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Fire Station

Long-term analysis, a path toward flood relief for New Richland

Earliest phases of water reroute planning laid important foundations

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Waseca County Land and Water Resources director Chris Howard says it's understandable that people feel there has been little or no progress in reducing the amount of water which flows through New Richland during significant rain events. He shares, though, that through continued collaboration with the City of New Richland, Al-though there has been movement forward, it has been behind the

scenes, and has been targeted mostly to understanding what the specific sources of the water are, how much they contribute, and how the effects can be minimized. The flood mitigation study was ordered by the City of New Richland in 2023 with Waseca County providing additional funding and technical resources in meeting state laws (Chapter 103E) pertaining to public drainage systems affecting the city.

Working for both the city and the

county, Houston Engineering of Maple Grove began a water flow study in 2023, and has already devised computer models which can indicate what properties will be affected depending on the amount and location of rainfall the area receives. The cost of various solutions has been examined, including property buyouts, flood walls, re-routes, improvements and increasing existing culvert capacities.

Foundation continued on 5



MOVING UPHILL - This aerial photo of New Richland, taken in the 1930s, shows development in the city moving to the west and north, while avoiding flood-prone areas to the south and east. Highway 13 did not yet exist when this photo was taken.

Historic factors influenced city development, water flow

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Waseca Land and Water Resources director Chris Howard has devoted many hours of attention to determining and analyzing water flow through New Richland, beginning in 2023 soon after he was first hired by the county.

He does not disagree with a statement made by one area resident that, when it comes to drainage in the southern part of the county, New Richland takes on the role of being a holding pond—that is, water pools there in the town's lower elevations until drai-

nage downstream allows it to flow away.

He shares his observation that locations for cities in the early decades of the county were based on two factors: access to the railroad as a vital provider of transportation, and access to water.

He has found vintage aerial photos which show that, in the 1930s, development in the town had stayed on high ground, moving north and west from the downtown district and avoiding the low lying land to the east and south which had a tendency to

Water flow continued on 5

Fundraiser at The Mill Event Center in Waseca Oct. 30

The New Richland Care Center suffered an extreme amount of damage in the September 19, 2026 flooding. At this fundraiser, there will be food for up to 800. To go orders can be placed at 507-415-8382 or Floodrelief4NRCC@gmail.com. Todd Utpadel will be performing from 5pm - 7pm. There will also be a bake sale and merchandise available for purchase.

New Richland Legion Auxiliary meeting at New Richland Library Thursday, Oct. 22

The New Richland Legion Auxiliary will hold their October meeting at the New Richland Library at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22.

Todd Utpadel at Geneva Grill and Bar Friday, Oct. 23

Musician Todd Utpadel will play at the Geneva Grill and Bar from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23. This is part of a Musicians Against Cancer, MAC performance.

NRHEG Elementary Color Run Oct. 24

The third annual color run at NRHEG Elementary will be on Saturday, October 24 at 3 p.m., with registration at 2 p.m.. All of the money raised will go towards the final phase of the inclusive playground, which is a PIP (rubber) pathway. There will be food vendors, face painting, games, as well as fire trucks.

A word from The Word

Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Psalm 37:4

Public Health emphasizes cannabis safety

Secure substances at home, talk to youth, and drive sober

As cannabis availability increases, public health reminds community members about essential steps to keep families, teenagers, and roadways safe. The focus is on locking up cannabis away from children, engaging teenagers in open conversations about cannabis use, and preventing impaired driving.

Cannabis edibles often closely resemble regular snacks, making them attractive to young children. Accidental ingestion by infants

and children can lead to severe health consequences, including extreme drowsiness, breathing difficulty, and hospitalization.

Lock it up
Keep original packaging
Contact Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 or dial 911 after accidental ingestion

The developing brain remains vulnerable to the effects of cannabis through early adulthood. Regular cannabis use during adolescence can impact memory,

learning, attention, and mental health. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in preventing youth cannabis use.

Talk early and often
Set clear expectations
Focus on wellness
Driving while high on cannabis impairs reaction time, coordination, spatial awareness, and decision-making skills. Impaired driving puts everyone on the road at risk.

Plan ahead

Avoid mixing substances
Know the law
By safely securing substances, guiding teens, and never driving under the influence, we can help protect health and prevent avoidable injuries

Learn more at Cannabis - MN Dept. of Health or contact Samara Plotz, Public Health Educator. samara.plotz@wasecacounty.gov or 507-308-8746 with questions.

County roadway plan improves chances for outside funding

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

Interested and invested parties were invited to a three-hour session which addressed the process of updating Waseca County's "County Roadway Safety Plan" the afternoon of Oct. 6. Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and from the Twin Cities company SRF Consulting met with about 20 people who chose to attend representing law enforcement, highway maintenance, and county and township leadership.

Leading the session was SRF consultant Renae Kuehl, a professional traffic operations engineer (PTOE). Kuehl explained that having a highway safety improvement plan broadens the county's eligibility for outside funding on targeted construction projects. She mentioned her company is in the fourth phase of a four-tiered process helping more than 50 counties update their plans; Waseca County's was last updated in 2014.

Kuehl shared that the State of Minnesota receives about \$37

million in highway safety funding from the federal government each year. About half of that is distributed to local agencies such as counties, municipalities and townships through an application process: local agencies describe a project which they believe will improve traffic safety and apply for funding. Selected projects are granted as much as 90 percent of the cost, with 10 percent coming from local funds.

Kuehl went on to say that the revised plan will not only identify projects, it will include all the information needed to apply to the state for funding them.

The reason for the Oct. 6 session, she said, was to receive input from local groups about actual roadway experiences within the county so it could be taken into account as the plan is updated.

According to Kuehl's summary, 10 percent of the highway miles in Minnesota are under the control of the state highway system, while 90 percent are locally controlled. Regarding incidents which involve either a death or a



VISUAL TRAP - This roadway in Waseca County provides an example of a "visual trap." An unfamiliar driver could easily believe this road continues straight ahead, but the hill is concealing a curve.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

life-changing injury, nearly 70 percent occur on locally maintained roadways.

Local safety plans are part of the national "Toward Zero Deaths" initiative which began in 2003. At that time in Minnesota, two decades of data showed a rising trend in severe crashes: 650 or more traffic-related deaths had occurred in three years between 1995 and 2003; the lowest number of deaths during those years was 568.

While acknowledging the only "acceptable" number of injuries

or deaths on roadways is zero, Kuehl related that, during the 23 years since the initiative began, deaths on Minnesota highways have been reduced to numbers as low as about 360 in some years, so that roughly 5,000 fewer lives have been lost than trends indicated prior to the program. The stated goal is 225 or fewer deaths per year.

The Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program has wide-ranging elements from education meant

Roadway continued on 7

City council sets tax levy at 10 percent

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff Writer

Geneva's city tax levy will be 10 percent higher than in 2026, with the option of changing it during the December council meeting, it was announced during the Oct. 13 meeting of the city council. The levy was set during a Sept. 16 meeting, which was rescheduled from the typical date of Sept. 8.

Council members received thanks from the City of New Richland for assistance during the New Richland cleanup after the September flooding: council members were informed that all types of assistance were greatly appreciated.

Geneva voters will have the city's community center as their polling place during the Nov. 3 general election. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. through 8 p.m.

A painting crew from Maquire Water out of Sioux Falls, SD was in town to paint the water tower Wednesday, Oct. 14. Though the full job of painting will be completed next spring, the crew was taking care of problem areas, so they don't spread over the winter.

Council members agreed that the city would take care of removing Radiolink equipment from the tower, but do not plan to do so until they hear from the court.

Council members asked city staff to investigate the cost of purchasing as many as 90 chairs and six tables.

Jill and Ron Hedavare, who live on Central Ave.,

Council continued on 2



FenceLines

by Mark Bernard

Come on, I just want you to lie to me

The scurs had the Weather Eye focused for more decent fall harvest weather until last Thursday's rain. Are we in for more dry conditions or did we just prime the pump? Starting Thursday, sunny with highs in the low 70's and lows in the low 50's. Mostly sunny Friday with highs in the low 70's and lows in the mid-50's. Mostly cloudy on Saturday with a modest chance of rain by evening. Highs in the low 70's with lows in the low 50's. Sunday, mostly sunny with a slight chance of rain. Highs in the mid-60's with lows in the low 40's. Mostly sunny on Monday with highs in the low 60's and lows in the mid-40's. Tuesday, partly sunny with highs in the mid-60's and lows in the upper 40's.

Partly sunny Wednesday with highs in the mid-50's and lows in the low 40's. Our Full Moon for October is on the 25th, and on the 26th our daylight falls to 10 hours and 30 minutes. The normal high for October 25th is 54, and the normal low is 33. The scurs will enjoy the warmest weather we'll see for a while. No recreational fire required.

As mentioned, the Full Moon for the month will occur on October 25th, even though most calendars say it's on the 26th. The calendars are on Eastern Daylight Time and since the Full Moon is at 12:12 a.m. Eastern Time, which makes it 11:12 p.m. Central Daylight Time. Regardless, this Full Moon goes by The Hunter's Moon. It was at this time that the settlers and Native tribes were well into stocking their larders with protein for the long winter. Much of the meat was canned, smoked or dried to keep until spring. The Ojibwe knew this as the Falling Leaves Moon as did the Sioux, who also called it the Moon of Changing Season. At the ranch we're inclined to call it the Moon of Draining Hoses. All the fun suddenly goes out of watering livestock at chore time.

Harvest progressed rapidly once the rain stopped on Friday. By Saturday forenoon there were already some combines back at it, although trucks were picking their spots in some fields. Warm temps and breezy conditions changed soil conditions in a hurry by Monday. Semis were able to at least get turned towards the road without getting stuck. Corn moisture has been extremely dry with reports of anywhere from the low to upper teens. Surprisingly enough, there were a still a few fields of soybeans scattered around the countryside. They disappeared quickly. Now the focus is on getting this corn out before Mother Nature changes her mind. Harvest is taking a little longer than anticipated.

