soudan) is lower at 26.5 percent, and Greenwood Township trails at 20.9 percent. Orr has 48.5 percent, Winton 40.8 percent,

and Morse Township is 35.9 percent.

In many areas, the majority of respondents have answered their census questionnaire online, with over three-quarters of the respondents in Ely and Tower answering online.

Households can still complete and mail back the paper questionnaire they received, respond online at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov), or call



844-330-2020. Households can also respond online or by phone in one of 13 languages and find assistance in many more. Those who respond will not need to be

See **CENSUS...** pg. 2B

## OUTLOOK

# Economists: Recovery from current recession could take years

Plunge in consumer spending is main driver of downturn

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

**REGIONAL-** Business closures and stay-at-home orders imposed in mid-March to combat the spread of the coronavirus sent the country's economy reeling into the steepest and shortest economic recession in history, and it's going to take until 2023 to fully bounce back.

That's the message delivered by economic experts recently in a video conference sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Chamber Executive Director Doug Loon said it was important for businesses to begin to get a handle on a road map to recovery.

"The more we understand, the better we're going to be to bring our state through this very difficult time," he said. "It's going to be a long road and the more we know the more equipped we will be to recover."

Jim Diffey is Senior Director of Industry Services and Consulting for Economics for IHS Markit, an international company that provides economic information and analytics for businesses and governments, including Minnesota state government. He set the stage by reviewing a series of graphs, charts, and talking points detailing the current impact of the recession and the company's projections for recovery.

Diffey said the mid-March shutdowns caused a massive 15.1-percent drop in consumer spending in April, May, and June, and projected that overall consumer spending for 2020 will decline 8.6 percent from 2019.

When consumers stop spending, businesses have to cut back on the goods and services they produce. Gross domestic product, the value of all goods and services produced in a year, is the primary indicator of the health of the economy, and that number is projected to be down by 8.1 percent for 2020. It's a hit that won't be recovered from quickly.

"Our recovery takes until mid-2022 to get back to the previous level of 2019 gross domestic product," Diffey said.

Of additional concern, Diffey said, is the fact that employment lags behind GDP during periods of recovery.

"We don't get to unemployment rates below five percent until 2022," he said. "Full employment isn't achieved until 2023."

See **ECONOMY...** pg. 2B



## VINCE SHUTE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

# Breakfast...With Bears!

Masks and social distancing didn't prevent a full house at popular summer event

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

**ORR-** If the 40 or so black bears that wandered in for breakfast on Saturday at the viewing platform at Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary were startled by the sight of face-mask-wearing humans looking back at them, it didn't show. Just watching them eating was enough for the humans to appear happy and excited.

As visitors gathered in the parking lot for the season's first "Breakfast with the Bears" event, about half were wearing face masks, and more donned them as they boarded the bus for the short ride to the viewing platform.

Sanctuary staff marked off every other seat on the bus to enforce a measure of social distancing, necessitating an extra van to accommodate a few who couldn't find seats on the bus.

The large number of bears spread out around the grounds helped to promote social distancing on the platform, as people could easily filter to different areas and still get good views.

However, it was also predictable that a crowd would gather when three cubs climbed the same tree, causing photographers to jockey for the best angles for pictures.

Business was brisk inside the gift shop, where fruits, pastries, and beverages were served. Participants also received a commemorative mug.

Another "Breakfast with the Bears" will be offered in August. Details and registration are available online at [www.americanbear.org](http://www.americanbear.org).



**Top: Simply put, do bear cubs come any cuter than this sleepy one resting in a balsam poplar?**

**Above: Two playful cubs engage in a trusting exercise. "You're not going to bite my toes too hard, are you?"**

**Left: No tomfoolery here. An adult bear just gets down to the business at hand.**

All photos by D. Colburn

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Help available for diabetics who need insulin

REGIONAL - Minnesotans with diabetes who need emergency insulin supplies but can't afford them can get the drug under a new state law.

The Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act was recently passed by the state of Minnesota and created one of the most comprehensive insulin safety net programs in the United States, according to Jon Erickson, executive director of the Ely Community Health Center.

"The safety net program will allow qualifying people with diabetes, with less than seven days worth of the lifesaving drug left, to pay no more than \$35 to get a one-time 30-day supply from their pharmacy," he said.

The program has two components, the urgent need program and the continuing need program.

The urgent need program provides up to a 30-day supply of insulin if someone has less than a seven-day supply of insulin and is a resident of Minnesota.

"You can access this

program once a year at any community or outpatient pharmacy in Minnesota with a valid prescription from a medical provider," Erickson said.

The continuing need program provides access to the insulin manufacturer's patient assistance program where one can obtain insulin at any community or outpatient pharmacy.

"This program requires an application that the Ely Community Health Center can assist you in completing. We can

also help you with any follow up or appeals that you may have," Erickson said.

"To qualify for the continuing need program, you must be a resident of Minnesota, not enrolled in either MA or MinnesotaCare, have a family household income of 400 percent or less of the federal poverty guidelines, and not be eligible for prescription drug benefits through the VA," he said. "There is also some eligibility for individuals who are enrolled in

Medicare Part D."

The state has set up a website, MNinsulin.org, that includes information on how to apply for the safety net programs and a downloadable application to take to the pharmacy.

For more information, contact Ely Community Health Center at 218-365-5678 or email director@elycommunityhealth.org.

## CENSUS...Continued from page 1B

### What to expect with a census visit

Census takers will follow local public health guidelines when they visit. If masks are required in the area, census takers

will wear them. Census takers must complete a virtual COVID-19 training on social distancing protocols and other health and safety guidance before beginning their work in neighborhoods.

Census takers are

hired from local communities. If no one is home when the census taker visits, the census taker will leave a notice of their visit with information about how to respond online, by phone or by mail. People are encouraged to coop-

erate with census takers and ensure that everyone who was living in their household as of April 1, 2020, is counted.

The U.S. Constitution mandates a census of the population every ten years. The goal of the 2020

Census is to count everyone living in the United States on April 1, 2020, (Census Day). Census statistics are used to determine the number of seats each state holds in the U.S. House of Representatives and informs how billions

of dollars in federal funds will be allocated by state, local, and federal lawmakers annually for the next 10 years.

## ECONOMY...Continued from page 1B

Fueled by a drop of nearly 50 percent in employment in leisure and hospitality jobs and significant losses in every other business sector, Minnesota was in the top 20 percent of states in terms of job

losses, Diffey said.

The Duluth metropolitan area was the hardest hit in the state, with 13.6 percent fewer people employed in May 2020 versus May 2019, higher than the state average of 12.8 percent.

Diffey noted that the pandemic accelerated several trends that were already underway, including more people working and shopping from home, which leads to declining demand for office and retail space.

Invited Minnesota panelists offered their observations about Diffey's presentation and thoughts about economic recovery.

State economist Laura Kalambokidis was the first

to speak.

"We have Minnesota recovering to pre-recession levels quicker than IHS," she said.

Kalambokidis noted that not all households experience the same effects from the economic downturn, with lower-income workers and their families suffering more.

"The downturn has the greatest effect on those least able to bear it," she said.

One of Kalambokidis's responsibilities is to project state tax revenues, and she said that the budgets developed for the 2022-2023 biennium will certainly have to contend with a revenue shortfall.

"The sooner those problems are addressed

the easier they will be to solve," she said.

King Banaian, dean and professor of economics in the School of Public Affairs at St. Cloud State University, emphasized that manufacturing job losses come after those in the service sector, such as leisure and hospitality, and therefore may take more time coming back.

An analysis of economics in the central part of the state, that included feedback from manufacturers and business owners, suggested they were less optimistic than Kalambokidis about a faster recovery, Banaian said.

"The majority of them said (the downturn) wouldn't end until the second half of 2021," he

said. "I think everybody here is believing employment growth is going to be slower. One thing we got from our panelists is the hesitancy for capital spending."

Banaian characterized their responses overall as more bleak than at the outset of the Great Recession in 2009.

Will Hale, chief of global operations for Cargill, said that economic recovery can't be separated from the future course of the coronavirus pandemic. "We keep looking at this as if it's all going to come down to getting the virus under control," he said.