Getting all the bushels hauled away and stored is taking extra time.

Sunday was a great day for the big bird feeder changeover at the ranch. A week earlier, we'd noticed at least one hummingbird. Having seen none this past week, it was time. There were still plenty of flowers blooming in case some stragglers happened by. Cleaning

the feeders for storage isn't a hard job, but it's tedious and time consuming.

Our hot water weighs in around 130°F, so with some soap and a cleaning brush, the feeders are nice and clean after drying before storing for the winter. In the meantime they were replaced with suet feeders. Not a lot of takers so far, but that can change at the drop of a hat. Plenty of activity on the sunflower feeders as our winter guests return.

How severe was the Saturday a.m. frost? At the ranch, it certainly wouldn't qualify as a killing frost. Some of the canna leaves show signs of being singed, but are still flowering like mad as temperatures have warmed up. Even the impatiens that wilt when you say the word frost were still fairly turgid. Odds are it wasn't at or below freezing very long according to other weather stations recording that kind of data. At the ranch, being on a hill has its advantages.

The pumpkin and squash pile was covered in case, and some of the tender vegetation that we may try to nurse through the winter was brought inside. Maybe we wouldn't have needed to, but we might've regretted it otherwise.

The trees at the ranch continue to baffle us. Some have yet to really show much color, let alone drop their leaves.

Others are completely bare and the ground under them is covered. The sheep keep their side of the fence relatively leaf-free. They have a preference though. The still supple newly fallen maple leaves are among their favorites. They like apple and grape leaves too. This is why some orchards and vineyards have sheep to tidy them up. They pick off lower leaves as well as fallen leaves. This allows more air movement underneath, lessening the chance for diseases like scab and powdery mildew to develop. With apples, they eat the ground fall fruit. If not removed, ground fall apples help apple maggots complete their life cycle. The sheep are a non-chemical method of pest control.

Our "talking" Corgi is a constant source of amusement. If not for Poppy somedays, there wouldn't be a lot to smile about given some of the tech issues with the confuser and cell phone recently. Lately she's been chasing chipmunks, recent newcomers to our backyard. Even though they technically don't hibernate, it's unlikely they'll benefit from her giving them daily exercise this winter. Chipmunks undergo torpor, a period of time where their respiration, heart rate and body temperature fall. They awaken periodically to feed on the cache of food, primarily seeds and nuts, stashed in several locations for the winter. My guess is there is at least one holed up under the silver maple tree if Poppy's regular sniffing and pawing are any indication. Corgi's may fib a little, but their nose never lies.

See you next week. Real good then.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

The connection of homestead and future farmers

I spent much of Saturday, Oct. 17 at Farmamerica, where I was one of dozens of volunteers who interacted with visitors during the Fall Festival. The day started out rather chilly, but by noon the temperature was pleasant and I was able to do without my hand-warmer.

What I want to share in this column is the interesting perspective that came from providing information about the 1850s homestead at Farmamerica and the fast-moving harvest that was going on all around me as I drove home.

Many homesteaders in the late 1800s acquired homestead property for free, or for a price so low it might as well have been free. A common amount of acreage was 160—more land than a European born farmer could have imagined ever owning, since farming practices on the other continent were already long established and land passed from father to first-born

son, with all the younger brothers left out in the cold.

Of that vast tract of land, much was left as pasture because one family and their horses could only plow, plant, cultivate and harvest so many acres.

I spent the day telling people how every bucket of water had to be drawn from the well and carried to where it was needed. One interactive display allowed kids to use a washboard and hand-cranked wringer to “do the laundry.” I used the example that every on switch we use a day was a job that needed doing back in pioneer times. A light switch would mean a candle or lamp had to be lit. A heater would mean firewood needed to be carried. Turning a car key would lead to hitching up the horses, possibly after feeding them and giving them water.

To the homesteaders, even the vintage tractors volunteers supply to pull the passenger



Coming from Farmamerica, Deb drove past harvesting equipment capable of feats homesteading farmers back in the day would not dream of accomplishing. Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

trams would have seemed miraculous.

After the day's event at Farmamerica wound down, I drove home past pieces of equipment capable of harvesting more in an hour than those homestead families would have been thrilled to bring in for a season. Wagons and trucks with enough cubic foot capacity to be apartments rolled through the fields loaded to their tops with golden bounty. Thanks to the machinery, two or three people kept the processes of picking, loading, and delivering going smoothly, filling bins with more grain than my theoretical homestead farmer probably harvested in his lifetime.

Yet he and the modern farmers are also richly connected. He made the same decisions about what to plant, when to plant it, and when to begin harvesting. He paid attention to the heavy rains and dry spells, worrying how each would affect his yield. He

worried whether the sale price of his wheat or oats or corn would be strong enough to keep him, his family and his essential livestock supported for the twelve months now standing between him and the next harvest. He weighed carefully how much of it he should sell right away and how much he should store in case prices would be higher later on.

They both planted their crops in the extraordinarily rich soil that is our heritage from the centuries of prairie grass that once grew in the southern part of Waseca County. Both sets of farmers took time to revel in the wonder of seedlings sprouting under the early summer sun.

That is the perspective I gained from being on a homestead site for part of the day and driving among harvest fields for another part. Isn't life interesting, that we can be simultaneously separated and joined in so many ways?

HERITAGE BITS



A New Richland physics class from long ago.

■ Council

from Page 1

came before the council to seek permission to build a single car garage sized shed in their backyard. They said there would be no driveway going to the shed, which will be for storage and a

woodshop. The council was receptive, but asked for more information, including drawn up plans.

Councilman Greg Bartsch requested a lock be put on the furnace door in the Community Center because there have been people going into the furnace room during events “and messing around in there when they have no reason to.”

NRHEG Star Eagle

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ZED by Duane M. Abel



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Ballot candidates answer survey questions

Bob Swenson, one of three candidates running for two open seats on the New Richland city council

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

I live in New Richland with my wife Lori Dahlhoff

- How long have you lived in the area?

3 years

- What is your occupation or profession?

Retired

- What positions or offices have you served which help you feel prepared for the office you seek?

I have attended every city council meeting for the last 3 years.

- What are some personal traits or experiences which act or will act as strengths

for you in this office?

I earned a Juris Doctorate from William Mitchell College of Law. Additionally, I was formerly active in Toastmasters, which gives me a solid basis in parliamentary procedure.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or concerns the office will be, or should be, handling in the near future?

Ensuring that the city serves the people of New Richland effectively by providing the necessary and expected services in a cost effective and transparent manner.



Swenson

Andrew Hoelscher, one of three candidates running for two open seats on the New Richland City Council

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

City of New Richland; I have a household of 1.

- How long have you lived in the area?



Hoelscher

I have lived in the area my entire life. I graduated with the NRHEG class of 2021.

- What is your occupation or profession?

Automotive mechanic

- What positions or offices have you served which help you feel prepared for the office you seek?

Although not having served for local office or government, I have had the opportunity to serve in various leadership roles throughout school and my career.

- What are some personal traits

or experiences which act or will act as strengths for you in this office?

While working in the New Richland community, I have gained a lot of experience helping and serving customers. During my career, I have not only learned how to better communicate but quickly adapt to other's wants and needs. It has also benefited me by creating strong connections with members of the community.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or concerns the office will be, or should

be, handling in the near future?

Having nearly lost my place of employment due to flooding, it is one of my top priorities, as others may agree. Other concerns I have regarding the community are promoting overall community wellness, maintaining a clean and attractive environment. I believe that well-maintained properties, welcoming public spaces, and a strong sense of community responsibility contribute to a healthier, safer, and more vibrant community.

Ryan Shea, running unopposed for re-election as Freeborn County Sheriff

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

I live in rural Albert Lea with my wife Joleen.

- How long have you lived in the area?

26+ years

- What is your occupation or profession?

Freeborn County Sheriff

- How long have you held the elected position you are in? What are some accomplishments you

wish to mention?

I have been a licensed peace officer in MN for over 28 years. I began working for Freeborn County as a Patrol Deputy in 2000, a Patrol Sergeant in 2011, a Detective in 2014, and Sheriff in 2023.

- What are some personal traits or experiences which act or will act as strengths for you in this office?

I have identified integrity, service, compassion, and professionalism as core values that I model to staff, and I want to see staff display those same values to the public.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or con-

cerns the office will be, or should be, handling in the near future?

The top issue facing law enforcement in the years to come is the technology boom. With AI increasing at alarming rates, so does the ability to use it for criminal activity. Keeping up with emerging trends in technology, how it is used for criminal activity, and how to combat that criminal activity is difficult. County budgets get



Shea

tighter and make the purchasing of technology for the Sheriff's Office even harder. We will continue in partnerships with State and Federal law enforcement, encourage staff in training, and work with regional and state partners on sharing information and equipment.

- What additional observations or impressions would you like to share?

I would like to thank the community for electing me as Sheriff 4 years ago. I am grateful for the support they have shown me and I look forward to serving as Sheriff for the next 4 years.

Larry Muff, one of three candidates running for mayor of New Richland

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

Two sons, a daughter and four granddaughters

- How long have you lived in the area?

Moved to area in 1987, Moved to New Richland 1989

- What is your occupation or profession?

Truck driver

- What positions or offices have you served which help you feel prepared for the office you seek?

I served all four Officer Positions at Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. Served as Policy Chair for the Research and Tech Transfer Committee for MN Soybeans with the University of MN Department of Agriculture. Served on Minnesota Fertilizer Task Force to develop Ag Fertilizer Research and Education Council. Served as Chair of AFREC for 7 years. Currently serve as a Supervisor at the Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District. Served two years as Chair of SWCD

- What are some personal traits or experiences which act or will act as strengths for you in this office?