Diffey noted earlier that his projections reflected improvement in pandemic conditions in the

second half of the year, and that worsening conditions were among numerous factors that could impact outcomes.

Hale said Cargill, a global company, was dealing with the coronavirus outbreak well before its arrival in the U.S., allowing them to develop health and safety responses elsewhere that could be utilized in U.S. operations.

"We are the benchmark for safety," he said.

Panelist agreed that the resilience of Minnesotans will be a positive influence in the state's overall recovery, but Kalambokidis said that patience will be needed as the state adapts to new opportunities in the post-pandemic period.



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## Memories of the Early Days

A fascinating look back at the early history of the Lake Vermilion area

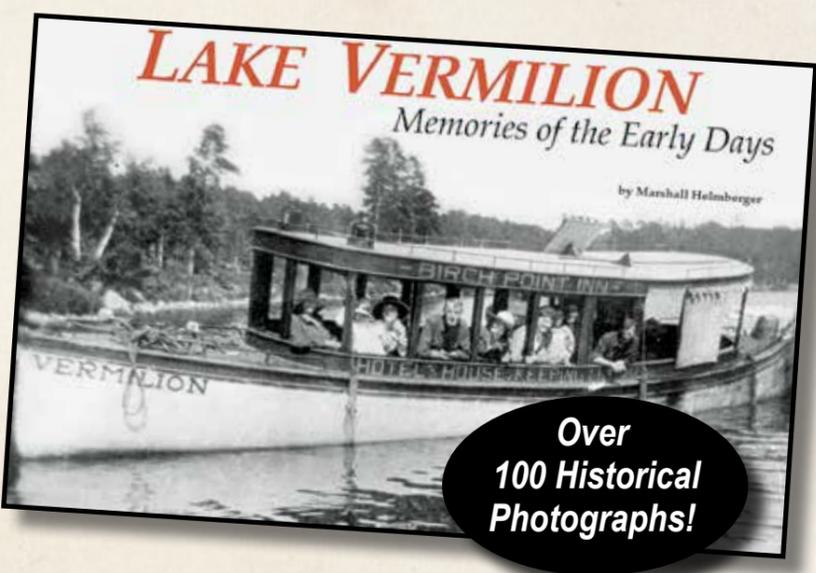
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# Obituaries and Death Notices



## Kenneth W. Barby

Kenneth "Ken" Wayne Barby, of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, July 8, 2020, at his home of natural causes. A memorial and family reunion will be held at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

Ken was a devout son, loving brother, and beloved father and uncle. He was born and raised in International Falls by Charles and Dorothy Barby. He loved living in northern Minnesota and remained here his entire life, retiring after a hard-worked, full career as a lead lineman with Minnesota Power. He later settled in Ely with his significant other, Linda.

Ken enjoyed hunting, fishing, and sports, especially hockey. He enjoyed family and many friends and was a clever conversationalist and skilled sportsman. He will be greatly missed.

Ken is survived by two daughters, Lee Taylor and Danielle Barby (Jeff Walker); grandson, Andrew Walker; two brothers, Ronald Barby and Richard Barby (Marcia Stoddard); nieces, Alexandra Barby and her children, Heather Barby, and Jessamine Barby; nephew, Jeremiah Barby; aunt, Mary Jane; other extended family; and many lifelong friends, including fellow outdoorsman and family friend, Tony Belak. Not to be left out and greatly loved is his dog, Casey Wayne, who was a comforting companion. Ken was loved and will be missed by all who knew him.

He was preceded in death by his beloved father and mother; many aunts, uncles and cousins; other family and friends. Also preceding him in passing was Linda.

## Alan W. Ketola

Alan William Ketola, 55, of Buhl, passed away peacefully in his home on Thursday, June 25, 2020. A private service to remember Al will be held for family only. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

Known by friends and family as Al, he graduated from Tower High School in 1982 and Florida State University in 1988. He held many different jobs in his younger years, managing a band in Atlanta, working for a video production company in Las Vegas, and doing custom car painting and auto body work in Virginia. He later took a position with Delta Airlines in Chisholm, where he worked for almost 20 years until his retirement

several years ago.

Al had many hobbies and interests over the years. He was an avid hunter and outdoorsman, and enjoyed deer hunting, duck hunting, fishing and trapping. He enjoyed photography, reading, writing, learning about Native American history and customs, and collecting Native American artifacts. He was also passionate about music, particularly heavy metal.

Al had many other nicknames including Riverman, The Owl, and T.A. Riley. Highly intellectual, creative, rebellious and articulate (when he chose to speak), Al was "Always Watching" and had a sharp wit and irreverent sense of humor. He was fiercely independent, resisted social norms, and forged his own path in whatever he did. His independent spirit will be remembered, and missed, by all who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his sisters, Carrie (Ted) Lewis of Virginia and Katherine (Mike) Lopic of Minnetonka; brother, Harold (Lori) Ketola of Independence; six nieces and one nephew.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Jerry and Becky Ketola.

## Linda Rae Dale

Linda Rae Nevala Dale, 67, of Warroad, formerly of Embarrass, passed away on Thursday, July 2, 2020, at home surrounded by her loving family. A special thank you to the hospice team for the wonderful care they provided and to Kecia Stroot for officiating the service. A celebration of Linda's life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 25 at the Nevala farm, 7731 Hanka Nevala Rd. in Embarrass.

She is survived by her husband, Ronnie Dale of Warroad; daughters, Tia (Scott) Moyer and Cari Hoffman, both of Warroad; grandchildren, Mikaila of Scottsdale, Keegan of Warroad, Jaron of Warroad, Korbyn (Taylor Moser) of Red Lake Falls, Kanon of Warroad and Jayce of Warroad; first great-grandchild due in November; father, Robert Nevala of Embarrass; brothers, Lyle Nevala of Duluth and Steve Nevala of Chaska; in-laws, Norman (Wanda) Dale, Robert (Laura) Dale, Rodney (Chris) Dale, Gary (Kathy) Dale, Craig (Karen) Dale, Gwen (Craig) Keskitalo, Tammie (Kjell) Lysnes and Wayne (Kathy) Dale; along with several nieces and nephews.

## Dennis LaFollette

Dennis LaFollette took his final portage on July 12, 2020, following a car crash outside of Ely. Private graveside services are planned at the Ely Cemetery. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his daughter, Andria LaFollette of Green Bay, Wis.; brother, Gary LaFollette of Ft. Dodge, Iowa; and long-time girlfriend, Michelle Seliga of Ely.

## Darrell Williams

Darrell Williams, 52, of Embarrass, died on Friday, July 17, 2020, at Essentia Health-St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth. Funeral arrangements are with Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Aurora.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota presents the Take a Swing at Hunger

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**How it works:**

- Purchase a \$20 ticket (only 500 will be sold!) at UWNEMN or Mesaba Country Club.
- Your ticket number will be written on a golf ball.
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- First ball in the hole (or closest to the pin) wins first place cash prize of \$2,500!
- The next four in the hole (or next four closest to the pin) win corresponding cash prizes for second, third, fourth, and fifth place.

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Take a Swing At Hunger Ball Drop will take place 6 pm Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at Mesaba Country Club. Need not be present to win. All proceeds benefit United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Buddy Backpacks program.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call 218-254-3329 or email elizabeth@unitedwaynemn.org**

# PUBLIC NOTICES

## Bearville Township Accepting Bids for Snowplowing (Cedar Lane)

Bearville Township is accepting bids for 2020/2021 snowplowing of Cedar Lane area-Beatrice Lake contract. Route would begin on the Snake Trail at Robertson's (where St. Louis County stops plowing) 1.45 miles to Beatrice Lake Forest Road, .4 miles of Beatrice Lake Road to Cedar Lane, .48 miles of Cedar Lane, from Cedar Lane .8 miles of Beatrice Lake Road ending where Echo Lane meets Beatrice Lake Road (approximate total distance 3.1 miles). Plowing would begin when there is a 4" snowfall, road must be kept open. The snowplowing seasonal contract would be in effect from November 1, 2020 until May 1, 2021. Requesting a bid for the total amount for the season. A Certificate of Insurance is required upon acceptance of the bid. Please contact Bearville Supervisor Gene Baker: 218-301-9343 or Kathy Cressy-Clerk: 218-376-4495 or bearvi@frontiernet.net. For more details and map. Sealed bids will be accepted until September 4 and opened at the September 8 Board of Supervisors meeting. Mail sealed bids to: Bearville Township Snowplowing bid, c/o Kathy Cressy - Clerk, 62949 County Road 557, Cook, MN 55723. Bearville Township reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk

*Published in the Timberjay, July 24, 2020*

## NOTICE EAGLES NEST TOWNSHIP CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD

The following offices are open for election at the November 3, 2020 General Election. Affidavits of Candidacy may be filed with the Town Clerk at the Eagles Nest Town Hall between the hours of 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. on July 28, July 30, Aug. 4, Aug. 6, and from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Aug. 11. Filings are open beginning Tuesday, July 28, 2020 and ending on Tuesday, August 11, 2020.

Clerk: 4 year term  
 Supervisor B: 4 year term  
 Supervisor C: 4 year term  
 Supervisor D: 2 year term

Filing fee: \$2.00

Deb Siverhus, Town Clerk  
 1552 Bearhead State Park Rd., Ely, MN 55731.

The election for these positions will be held Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

*Published in the Timberjay, July 10 & 24, 2020*

## Town of Embarrass Notice of Primary Election and Notice of Candidate Filing

Notice is hereby given to all qualified voters of the Town of Embarrass, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota. Primary election will be held Tuesday, August 11, 2020. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Embarrass Town Hall.

Affidavits of candidacy may be filed with the Town Clerk at the Clerk's Office located at the Embarrass Town Hall, 7503 Levander Road. Filing dates are from July 28, 2020 to August 11, 2020. The Clerk's Office hours are from 9:00- 3:00 pm Monday-Thursday. The following Township Offices are to be filled in the November 3, 2020 Election:

(Two) Board Supervisors and (One) Town Clerk  
 Each position is a four-year term.  
 A two-dollar fee is required with each filing.

Filing for offices closes on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (The Clerk's Office will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on August 11.)

Jennifer Boese, Town Clerk

*Published in the Timberjay, July 17 & 24, 2020*

## NOTICE OF FILING DATES FOR ELECTION TO THE SCHOOL BOARD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 707 NETT LAKE, STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the period for filing affidavits of candidacy for the office of school board member of Independent School District No. 707 shall begin on July 28, 2020, and shall close at 5:00 o'clock p.m. on August 11, 2020.

The general election shall be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. At that election, three members will be elected to the School Board for terms of four (4) years each. Affidavits of Candidacy are available from the school district clerk, Nett Lake School, 13090 Westley Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772. The filing fee for this office is \$2. A candidate for this office must be an eligible voter, must be 21 years of age or more on assuming office, must have been a resident of the school district from which the candidate seeks election for thirty (30) days before the general election, and must have no other affidavit on file for any other office at the same primary or next ensuing general election. The affidavits of candidacy must be filed in the office of the school district clerk and the filing fee paid prior to 5:00 o'clock p.m. on August 11, 2020.

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD  
 Malita Spears, School District Clerk

*Published in the Timberjay, July 17 & 24, 2020*

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# Outdoors

Our lives in the  
Northwoods

## HUNTING

### DNR tightens limits ahead of 2020 deer season

It will be bucks only for hunters in many areas, limited antlerless permits elsewhere

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Deer hunters in much of north-eastern Minnesota will need to look for antlers when they take to the woods this fall. That's because the Department of Natural Resources has trimmed the number of antlerless permits in several deer permit areas while designating four others in the area as "bucks-only."

The stricter limits this fall are in response to back-to-back tough winters, according to DNR wildlife managers.

The new bag rules will apply for both archery and firearms hunters. The archery deer season gets underway on Sept. 19, while the regular firearms season runs from Nov. 7- Nov. 22 in northeastern Minnesota.

Most of the hunters who take part in the hunt in

northeastern Minnesota will be limited to a buck. That's because four of the permit areas, including 119, 118, 130, and 132 are designated as bucks only. Four other permit areas, which include the bulk of St. Louis County, will be limited to the permit lottery. Permit area 177, which encompasses Lake Vermilion and farm country west of Cook, will offer 600 antlerless permits. The permit area was designated

"hunter's choice" in 2019, although hunters registered just 547 antlerless deer out of a total harvest of 1,135. One out of four hunters in the permit area registered a deer last year.