Been clinically identified as a "Compulsive Problem Solver."

Very analytical to details. Listening is my first step. Asks lots of questions for information. Willing to speak up and call out problems. Won't back down when challenged. Problem solver on issues others wouldn't address. While serving on the Research Committee for MN soybean we would have a two inch thick ring binder of Research Proposals to analysis for funding. Would read each line and highlight areas for questions. While

serving on AFREC we would have almost that much to analysis also. We would also look at Federal Research Projects. Took active roles in creating and passing Legislation in Minnesota. Testified at two Minnesota Legislative Hearings. Vast experience in the legal system.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or concerns the office will be, or should be, handling in the near future?

First of all, we have to live within our budget. We are not a Community power house of Economic creation. But at the same time, we can't put our heads in the sand and ignore the core Structural needs that are required to maintain the City Infrastructure and services. Needs to these issues need to be identified, find ways to address them and ways to pay for them. This City has ignored its water issues for to many decades and it has devastated residents economically. This has caused this community to become an economic death trap for residents.

- What observations or impressions would you like to share?

I wasn't born or raised here in New Richland but New Richland has become my home more than where I grew up. It really irritates me to see residents economically harmed on issues that can be solved. I have been working on these issues for over 5 years now in my roles at SWCD and the Le Sueur IWIP. I am so frustrated with the wall of resistance I have come up against in getting leadership positions to acknowledge the problems and take proper actions that will move things forward. This is why I am running for Mayor. To be in a position to take actions to solve these problems.

Amy Ihrke, one of six candidates running for five open seats on the NRHEG School Board.

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

Husband, Mike; daughter, Taytum (Chad) Erickson and their children, Nolan and Leila; and son, Jace.

- How long have you lived in the area?

My entire life

- What is your occupation or profession?

Funeral Director at the Dennis Steffel Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca-Janesville-Waterville along with the Schoenbauer Funeral Homes in Le Center and Montgomery.

- What positions or offices have you served which help you feel prepared for the office you seek?

I have served on the school

board for the past 4 years. I feel that the current school board has continued to support the students and their families and the staff with continuing the tradition of providing a positive and solid education and school environment to be sure that our students are successful. We continue to make changes within the district to be sure that we can provide opportunities that stay current with the changes in curriculum and classroom needs and supports the needs of our upcoming graduating classes.

- What are some personal traits or experiences which act or will act as strengths for you in this office?

I have lived in the New Richland area for my entire life and prior to my experience on the school board I served on the New Richland City Council for 10 years. With living in the area I feel a strong connection to be sure that along with the

cities in our district to continue to be stable I want our district to also continue to thrive and be the school of choice for those who continue to make this area home. I have enjoyed being a part of the district that I call home and feel that I have learned a lot over the past 4 years, but look forward to continue to learn and help our school succeed.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or concerns the office will be, or should be, handling in the near future?

Along with being sure that our district staff feel supported and valued, it's important that our students and their families are receiving the education and extra curricular activities that meet their needs. Along with ensuring the level of education we are providing our students is top notch it is also important for the board to

continue to balance budgets each year. To continue to keep our budget and taxes align with the needs of the district.

- What additional observations or impressions would you like to share?

Our world is changing quickly with each upcoming year. I feel that it is also important to stay focused on the ways that our children are learning and give them the opportunities they need to be successful through their school years. To continue to provide and explore innovative opportunities to teach. But to also continue to support our staff in the ability to have the technology and resources to provide these opportunities to their students.



Ihrke

Troy Buendorf, one of six candidates running for five open seats on the NRHEG School Board.

- Your area of residence and members of your family in the same household:

Wife, Theresa Buendorf, Daughters Clara, Eva & Nellie Buendorf

- How long have you lived in the area?

My whole life

- What is your occupation or profession?

Farmer, Part-time Bus Driver

- What positions or offices have you served which help you feel prepared for the office you seek?

I have served on the Church Council at Trinity Lutheran Church multiple times, gaining valuable experience in leadership, teamwork, and decision-making. As a part-time school bus driver, I understand the importance of responsibility, safety, and serving our children and families. As a busi-

ness owner, I have developed a strong understanding of financial management, budgeting, and making responsible decisions. These experiences have prepared me to serve in public office by helping me understand the importance of accountability, listening to others, and making thoughtful decisions that benefit the community. I am committed to serving others, being a responsible leader, and working to represent the needs and interests of the people I serve.

- What are some personal traits or experiences which act or will act as strengths for you in this office?

One of my greatest strengths is being a good listener and being willing to consider different perspectives. As a part-time school bus driver, I have gained firsthand knowledge of how the school system operates and understand the importance of keeping students safe and supporting their needs. Having attended NRHEG schools myself, I have a personal connec-

tion to the district. My children also attend NRHEG, and my wife and sister-in-law are teachers in the district. These connections give me a unique perspective on the importance of providing a positive learning environment for students, supporting staff, and maintaining strong relationships with families and the community. I care about our school and community, and I would bring my personal experience, practical knowledge, and willingness to listen to the role.

- What do you regard as some of the most important tasks or concerns the office will be, or should be, handling in the near future?

Some of the most important priorities are meeting the needs of all students, maintaining fiscal responsibility, and finding ways to attract more students to our district. We need to ensure students have the resources and support they need to succeed while making responsible financial decisions that

benefit the district now and in the future. Attracting and retaining students is also important to maintaining strong schools and a thriving community. I believe these priorities require careful planning, collaboration, and a commitment to making decisions that serve the best interests of our students, staff, families, and taxpayers.

- What additional observations or impressions would you like to share?

I believe open communication between the school board and community members is essential. I strive to be a good listener and encourage people to reach out to me with their questions, concerns, and ideas. I believe everyone should have an opportunity to be heard and that working together leads to better decisions. Our school is the lifeblood of our communities, and I want to help ensure it remains strong and continues to serve our students, families, and community for many years to come.

Get your news in the Star Eagle
e-mail steagle@hickorytech.net



AG LENDING TEAM:
Mike Budach, Adam Legred, Michael Yocom, Jackie Henke & Ashton Voigt

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OBITUARIES

Charles Sonnek

Charles D. Sonnek, age 92, of Waldorf died at his home surrounded by loved ones Tuesday, October 13th. A visitation will be Friday, October 23rd, 2026 from 4:00-7:00pm at Nasinec Funeral Home in Wells and will continue one hour prior (9:30-10:30am) to the Mass at church on Saturday. The Memorial Mass will be held at 10:30am Saturday, October 24th, 2026 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Waldorf with Father Peter Klein officiating. Burial will be at St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery in Minnesota Lake, MN. Charles and Betty planted hundreds of trees throughout the years, and the family asks you to honor Charles by continuing the tradition. Please see nasinecfh.com to leave online condolences.

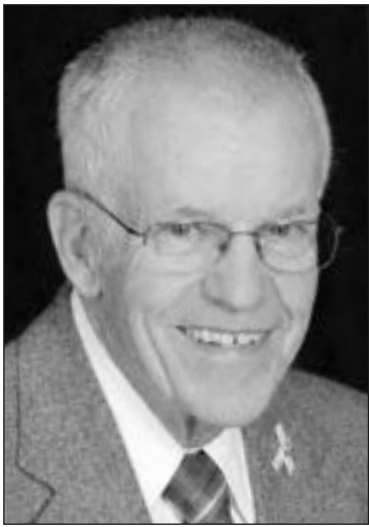
Charles Dominic was born July 20, 1934 to Dominic and Gladys (Bentley) Sonnek in Vivian Twp., Waseca Co., MN. Charles met Betty Bartelt when they were the only two 1st graders together in the country school.

For his entire life, Charles has been a person who has been involved in various "communities". During high school he was on the basketball team, was an FFA leader, and served as a class officer. He and his class were instrumental in starting the Festival of Agriculture in Minnesota Lake; the annual Festag celebration. His leadership in FFA continued after he graduated from Minnesota Lake High School in 1952 and continued while he was attending the University of Minnesota. In 1953 Charles received the prestigious American Star Farmer Award from the National FFA Organization.

His "community" focus shifted when he married the love of his life, Betty Bartelt, November 25, 1953 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Minnesota Lake. At that time his priorities shifted to family and farming. He was a natural mentor to his family. He participated in many fun family activities such as softball, volleyball, father/son wrestling, camping, and hiking. He was a natural mentor to his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

He taught his children the importance of a strong faith and led by example. He was an active member of the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Waldorf. He attended Mass regularly with his family, leading the rosary before Mass, singing in the church choir, and serving as a Communion distributor. He helped with church maintenance and also helped in the creation of the St. Joseph's Community Cemetery by providing and laying the sod at the new site. He and his wife also provided religious education to parish youth by teaching in the C.C.D. program. He and his wife also were actively involved in the community by doing cemetery restoration, research, and genealogy.

As Charles's farming career evolved, he taught his family the values that resulted in true suc-



Charles Sonnek

cess. "Don't farm for the exercise of farming." He taught that true success resulted from patience, hard work, optimism, perseverance, and faith. The value of organization and meticulous care of equipment was crucial. Not only did he teach his values to his family, he also practiced these values in his business relationships; sod farming with his partner, Richard Hankerson, and co-owning B&S Grain Company with Gordon Bartelt. He was a leader in establishing the practice of buffer strips in the state of Minnesota. In 2007 he was awarded the Conservationist of the Year by the Waseca County Chapter of Pheasants Forever.

Charles always put others' needs before his own. He was willing to drop everything to help someone address a need. Not only did he help resolve the issue, but he taught the individuals the skills to deal with it in the future themselves. All that Charles has taught so many throughout his life will live on long after he is gone.