Meanwhile, a total of 300 antlerless permits will be issued for PA 176, which was designated hunter's choice last year. Hunters there registered a total of just

See DEER...pg. 5B



## Wildflower Watch

This week's featured flower  
**FIREWEED**



Few wildflowers are more prominent in mid-to-late summer in the North Country than **Fireweed**, *Chamaenerion angustifolium*. It's well-known as a pioneer after fire, but it's equally abundant along roadsides, where it likes the access to plenty of sunlight.

This is an easy species to identify, thanks to its prominent spikes of magenta flowers that sit atop stems that frequently grow four feet tall. The individual flowers measure about an inch across and feature four paddle-shaped petals. The leaves are long and narrow, and attach along the stem opposite to each other.

It's a member of Primrose family.

## PREVENTION

### St. Louis County showing success in fight against AIS

REGIONAL — St. Louis County boasts more than 1,000 lakes, hundreds of miles of rivers, 169 public boat launches, and one of the lowest rates of spread of aquatic invasive species in the state. With only 0.05 percent of its lakes and rivers currently infested and only one new infestation in the last four years, St. Louis County's unique prevention model serves as an inspiration in the fight against aquatic invasive species.

That's according to a press statement issued by Wildlife Forever, a partner in the county's AIS efforts.

Each year the county utilizes over \$600,000 in funding to create a comprehensive aquatic invasive species prevention and management plan. Funds go towards research, education, on-the-ground prevention efforts and a comprehensive outreach and media campaign in partnership with Wildlife Forever's Clean Drain Dry Initiative™.

The Clean Drain Dry Initiative™ (CD2) is the national campaign to educate outdoor recreational users on how to prevent the spread of invasive species. Strategic communications, marketing, outreach and educational

See AIS FIGHT...pg. 5B

## SUCCESS STORIES

### No swan song for these birds

After a successful reintroduction, researchers hope to learn more about trumpeter swans

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Researchers hope to learn more about the subject of one of the most successful wildlife recovery efforts ever undertaken in North America. Fifty years ago, the trumpeter swan — the largest living waterfowl in the world — was all but a memory in most of North America after years of overhunting and loss of habitat.

But the discovery of a population of trumpeters in a remote part of Alaska gave wildlife managers the opportunity to attempt a reintroduction of the species to other parts of the continent, including Minnesota. In the mid-1980s, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources began a reintroduction effort with eggs from the Alaska population. That reintroduction expanded the reintroduction to northeastern Minnesota, among other locations. An earlier effort by the regional parks system in the Twin Cities had used trumpeter eggs from a small, residual population in Montana to establish a population of trumpeters in the metro region.

But the reintroduction in northern Minnesota was particularly successful, and trumpeters are now commonly seen in the summer months in much of northeastern Minnesota, where they breed most often in remote marshes and beaver ponds.

**Above: A pair of trumpeter swans flies above a beaver pond in the Superior National Forest. The population of trumpeters has rebounded spectacularly in Minnesota following a reintroduction effort started by the DNR in the 1980s.**

**Right: A pair of trumpeters stand on lingering ice on Lake Vermilion's Pike Bay.**

photos by M. HelMBERGER

Trumpeter pairs mate for life and typically return year-after-year to places where they have successfully raised young.

When the DNR's nongame program began its reintroduction in the 1980s, biologists set a goal to build a trumpeter population as high as 350 birds. Today, approximately 30,000 trumpeter swans live and breed here in Minnesota, making it by far the largest population of trumpeters in the lower 48 states.

With the reintroduction an overwhelming success, wildlife biologists are now hoping to learn more about how these remarkable birds, whose wing spans can extend more than eight feet. Researchers are in the process of capturing 35 of the big birds in various locations in Minnesota, which they'll fit with neck-mounted transmitters. An additional 55 trumpeters will be captured and fitted with transmitters at other locations in the Midwest where



they have also been successfully reintroduced.