The family would like to recognize and thank Clement Nhyirani, Charles's special caregiver. His compassionate, loving, respectful care was greatly appreciated. This allowed Charles to live his final days at home as he always wanted.

He is preceded in death by his wife Betty; children: Andrew Sonnek, Jonathan Sonnek and Ruth Buswell; grandson Ryon Sonnek; daughters-in-law: Kandy Sonnek and Marcia Sonnek; and his parents.

Charles is survived by his children: Charles "Rick" Sonnek (Barbara Jean) of La Crescent, MN, Tim (Barb) Sonnek of New Prague, MN, Beth (John) Thompson of Rochester, MN, Amy (David) Adams of Minneiska, MN, Steve (Vonnice) Sonnek of St. Clair, MN, Chris (Karen) Sonnek of New Richland, MN, Kellen Sonnek of Fairmont, MN, Perry Sonnek of Muskego, WI, Joy Sonnek of Rochester, MN, Sara Lee Sonnek of Mankato, MN, Peter (Lori) Sonnek of Minnesota Lake, MN, Anthony (Brenda) Sonnek of Elysian, MN, Matthew (Rose) Sonnek of Rochester, MN; son-in-law, Trevor Buswell of Houston, MN; caregiver Clement Nhyirani; siblings: George (Barb) Sonnek, Sister Carmen Sonnek, Betty (Jack) Latourelle and Rita Wisher; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and their families.

Joseph Solberg Jr.

Joseph "Joe" A. Solberg Jr., age 95, died Friday, Sept. 25, in La Crosse, WI.

A funeral service will be at 11:00 AM on Friday, Oct. 30 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 204 1st Street NW, New Richland, MN 56072. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service at Trinity Lutheran.

Joseph Alfred Solberg Jr was born Nov 9, 1930 at home near Hartland. Joe was the 2nd son of Joseph Sr. and Alma (Sigurson) Solberg. He graduated from Freeborn High School in 1949, where he met his classmate and friend, Barbara Crowe. They were married on October 7, 1950. They cherished 74 years of marriage.

First and foremost, Joe was a FARMER, even in his last days he wanted to "break out of here" to check on the crops and animals, if only he could find the truck keys.

Farm work took precedence above all else, which suited Joe and Barb, since they worked side by side on their crop and dairy farm. Once he sold the dairy herd, he continued to raise beef cattle. Joe loved to tell stories. He always inserted a little chuckle mid story, so we knew he was enjoying the memories he was sharing. He learned to speak Norwegian as a child listening to his parents and grandparents, who did not learn of his talent until years later. Joe loved to fish, and hunt. He especially loved deer hunting on our home farm acres. Joe and Barb enjoyed square dancing and were members of the Sons of Norway.

Joe is survived by his 5 children: Dori (Bill) Jensen, West Salem WI; Wendy (Ed) Nowak, Elysian MN; Brian (Becca) Solberg, Hartland MN; Trudy Drugg (Tom Ameson), West Salem, WI; Daryl Solberg

(Vickie Bair), Minnesota Lake, MN. Grandchildren: Jeremy (Susie) Jensen, Emily (Michael) Pollard, Grady (Elisabeth) Jensen, Molly (Zach) Bidman, Dani (Chad) Youngberg, Leslie (Joe) Vike, Marty (Cary) Smith, Nick (Laura) Smith, Maggie (Ryan) Tucker. 22 Great grandchildren and 1 due in March. Also surviving sister-in-law, Jane Crowe.

Joe is preceded in death by his wife Barb (May 2025). Parents: Joseph, Sr and Alma Solberg, Parents in law, Ralph and Luella Crowe. His and Barb's siblings: Palmer Solberg, Roger (Cathy) Solberg, Ronald (Arlene) Crowe, Norma (Sheldon Swenson) (Jim Robinson), Eunice (Merv) Wagner, Wesley Crowe, Wayne (Nancy) Crowe and, son in law. Dan Drugg (Oct, 2015)

In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to Trinity Lutheran Church, PO Box 186, New Richland MN



Joseph Solberg Jr.

56072. Bonnerup Funeral & Cremation Service is assisting with arrangements.

Ellendale Fire Station Visit



FIRE PREVENTION - 2nd graders visited the Ellendale fire station in celebration of fire prevention week. The students learned what to do in case of a fire: how to get out, plan a meeting spot and remember firefighters are there to help you. This year the special topic was about lithium batteries and making sure to unplug items we charge when the battery is full.



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Compostings

by Al Batt

Tip the lunchroom ladies in school

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING

I just read “The Shining” by Stephen King.

I thought you didn’t like horror novels.

I don’t. I shut my eyes during the scary parts.

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. A radio station played “You Can Call Me Al” by Paul Simon and dedicated it to me. I am a lucky guy.

I rode on a bus and listened to a fellow traveler tell me he was not good at sleeping. The only thing that helped was called cognitive shuffling. He explained that the technique involved thinking of a random, emotionally neutral word, for example, “tree.” He takes the first letter of the word, in this case “T,” and he thinks of as many items or objects as he can that begin with the same letter, such as “table,” “toaster” or “towel”—visualizing each item as he thinks of them. Once he cannot think of any more words beginning with the letter T, he moves on to a second letter. He said he rarely makes it to a third letter before falling asleep.

I’VE LEARNED

The best foldable device is a book.

You are a hypochondriac if you put cough syrup on your pancakes.

We never tipped the lunchroom ladies in school.

On my drive home from Northfield, I met many one-eyed cars and many more bright-eyed ones. Some were too bright-eyed, causing me to mumble, “Namaste.” In Sanskrit, that means “I bow to you.” In yoga, “namaste” is often said to mean “The light in me salutes the light in you.” If your high beams dim on their own, your car is using an automated system.

To be frank, I’d have to change my name.

Humpty Dumpty was pushed off the wall by a cat.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Why did the cat cross the road? Because the chicken had a laser pointer.

If my body were a car, I’d trade it in for a newer model because every time I sneeze, my radiator leaks and my exhaust backfires.

My wife asked me to stop singing “I’m A Believer” by The Monkees because she found it annoying. I thought she was kidding. Then I saw her face.

Why did Humpty Dumpty have a great fall? Because he was on edge all summer.

IN THE HEADLINES

Bigfoot is never seen at a bowling alley. Researchers say shoe sizes are a big deterrent.

Snowman caught picking his nose in the produce department of a grocery store.

The Condescending Club has rules, but you wouldn’t understand them.

Cemetery refuses to bury anyone living in the area.

New fiber-laden cereal promises a colonoscopy preparation in every bowl.

A local couple went on a whale-washing tour. They thought it was a typo but learned it takes a long time to wash a humpback whale.

NATURE NOTES

Laura Belin of Ames asked how long she should keep her hummingbird feeder up. I keep mine up for two weeks after I stop seeing any hummingbirds at them. I do so in case a straggler shows up and could use a convenient filling station. When that happens, I wish the tiny birds could tell me why they were running so late. I need more good excuses.

I watched a northern harrier hunt by floating low over the ground. Its buoyant flight reminds many of a butterfly’s. I quite like seeing the raptor once called a marsh hawk. The more, the harrier.

A young cardinal, its grayish-black bill not turning an orange-red color until the bird is 65-80 days old, was feeding on a platform feeder offering black oil sunflower seeds. It fended off a female purple finch who thought the seeds were for sharing. There was a lot of feigning and stabbing the air with bills, but no apparent harm.

The yard blue jays were having a communal cow. They had discovered a perched owl or accipiter. Their common calls were a harsh, raucous “Jay, jay, jay!” I’m sure a blue jay, a dapper sentry of the neighborhood, is a reliable listener, even though it sounds as if it’s a constant interrupter.

I marveled at the beauty of the red maple leaves. They had worked hard, and now they get to become breathtaking beauties. I found it impossible to find a loser in a legion of champion leaves.

A woolly bear caterpillar’s direction of travel is an instinctual search for a safe spot, not a conscious navigation towards a specific destination. It moves in search of a suitable hibernating spot to overwinter, like under leaf litter or wood chips, which offer a freeze tolerance. The colors of the future Isabella tiger moth indicate the woolly worm’s age.

MEETING ADJOURNED

“Kindness and politeness are not overrated at all. They’re underused.”—Tommy Lee Jones.

Child’s History of Waseca County

Chapter XV, 1856. Attempted division of county—Circulation of remonstrance—Tramp on foot through Medford, Clinton Falls, Blooming Grove and Woodville.

The last chapter necessarily carried this history into the year 1856. There are other matters that took place that winter that belong to both years. It is intended to keep the history of each year by itself, as far as possible, but there are some matters that cannot be separated by months without destroying the thread of the narrative. Of such matters will this chapter relate.

FIRST ELECTION

The first election in Steele county, of which the present Waseca county as then the larger part, territorially, was held October 9th, 1855. The LeSueur precinct, as it was called, included the south half of this county and the township of St. Mary; the polling place was at the residence of Chris Scott, the farm now belonging to Mr.

Carmody in Wilton. Twenty votes were cast. The north half of the county, then called Swavesey, also held an election at the same time, but I have been unable to learn how many votes were polled there at that time. Only one hundred seventeen votes were cast at that election in the territory comprising the counties Steele and Waseca. The following officers were elected: County commissioners, S. B. Smith, Wm. Allen and M. P. Ide (Mr. Ide lived then in what is now Blooming Grove); register of deeds, Chas. Ellison; sheriff, Wm. F. Pettit; treasurer, David Sanborn; surveyor, John W. Park; clerk of the court, F. W. Fisk; county attorney, John M. Bliven (then a resident of what is now Blooming Grove); judge of probate, F. B. Davis; assessors, David Lindesmith, Chas. Thompson, and Luke B. Osgood (Mr. Osgood lived on the line between Janesville and Isoco); justices of the peace, Simeon Smith and Curtis Hatch, of the north part of the county, and

John Jenkins, of the south part.