The transmitters will allow researchers to monitor trumpeter swan movements at 15-minute intervals throughout the year. "Results of this study will provide information about migration, year-round movements, mortality risks and swan use of various habitat types," said David Andersen, a researcher with the Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University

of Minnesota, who is cooperating on the project.

Researchers want to know more about trumpeters' habitat needs and migration patterns to allow for better management in the future, both here in Minnesota and in places like Missouri and Arkansas, where some trumpeters from the Upper Midwest spend the winter months. "Those are states where we know that

See SWANS...pg. 5B

**DEER...**Continued from page 4B

200 antlerless deer in the permit area in 2019, out of 995 total registrations. Only 17 percent of hunters reported harvesting a deer in the permit area last year. In other areas, the DNR will issue 400 antlerless permits in PA 178, while just 50 will be issued in PA 131. PA 117, which encom-

passes the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, will be the only permit area in the region designated as hunter's choice. Relatively few deer reside in the BWCAW and the permit area only attracts a small number of hunters who are seeking a challenging experience.

**SWANS...**Continued from page 4B

our birds have migrated to," said John Moriarity, director of the Three Rivers Parks system in the Twin Cities. "If we know they are migrating to an area, we would work to try to improve habitat there to have a safer location for migrating."

It also identifies places outside Minnesota where educational outreach through local game officials can help trumpeters. "In the early years [of reintroduction], most of them got shot," said Moriarity. "The education has gotten much better in southern states. Mortality from hunting has dropped

dramatically."

Trumpeters still face other hazards. Some still die every year from lead poisoning as they ingest lead shot from wetland sediments. Some also die from flying into power lines or other obstructions, that can kill large numbers of a wide variety of birds.

Wildlife managers know that some trumpeters will spend the winter in Minnesota, where they can find areas of open water and sufficient food. But how many spend the winter in the state isn't clear, and that's one more question that the new study should help to answer.

**AIS FIGHT...**Continued from page 4B

services provide access to consistent messaging, and resources for local communities to implement prevention programs.

St. Louis County has combined on-the-ground efforts with a comprehensive outreach and media campaign. The county's prevention efforts have been accomplished in partnership with local lake associations, cities, townships, the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District and national leaders such as Sea Grant and Wildlife Forever. On-the-ground efforts including boat inspections, education, and decontamination at boat ramps, tied together with billboards, TV public service announcements, gas station advertising, radio ads, and print advertising allow the CD2 prevention message to be seen, heard and felt throughout the county.

Burntside Lake Association is one of several key partners integrating CD2 education and outreach around the lake and throughout the Ely area. "Our volunteer network works with Wildlife Forever to distribute materials to inspectors at the landings throughout the summer as well as the many storefronts in Ely to educate locals and tourists alike," said Carrie Ohly-Cusack with Burntside Lake Association. "We appreciate the continued support from the county to maintain the health of our lake and community."

St. Louis County Commissioners meet annually to review and allocate grant funds to the AIS prevention projects that will have the largest impact. "We rely on the unique expertise of our partners to protect our waters from the constant threat of AIS," said Commissioner Keith Nelson. "Wildlife Forever plays a key role to ensure our communities and visitors are aware and stay vigilant in doing their part to stop the spread. It's absolutely critical to maintain a high level of awareness if we are to stay ahead of this

**LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST**

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
80 68					85 66					83 58					77 56					77 55				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
07/13	80	51	0.00		07/13	78	47	0.00		07/13	78	55	0.00		07/13	79	55	0.00		07/13	79	51	0.00	
07/14	78	57	1.10		07/14	79	60	1.05		07/14	79	56	1.06		07/14	72	59	1.10		07/14	79	59	1.36	
07/15	71	48	0.00		07/15	70	50	0.00		07/15	73	58	0.00		07/15	79	55	0.00		07/15	71	51	0.04	
07/16	80	55	0.09		07/16	80	60	0.02		07/16	78	58	0.14		07/16	73	59	0.09		07/16	79	56	0.08	
07/17	77	50	0.19		07/17	80	49	0.18		07/17	74	58	0.46		07/17	82	55	0.19		07/17	76	49	0.28	
07/18	86	54	0.52		07/18	86	50	0.57		07/18	85	58	0.75		07/18	84	66	0.52		07/18	85	60	0.64	
07/19	84	61	0.31		07/19	86	60	0.47		07/19	85	60	0.03		07/19	70	55	0.31		07/19	85	60	0.37	
Total			10.62		YTD Total			11.16		YTD Total			14.66		YTD Total			NA		YTD Total			10.81	