Originally the territory of Minnesota was divided into nine counties. By act of the territorial legislature, Wabasha county originally occupied all that portion of Southeastern Minnesota east of a line running due south from a point on the Mississippi river, known as Medicine Bottle village at Pine Bend. Dakota county embraced all the territory west of Wabasha county and south of a line beginning at the mouth of Crow river and running up said river and the north branch thereof to its source, and thence west to the Missouri river. In 1852, Hennepin county was carved out of Dakota county, and, in 1853, Goodhue, Fillmore, Scott, LeSueur, Rice, Sibley, Blue Earth and Nicollet counties were carved out of Dakota and Wabasha counties. Rice county, by that act, included all of what is now Steele county and townships 105, 106, 107 and 108, range 22, of what is now Waseca county. Blue Earth county, by the same act, included

the townships in ranges 23 and 24, of what is now the larger portion of Waseca county.

By legislative act of February 23, 1854, the counties of Houston, Fillmore, Wabasha and Goodhue were changed, and the county of Winona was organized. By act of Feb. 20, 1855, the counties of Olmsted, Dodge, Mower, Freeborn, Faribault, and Steele were created and the boundary lines of the old counties changed. By that act, Steele county then contained ranges 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24, and townships 105, 106, 107, 107—a territory twenty-four miles north and south and thirty miles east and west. The geographical center of the county, as then bounded, was near the western line of the township of Meriden.

The county seat of Steele county was not designated, nor the county fully organized by statute until Feb. 29, 1856, although county officers had been elected in the fall of 1855.

Foundation

from Page 1

In the end, engineers suggested the most holistic solution calls for \$10 million or more worth of excavation to create 11,000 feet of channel and integrated water storage to catch water which would otherwise flow into town from the east, south and southwest and carry it to the west, delivering it to Boot Creek at a downstream location.

The plan is to design the channel to carry the nearly 200,000 gallons per acre of water which result from a 100-year rainfall—one like the city experienced on Sept. 19 with 7 inches of rain within a 24-hour period. The flooding event in 2016, Howard shared, was certainly catastrophic, but because rainfall came in separate events across two separate days, it did not meet the criteria for being a 100-year-event.

Preliminary plans for the channel indicate it would require easements on about 50 acres of property and might need to be up to 35 feet deep in places. How long it will take to secure funding and satisfy statutory requirements is unknown, Howard says, but once all elements are in place, it will take about 1.5 years to construct the channel.

Howard has been preparing funding requests for the project for months already, and meeting with

area landowners to see how open they are to allowing the channel to pass through their property.

In preparing applications, he has encountered numerous factors which must be balanced alongside each other. Agencies which might supply funding have specifications and expectations for projects they support. At the same time, Minnesota statute regarding drainage and drainage systems has more than 100 sections which state fairly succinctly all the processes which must be followed to create, maintain, expand or improve, and perhaps eventually abandon a manmade drainage system. One needn’t read very far to figure out ditches affect many people, and many steps are needed to work toward treating all of them as fairly as possible. Perhaps because of that highly political nature, drainage laws are very specific on many points.

Public interests such as water quality, public safety and environmental considerations must be balanced with fair treatment of landowners and complying with state law. All of those become factors in preparing requests for funding, and in some cases there are conflicts between the statutory requirements of various agencies.

Howard concedes that the publicity surrounding the recent tragedy will likely increase how receptive agencies are to helping, but they will still require state statute



FUTURE FLOODING - Between 80 and 100 acres of New Richland were under water at the peak of the Sept. 19 flood. Analysis and planning toward alleviating future flooding has been ongoing for about 5 years, beginning with a study in 2022.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

to met. We cannot simply transfer our problems to another town or community downstream.

Another way the application’s impact may be strengthened is that survey measurements made on

Sept. 19 indicated water levels within one or two tenths of an inch to those in forecasts created using Houston Engineering’s computer models, verifying their accuracy.

Water flow

from Page 1

people to acquire lower lying land and build on it.

“There have always been issues with drainage in New Richland during large water events,” Howard summarized. “Now, with weather systems that deliver a lot of rain at once, that flooding is more evident.” He also points out the public drainage systems constructed in the 1970s were designed for 2-, 5-, and 10-year, rather than 100-year events.

Using the county’s Beacon mapping system, Howard demonstrates that elevations in New Richland range from 1,172 feet above sea level along the water-

way and in the baseball field, and are as high as 1,186 in the area of downtown. He estimates that between 80 and 100 acres of New Richland were underwater on Sept. 19, with depths of six feet at the lowest elevations, with 3 to 4 feet being much more common.

While people may feel a tendency to blame drainage ditches for delivering water into town, Howard points out that water will always move from higher elevations to lower ones. The natural waterway through town would automatically be a catching point for water due to its lower elevation. Since one inch of water on

an acre of land equals 27,000 gallons of water, the 7-inch rainfall delivered 189,000 gallons of water to the 5,000 acre contributing watershed through New Richland.

Howard closed with an observation that the historic multi-decade problem plaguing the residents of New Richland is being addressed by a reputable, nationwide engineering firm which has the best interests of the City of New Richland and Waseca County in mind. “The problem cannot be addressed soon enough,” he said, “but progress is forthcoming.”

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BIG PLAY — The Panthers’ A.J. Deen, left, hauls in a first-quarter touchdown pass from quarterback Brooks Gilliland, right, during NRHEG’s Senior Night 50-14 victory over Medford last Wednesday. Photos by Jim Lutgens



Panthers win big on Senior Night

Last week, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School football coach Devin Lockerby said there was one distinct difference in his team and Fillmore Central.

The opposite could be said of the most recent game.

The Panthers came out flying and never really let visiting Medford get into a rhythm while cruising to a 50-14 triumph on Senior Night in New Richland.

"It was a great night for our seniors getting a win on their night," said Lockerby. "We played a physical brand of football tonight for four quarters. Now, it's on to the next game."

The Panthers struck quickly. Sean Lassahn busted a big run on their first play and, on their second play, Brooks Gilliland hit A.J. Deen with a long touchdown. A two-point PAT try failed, but it was 6-0 early in the opening quarter.

The Tigers sustained a couple setbacks in the first period as they lost their starting quarterback to injury and a starting lineman was taken off the field on a stretcher with an apparent broken leg.

The Panthers, meanwhile, continued to score, striking quickly after a botched snap on a Medford punt set them up on the Tigers' 24-yard line. Three players Lassahn scored from

three yards out, and he ran for the two-point conversion to put the Panthers up 14-0 with 9:15 left in the first quarter.

A long punt return by Calvin Nissen then put the Panthers on the Medford 28, but a tipped pass resulted in a Tiger interception. Then Medford's lineman went down, temporarily at least, taking the wind out of the Tigers' sails.

Lassahn broke a 69-yard run and, after an incomplete pass on the PAT try, it was 20-0, still in the first quarter.

Nissen opened the second stanza with another nice punt return to the Medford 32, and Lassahn quickly followed with a bruising 33-yard touchdown run. Ryan Schlaak carried for the conversion, making it 28-0.

The Tigers then finally found the end zone, scoring on 57-yard pass.

Lassahn added one more touchdown run from 25 yards out, putting the Panthers up 36-7.

NRHEG reserves got playing time in the second half as the Panthers cruised to the Senior Night victory.

The Panthers improved to 4-3 while the Tigers fell to 0-7.

NRHEG concludes the regular season Wednesday, Oct. 21 at United South Central. Playoffs start the following Tuesday.



MORE BIG PLAYS — The Panthers’ Calvin Nissen, left, breaks a tackle during one of his impressive punt returns in NRHEG’s 50-14 victory over Medford on Senior Night in New Richland last Wednesday. At right, Sean Lassahn stiff-arms a Medford defender during one of his long runs.



MORE BIG PLAYS — The Panthers’ Jovey Knudson bumps a shot during an earlier season match for the NRHEG volleyball team, which defeated Maple River last week. Photo by Jim Lutgens

NRHEG spikers pick up win against Maple River

Panthers fall short at Randolph as playoffs loom

Victories have been tough to come by this season for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School volleyball team.

But the Panthers got one in convincing fashion last Monday, topping Maple River 3-1 in New Richland. Set scores in favor of NRHEG were 25-19, 17-25, 25-22 and 25-22.

According to NRHEG head coach Bethany Tennis, the Panthers showed great composure while fighting through adversity.

"Despite some ups and downs throughout the match, the girls battled their way to victory in four sets," said Tennis.

The highlight for the Panthers was nine service aces.

"We hope to continue this momentum as we travel to Randolph tomorrow night," said Tennis.

Individually against Maple River: Ezra Boerner four kills, two digs, four blocks and two aces; Izley Boerner eight digs; Clara Buendorf two kills, one dig, one block; Clara Buendorf two kills, one dig, one block; Aubrey Hendrickson 11 digs, one ace; Jovey Knudson three kills, three blocks; Anika Ladlie nine kills, five digs, three blocks; Joey Rossing two digs; Brooklyn

"Despite some ups and downs, the girls battled their way to victory in four sets."

— Coach Bethany Tennis

Sommer five digs, 24 set assists, two blocks, one ace; Emmy Stadheim six kills, nine digs, three blocks, one ace; Ciara Stenzel four digs, four aces.

At Randolph, the Panthers took their momentum but lost three close games 25-23, 25-20, 25-21.

Individual statistics: Ezra Boerner five kills, three digs, one set assist, two blocks, one ace; Izley Boerner five digs, one set assist; Buendorf one kill; Sierra Fish two kills, one set assist; Hendrickson seven kills, two set assists, two aces; Knudson three kills, one dig, one set assist; Ladlie eight kills, 10 digs, one ace; Rossing one dig, one block; Sommer four digs, 18 set assists, on ace; Stadheim seven kills, two digs; Stenzel three digs.

Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber announces 2026 Business of the Year nominees

ALBERT LEA, MN — The Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the nominees for its 2026 Business of the Year Awards. The awards recognize local businesses and organizations whose contributions help strengthen the Freeborn County economy, support their communities, and make the region a vibrant place to live and work.

Winners in the Small, Medium, and Large Business of the Year categories will be announced during the Chamber's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 27, 2026, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Wedgewood Cove in Albert Lea.

2026 Business of the Year Nominees

Small Business

- Albert Lea Family YMCA
- Albert Lea Moose Lodge #1703

- Alerus Bank – Albert Lea
- Ignite Nutrition
- Leland Realty
- NorthBridge Auto Plaza
- Shell Rock River Watershed District Medium Business

- Albert Lea Bus Company
- Arcadian Bank
- Good Steward Consulting
- Knutson Place Assisted Living

- Kwik Trip – Bridge Avenue

Large Business

- Cargill Foods
- Independent Management Services

- Larson Manufacturing
- Oak Park Place

"One of the greatest strengths

of Freeborn County is the diversity of the businesses and organizations that contribute to our local economy," said Valerie Lockhart, Executive Director of the Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce. "From small businesses serving our neighbors every day to major employers creating jobs and opportunities, each plays an important role. These nominations are an opportunity to recognize that impact and celebrate the people behind these organizations."

The Annual Meeting will also highlight the Chamber's accomplishments over the past year, recognize the people and partnerships helping move Freeborn County forward, and share priorities for the coming year.

Chamber members, business leaders, community partners, and guests are invited to attend the celebration. Tickets are going fast! \$75 per person - Gold Tables of 8 folks together - \$600.

Event Details

What: 2026 Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber Annual Meeting and Business of the Year Awards

When: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Where: Wedgewood Cove, Albert Lea, Minnesota

Tickets: \$75 per person | Gold Tables: \$600 (with additional benefits and perks!)

For event information and registration, visit <https://www.albertlea.org/annual-meeting/> or contact the Albert Lea–Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce at (507) 393-7978.

Hwy 14 resurfacing begins; I-35 nearing completion

OWATONNA, Minn. – Motorists on Highway 14 near Owatonna will experience lane and ramp closures beginning Oct. 19 as crews resurface the road, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The resurfacing of Interstate 35 northbound and southbound lanes from Highway 14 to the Straight River Rest Area is expected to be completed by the end of October. Once completed, all lanes will re-open to traffic.

In November, crews will close a lane on I-35 northbound to repair a slope south of the I-35/Highway 14 interchange. MnDOT will announce that work in advance.

Highway 14 eastbound and westbound lanes will be resurfaced from I-35 to Highway 218. Lane closures will be in place during the work. It is expected to be completed in November.

Short-term ramp closures will occur and motorists will be detoured. It is anticipated that ramp closures will last several hours to a few days. Closures will be shown on 511mn.org.

- Highway 14 eastbound off-ramp closure to Highway 218

Detour: From Highway 14 eastbound, take Steele County Road 45 exit and go south. Go east on Steele County Road 60, which intersects with Highway 218.

- Highway 14 eastbound on-ramp closure from County Road 45

Detour: Continue north on County Road 45 and take exit to Highway 14 westbound. Take exit at I-35 and then take exit to Highway 14 eastbound.

- Highway 14 westbound off-ramp closure to County Road 45

Detour: Continue west on Highway 14. Take exit at I-35

and then take exit to Highway 14 eastbound. Take County Road 45 exit.

- Highway 14 eastbound off-ramp closure to County Road 45

Detour: Continue east on Highway 14. Take exit to Highway 218, go north and take exit to Highway 14 westbound. Take exit to County Road 45.

- Highway 14 westbound on-ramp closure from County Road 45

Detour: Go south on County Road 45 and take the eastbound exit to Highway 14. Take exit to Highway 218, go north and take exit to Highway 14 westbound.

- Highway 14 eastbound on-ramp closure from Highway 218

Detour: Go north on Highway 218 and take the westbound exit to Highway 14. Take the County Road 45 exit and then exit to Highway 14 eastbound.

To learn more about the proj-

ect, visit the MnDOT project website where you can also sign up to receive email updates.

Stay connected, informed Check out other MnDOT southeast Minnesota construction projects and sign up for project updates.

Join the MnDOT Southeast Minnesota Facebook group and follow us at MnDOT Southeast on X.

Sign up to receive text message and/or email alerts during significant road closures or winter weather events that affect state highways in southeast Minnesota.

Find road updates in Minnesota on 511mn.org or get a free app at Google Play or the App Store.

Search job openings and sign up to receive southeast Minnesota job alerts.

Sign up to receive emails about traffic safety.

Roadway

from Page 1

to increase driver awareness, expanded law enforcement to encourage drivers to obey traffic laws, engineering of improved roadways, and strengthened emergency medical services.

When it comes to highway engineering, Kuehl said, TZD takes a proactive approach. Information from all crashes in the state is compiled and underlying factors are identified. Closest attention is paid to “severe” crashes, which in this context are those that entail a death or a life-changing injury.

Data indicated that inappropriately high speeds are contributing factors in more than 20 percent of severe crashes: driver inattention in about 7 percent. Of slightly more than 2,000 severe incidents in 2021 to 2025, about one-fourth involved an “impaired” driver.

Statistics indicate nearly half of all severe accidents occur at intersections; nearly half also involve a “lane departure,” whether that includes leaving the roadway or moving into the oncoming side.

Kuehl presented examples of ways highway construction and signage could help reduce numbers in these two settings. She provided the example of curves where drivers might leave the roadway either because they

were unaware of the curve or because they navigated it at too high a speed. For such areas, she offered placing chevrons (> shaped signs) and posting recommended curve speeds as relatively low-cost solutions: she indicated the size and number of chevrons could be selected based on the sharpness—or lack of visibility—on the curve. Another option would be to re-engineer the curve, which would entail construction.

Regarding intersections, she described that accidents are more likely to occur when roads meet at an angle rather than square on.

Where actions at intersections occur because one driver failed to notice a sign, her presentation showed that solutions can range

from adding flashing lights or creating a four-way stop to constructing a roundabout which would compel drivers to slow down and pay more attention. Thus, the cost to strengthen safety at the intersection could range from a few hundred dollars for additional signage to hundreds of thousands of dollars for major construction.

Mark Wagner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s (MnDOT) traffic engineering department, said that when the department evaluates requests for funding, it weighs the cost of the project as compared to the number of drivers whose safety would be improved, and the degree to which safety would be enhanced.

Notice of Public Hearings and availability of environmental report

In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of Need for the PowerOn Midwest 765 kV and 345 kV High-Voltage Transmission Line Project

PUC DOCKET NUMBER: E002, ET2, ET6675/CN-25-117 | **CAH DOCKET NUMBER:** 28-2500-41617

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold public hearings on the Certificate of Need Application filed by Great River Energy, ITC Midwest LLC, and Xcel Energy (collectively, the Applicants) for the proposed PowerOn Midwest Project. The Project would involve construction and operation of approximately 340 miles of new 765-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines and additional 345-kV circuits on replacement or existing structures across southern Minnesota, along with related substation expansions and upgrades.

The proposed facilities in Minnesota include:

- Approximately 271 miles of new 765-kV single-circuit transmission lines from the South Dakota border connecting with the Lakefield Junction Substation in Jackson County, Pleasant Valley Substation in Mower County, and North Rochester Substation in Goodhue County, with an additional connection from Lakefield Junction to the Iowa border.
- Approximately 31 miles of new 345-kV circuit between the Pleasant Valley and North Rochester substations, replacing existing single-circuit structures with new double-circuit-capable structures.
- A second 345-kV circuit added to an approximately 38-mile segment between North Rochester Substation and Hampton Substation in Dakota County, primarily using existing double-circuit-capable structures.
- Expansions and upgrades at Lakefield Junction, Pleasant Valley, North Rochester, and Hampton substations, including 345-kV transmission line connections between select existing and expanded substations.

The project is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) Long Range Transmission Planning Tranche 2.1 portfolio, approved by the MISO Board of Directors in December 2024 as part of the MISO Transmission Expansion Plan 2024 (MTEP24). The Applicants state that the project is needed to address projected reliability issues, support compliance with national reliability standards, improve regional transmission capability, and provide capacity to serve forecasted residential, commercial, and industrial demand. The Applicants also state that the project would support replacing aging or less cost-effective generation with new generation resources, including carbon-free resources, while maintaining electric system reliability.

IMPORTANT: *This proceeding concerns whether the project is needed. Granting a certificate of need would not approve a specific transmission line route or guarantee approval of a route permit. If a certificate of need is granted, specific routes would be reviewed in separate route permit proceedings, with additional opportunities for public comment at meetings and hearings. The Applicants expect to file route permit applications no earlier than the first quarter of 2027.*

In-Person Public Hearings

Date	Hearing Location	Time
Monday, November 9, 2026	St. Leo Church (Gym) 415 S Hiawatha Avenue, Pipestone, MN 56164	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Monday, November 9, 2026	Murray County Central Schools (Gym) 2420 28th Street, Slayton, MN 56172	5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 10, 2026	Worthington Event Center 1447 Prairie Drive, Worthington, MN 56187	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Tuesday, November 10, 2026	Windom Community Center 1750 Cottonwood Lake Drive, Windom, MN 56101	5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Thursday, November 12, 2026	Fox Lake Event Center 730 125th Street, Sherburn, MN 56171	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Thursday, November 12, 2026	Golden Bubble 11575 State Highway 22, Wells, MN 56097	5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Friday, November 13, 2026	Austin Eagles Lookout Aerie 703 107 11th Street NE, Austin, MN 55912	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Monday, November 16, 2026	Dodge County Fairgrounds Midway Building 100 11th Street NE, Kasson, MN 55944	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these hearings, please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the hearing. To find out if a hearing is canceled due to bad weather or other reasons, call 1-855-731-6208 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Online Public Hearing via WebEx

Date: Monday, November 16, 2026 **Time:** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
(The hearing ends when all attendees have commented or at 9:00 PM. Log in at the start time to ensure participation.)

Join by WebEx (Webinar) Link:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/jhp?MTID=m692095c2a8eac8e7efe30f48b01df54>

Webinar Number: 2480 280 7515

Webinar Password: GakXRvpI846 (42597874 from phones)

Join by Phone: 1-415-655-0003

Phone Access Code: 2480 280 7515

If you are joining the hearing via WebEx and would like to ask a question or make a comment during the designated portion of the hearing, use the raised-hand function or the chat function to send a message to the hearing moderator. If you are joining the hearing by phone, press *3 on your phone. When it is your turn to speak, your line will be unmuted, and you will be able to ask questions and provide comments.

Additional information and instructions are available at: <https://mn.gov/puc/activities/meetings/webex/>

Public Hearing Information

The public hearings will be presided over by the Honorable Joseph Meyer, an administrative law judge with the Court of Administrative Hearings, who will provide the Commission with findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation.

The purpose of the public hearings is to obtain public input and compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the certificate of need application. Specifically, interested persons will have the opportunity to: (1) ask questions of state staff and the Applicants; and (2) offer oral and written comments on the merits of the certificate of need application and on the environmental report.

- Comments received at the hearings and during the comment period will be used to inform the record and help the Commission make its final decision.
- The information presented will be the same at all in-person and online hearings.
- The hearings will end when all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded, or at the scheduled end time of the hearing, whichever occurs first. It is recommended that all interested persons arrive at the scheduled start time.
- Members of the public may participate without intervening as a party; representation by legal counsel is permitted but not required.

Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted until December 7, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. Please include the docket number in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Topics for Comment

- Should the Commission grant a certificate of need for the PowerOn Midwest Project?
- If granted, what additional conditions or requirements should be included in a certificate of need?

Submit Comments

Online: <https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/public-comments>

Email: consumer.puc@state.mn.us

U.S. Mail: Consumer Affairs Office

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101

Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission’s website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Environmental Report

The Commission has completed an Environmental Report (ER) for the project. The ER outlines the affected resources, evaluates potential human and environmental impacts, describes approvals required from other government agencies, and considers possible alternatives (where applicable).

The ER is available for review and download on the Commission’s eDocket System. Print copies of the ER will be available for review at the in-person public hearings. A limited number of electronic copies (flash drives) of the ER will also be available to take home. For questions about the availability of the ER please contact Commission staff.



Evidentiary Hearings

Members of the public may attend and listen to the evidentiary hearings, but these hearings will not provide opportunities for public comments. To provide oral comments, please attend one of the in-person or online public hearings described earlier in this notice.

The evidentiary hearings will be held in the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Hearing Rooms at 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101, beginning on November 18, 2026, at 9:30 AM. The hearings may continue on November 19 and 20, 2026, if needed, as determined by Judge Meyer.

Additional Information

Minnesota Statutes and Rules. This project is being reviewed under Minn. Stat. ch. 216B.243 and Minn. Rules ch. 7849. The rules and statutes are available for review at: www.revisor.mn.gov

Review Process. Information on the review processes for certificates of need for large energy facilities is available on the Commission’s website at: [puc.eip.mn.gov/certificates-of-need](https://mn.gov/puc/certificates-of-need).

Filing Requirements. Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission’s electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are also encouraged to use eFiling. Visit edockets.state.mn.us, select Sign In/Register and follow the prompts.

Full Case Record. To view all documents filed in this matter, visit edockets.state.mn.us, select Search Documents, enter the docket number (25-117), and select Search.

Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter, visit edockets.state.mn.us and select Subscriptions.

Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email eservice.admin@state.mn.us or call 651-201-2246 with the docket number, your name, mailing address, and email address.

PUC Project Website. <http://puc.eip.mn.gov/web/project/25117>

Contacts

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

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Lauren Agnew, lauren.agnew@state.mn.us or 651-201-2198

Tessa Kothlow, tessa.kothlow@state.mn.us or 651-539-1069

Applicants

Dan Leshner, Great River Energy,

Connect@PowerOnMidwest.com or 888-283-4678

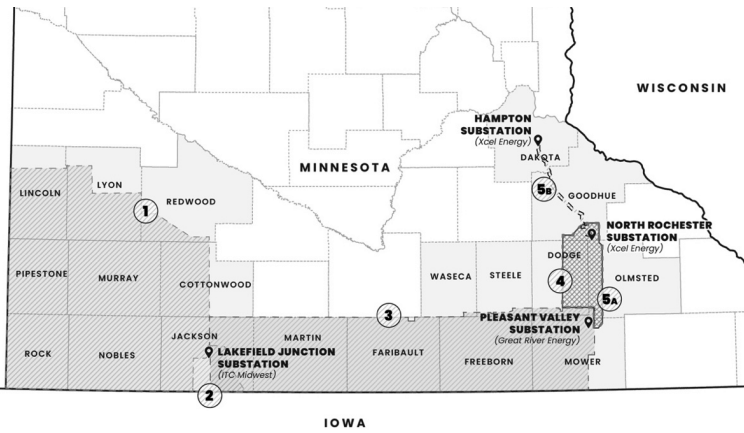
Mark Rothfork, ITC Midwest,

Connect@PowerOnMidwest.com or 888-283-4678

Timothy Rogers, Xcel Energy,

Connect@PowerOnMidwest.com or 888-283-4678

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651-296-0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email consumer.puc@state.mn.us for assistance.





Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoors Writer

Lessons from the good old days

This past week I was having a little problem breathing, which I attributed to congestion in my chest. I woke up in the middle of the night and thought about what to take to get some relief. I then thought about my time as a kid whenever I had congestion, my mother had a remedy. She saved old flannel sheets and when they became too worn out to use she would cut them into strips and grease my neck with Vicks or Mentholatum and wrap a strip of that sheet around my neck and secure it with a safety pin. I had some Mentholatum on hand, so I tried greasing my chest with it. It didn't take long for me to fall back to sleep. When I woke up in the morning, I felt much better. I guess that some of the old remedies still work today, thanks Mom!

With the cabin being officially closed up for the winter, I only have to winterize the boat and put it in storage for the winter. I usually wait until November, but I don't see me using it again this fall. I didn't get on the water as much as I would have liked

this year. I still consider this a very good year because I got to go up north with both of my sons. My oldest grandson, Trevor took me and his dad to Lake Superior fishing for Lake Trout. I caught my first and second one on that trip which I can now cross off of my bucket list.

I would consider the year a very good one. Trevor took me out fishing a few times this summer and that really made me feel great. Not only that, but I actually caught some fish. We fished a few area lakes this summer and had good luck on all of them. We fished Beaver, St. Olaf, Fountain and Albert Lea Lakes and caught fish on all of them.

To Trevor, it is more about the catching than the keeping. He keeps what he will eat fresh out of the lake and doesn't like to freeze them.

I can remember going up north and catching fish, putting them in milk cartons and freezing them. The next spring I would usually find one of those cartons in the bottom of the freezer that I had forgotten about. I



Here is a picture taken on Dick's sister Judy's Baptism Day. Shown are Dick in front, his dad and his mother holding Judy.

don't let that happen anymore. Eating fish fresh out of the water is the best.

Until next time: Myre-Big Island State Park wastewater system rehabilitation for park and campground infrastructure (October 2025) (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/get-out-more/modernizing-camping.html#text-1-2>)

Project design is complete on the capital investment project that will connect the park to the City of Albert Lea's wastewater treatment system. Construction will begin in 2026, and

the project is expected to be complete in late 2026 or early 2027. In addition to collaborating with the City of Albert Lea, DNR staff worked closely with Dakota Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to ensure design plans are appropriate given the cultural significance of Big Island to the Dakota community.

Please take the time to remember our troops that are serving now and those that have served before them. They are the reason that we have all of the Freedoms that we enjoy today.

LOOKING BACK

25 years ago

- Carey Kay Paulson and Jeremy Lee Root are happy to announce their engagement and upcoming wedding. Carey is the daughter of Dennis and Bessie Paulson of Waseca and is a 1994 graduate of El Shaddai Private School and a graduate of Rochester Technical College. Jeremy is the son of Burchard and Kayla Root of New Richland is a 1993 graduate of New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School. A Saturday, October 13, 2001 wedding is planned.



- Laura Ewald of Waseca County showed the Champion Hereford heifer at the 2001 Minnesota State Fair 4-H Beef Show on Thursday, August 23. Ewald, the daughter of Guy Ewald of Waldorf is a member of the Waldorf Peppy Peppers 4-H club and received an award from MN Hereford Breeders and Oxley Hereford Ranch.

- Valerie Crumb received a \$200 scholarship from the Lutheran Brotherhood Freeborn Branch 8482. Valerie attends Minnesota State University at Mankato.

- In the Byron Invitational Cross Country Meet the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva team placed second with 50 points.

50 years ago



- Kim Massop smiled happily as she realized that she was being crowned Homecoming queen at Waldorf-Pemberton High School, Thursday evening. Doing the honors was Cindi Bartelt, retiring queen. The other two candidates were Lynn Huxford and Jeanne Floden. Kim is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Massop of Waldorf.



- New Richland-Hartland FFA Chapter officers, Lonnie Kormann, treasurer and Kevin Knudson, president hold a check for \$2,300 which was the amount of money received for the corn collected in the chapter's annual Corn Drive, last Tuesday. The money will be presented to Camp Courage by the chapter.