POPULATION SURVEYS

**Slight increase in Vermilion loon count**

Yet numbers remain below the ten-year average for fourth year in a row

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

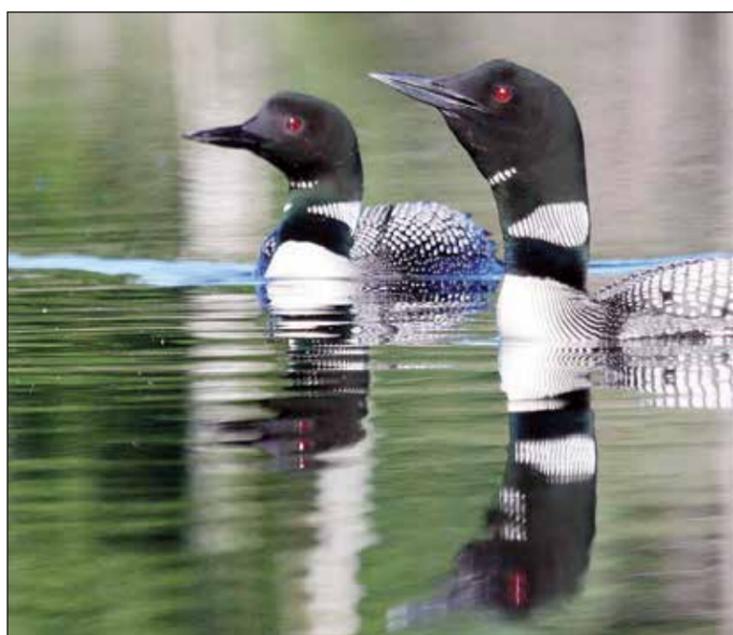
LAKE VERMILION— Loon numbers here increased just slightly in 2020 but remain below the ten-year average count of 234 loons. The weather was mostly calm and a total of 79 volunteer counters covered 22 separate count territories on the big lake as the Vermilion Lake Association held the 38th annual loon count on July 13.

Counters tallied a total of 201 loons, up just slightly from last year's count of 195. Counters found a total of 120 loons on the lake's east end, a modest increase over the 104 loons spotted there last year. Meanwhile, loon numbers dipped slightly on the west end, with 81 loons spotted, compared to 91 during last year's count.

Counters tallied a total of 28 chicks, with 13 seen on the west end and 15 in the east. That was eight fewer chicks than spotters sighted last year, although several volunteers reported seeing adult loons still sitting on nests so the lake could still produce a few more chicks this season.

This year's loon totals, which represent the fourth-straight year that loon numbers on the lake have been below the ten-year average, suggest that the lake's loons could be showing the effects of the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Minnesota is home to more common loons than all other states in the U.S. combined, except Alaska. And as the state bird, inter-



est has long been high in this iconic summer resident. In the wake of the 2010 oil spill, researchers have been closely watching loon numbers for signs that the incident on the Gulf could be impacting loon numbers and reproduction. Previous research has demonstrated that loons in Minnesota and Michigan were exposed to the 2010 spill, but it remains uncertain how quickly any effects from that exposure might show up in population trends and reproductive success. The Lake Vermilion loon count is one of the longest-running loon surveys in Minnesota, which makes it particularly valuable for researchers watching the long-term health of the state's loon population.

Most Minnesota loons winter on the Gulf Coast, so they likely were exposed to some of the toxic byproducts of the 2010 spill. In addition, young loons from the region will frequently spend their first several years living on the Gulf. They don't return to breeding grounds on northern Minnesota lakes until they reach maturity.

Loons are good indicators of water quality because they need clean, clear water to catch food. They are also sensitive to disturbances such as lakeshore development and contaminants like mercury and lead in their environment.

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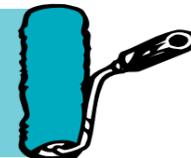








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