75 years ago

- Mr. and Mrs. Leo Skelton are the parents of a son, born at the Memorial hospital, Waseca, Monday November 12, weighing 8 pounds and 12 ounces. Mr. and Mrs. Skelton are now the parents of three children, a daughter and two sons.

- Saturday evening Mrs. Henry Weckwarth went out to their farm yard to investigate the terrific barking of their dog and found a deer eating leaves off the trees in the orchard. As they approached the deer, it bounded away into the field. Mrs. Weckwarth thinks maybe deer like even a late apple or two.



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IN BRIEF

Derek Dittrich Fundraiser at Geneva Community Center Saturday, Oct. 24

There will be a fundraiser for Derek Dittrich at the Geneva Community Center from 1-6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24. Event will include pulled pork dinner, silent auction, wine pull, bounce house and kids game room. Free will donations accepted. Silent auction items can be dropped off with Ruth at RJ's Ellendale Liquor, Leah at George's of Geneva, Jannell 507-456-5946 or Jacquie 507-383-6685.

Hot Beef Sundae Dinner at Hartland Evangelical

Lutheran Church Sunday, Oct. 25

Hartland Evangelical Lutheran Church will have a Hot Beef Sundae Dinner from 11 a.m. thru 1 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 25. Adults \$12, 10 and under \$6. Take out available. Located at 404 Broadway, there will also be a quilt raffle and country store.

Romp and Rhyme Storytime Hour at New Richland Public Library, Tuesday, Oct. 27

Romp and Rhyme Storytime Hour at New Richland Library 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27. Puppets, bubble machines, music.

These are not your average storytimes. For ages 3-6.

Meet the School Board Candidates Wednesday, Oct. 28

Education Minnesota - NRHEG will host a Meet the Candidates evening for the six people running for school board. A list of questions will be asked of the candidates to help voters make an informed decision on November 3. This will take place at the NR Media Center at 7 p.m. on Oct. 28.

Spheros Basics at New Richland Public Library

Thursday, Oct. 29

The New Richland Library will hold a Spheros Basics class at 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29. Code spheros to roll around and compete in a tournament, for ages 7-12.

New Richland Care Center Flood Relief Burger Basket at the Mill Friday, Oct. 30

The New Richland Care Center will hold a flood relief Burger Basket at the Mill from 3-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30. Cost \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. There will also be a wine pull, silent auction and bake sale.

Attend the Church of your Choice!

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LEGAL NOTICES

Office of the Minnesota Secretary
of State
Certificate of Assumed Name
Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAME: 5MB
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PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSI-
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APPLICANT(S):
Name: 5MB LLC
Address: 101 State St. S. Waseca,
MN 56093 USA

If you submit an attachment, it will

be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supercedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this doc-

ument under oath.

SIGNED BY: Matthew R. Petsinger

MAILING ADDRESS: 101 State
St. S. Waseca, MN 56093 USA

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: matthew@5mblc.com

Work Item 1673751900021
Original File Number
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STATE OF MINNESOTA OFFICE
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Steve Simon Secretary of State

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on October 15 and 22, 2026

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY WASECA

DISTRICT COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No.: 81-PR-26-669

Estate of Boyd Richard Lewer, deceased

AMENDED NOTICE OF INFORMAL APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS (WITHOUT A WILL)

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:

Notice is hereby given that an application for informal appointment of personal representative has been filed with the Probate Registrar. No will has been presented for probate. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Probate Registrar has informally appointed Patricia Ann Lewer at 27798 128th ST, New Richland MN 56072 as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent. Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be en-

titled to appointment as Personal Representative, or may object to the appointment of the Personal Representative. Unless objections are filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-607, and the court otherwise orders, the Personal Representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Notice is also given that, subject to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four (4) months after the date of this Notice,

or the claims will be barred.

2026.09.16

BY THE COURT
Dated: 09/16/2026, 12:07:03 P.M.
/s/Carol M. Hanks
Judge of District Court
Shannon Asselin
Court Administrator
Cassie Norell, Probate Registrar
Self-Represented Litigant:
Patricia Ann Lewer
27798 128th St.
New Richland, MN, 56072
Published in the Star Eagle October
22 and 29, 2026

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SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2-5PM PM
AT THE ELLENDALE COMMUNITY BUILDING

**NRHEG SCHOOLS
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**

2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement Project

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that NRHEG Schools is accepting bids for the 2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement project. Bids shall be submitted upon the form provided at the mandatory pre-bid meeting held October 28th, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. at the NRHEG Elementary School, 600 School St, Ellendale, MN 56026 Bids must be delivered in a sealed envelope and shall be titled: "*Sealed Bid 2027 NRHEG Elementary School Building Envelope Improvement Project*" no later than 2:00 P.M., November 11th, 2026. Bids received after this time will be returned unopened.

Bids shall be delivered via mail or in person to:

NRHEG Schools
District Office - Attention: Michael Meihak
306 Ash Ave. S
New Richland, MN 56072

Each bid must be accompanied by a bid bond or certified check from a solvent bank in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid, payable to the Owner, as security that if awarded the work, the bidder will sign a contract.

All Contractors shall attend a mandatory pre-bid conference to inspect the job site and to ensure comprehension of the specifications. Specifications shall be distributed at the time of the pre-bid meeting. Contractors who do not attend the pre-bid conference shall be disqualified from bidding. Please contact Kris Kanak at (320) 290-7135 to reserve a copy of the specifications.

NRHEG Schools reserves the right to reject any and all bids and waive informalities or irregularities and enter into such contract or contracts as deemed in the best interests of NRHEG Schools.

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NRHEG Secondary school recently posted on their Facebook, “CONGRATULATIONS to our very own, Golden Apple Award Winner, Señora Joanie Olson. To know Señora Olson is to love her. Throughout her time at NRHEG, she has made a lasting difference in the lives of countless students, colleagues, and members of our school community. Her kindness, compassion, and commitment to others have helped create a welcoming environment where people feel valued, supported, and cared for.

Thank you, Joanie, for the lasting impact you have made on NRHEG. You are truly one of the best, and our school community is better because of you!”

Get your news in the Star Eagle
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Former communications manager files lawsuit

By STEELE COUNTY TIMES

The former communications manager for the City of Owatonna has filed a lawsuit alleging the city retaliated and discriminated against her.

Deanna Sheely filed the suit Thursday in Steele County District Court where she is claiming age discrimination and workplace harassment as well as unlawful retaliation under the Minnesota Whistleblower Act.

The complaint alleges that City Administrator Jenna Tuma and other members of the administrative staff showed a preference for younger employees, while older employees like Sheely with decades of experience, were forced out because they would not simply fall in line without asking questions or suggesting alternatives.

Sheely claims Tuma forced her out in March. She had been given one business day to respond to a notice of discharge. She then requested a formal, independent investigation into her claims and was then fired just one day after Tuma declared the investigation she herself had commissioned and controlled

had cleared the city of any wrongdoing.

“My commitment to community engagement and timely, open communications with the public regarding significant decisions seemed to threaten the new leadership team and their way of operating,” Sheely said.

She says the decision to take legal action was difficult, but she felt forced to do it after trying to resolve issues with supervisors and sharing concerns with several City Council members and following city policies.

“I hope the outcome leads to real organizational change for the City’s current and future employees and that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions,” said Sheely.

She added, “My only desire all along has been to contribute to creating a city government that serves the community effectively through transparent, accurate communication and proactive engagement.”

Sheely is represented by the Twin Cities law firm of Trautmann Martin.

We’ll have more on this developing story as it becomes available.

Minneapolis man charged with theft from American Legion charitable gambling

Dakkota Cruz Moreno, age 31, of Minneapolis, was charged* in September with felony theft related to charitable gambling funds from the Owatonna American Legion, announced Steele County Attorney Robert J. Jarrett.

The criminal complaint outlines the investigation and events between February of 2025 and May of 2026, in which Mr. Moreno is alleged to have stolen over \$82,000 of charitable gambling funds.

County Attorney Jarrett stated, “Embezzlement and misappropriation of funds are the most common type of theft facing charitable organizations. Having proper control systems in place is critical to preventing these types of crimes. It’s unfortunate because the community trusts organizations to properly raise

funds for good causes, and fraudsters take advantage of that to benefit themselves.”

County Attorney Jarrett thanked the Minnesota Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division, including Agent Ali Duong, and investigators with the Gambling Control Board for their thorough investigation leading to these charges.

Mr. Moreno’s first court appearance is scheduled for December 7, 2026 at Steele County District Court.

*A copy of the criminal complaint is available under court file 74-CR-26-1769.

*Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant/suspect is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

STOP ON DOWN TO ROYAL VILLA

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WIN A PRIZE
SIGN UP FOR A DRAWING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31ST
FROM 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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Triumphed over a County Engineer in Iowa on a water flow case on a drainage ditch.

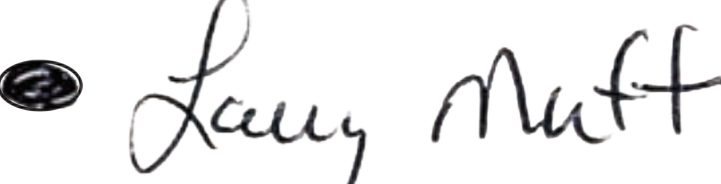
Found flaws in U of MN Research Proposals and called them out.

Spent 3 years, by himself, resolving issues that split MN Corn and MN Soybeans over their joint AG Expo Meeting.

As Chair of AFREC, managed 11 different Ag Groups into one united voice for Agriculture Fertilizer Research & Education Council.

Made policy and job descriptions changes at Waseca SWCD for better accountability and performance.

Write in vote for Mayor of New Richland



Paid for by Larry Muff

STOP the MADNESS!

RE-ELECT GENE DORNINK FOR STATE SENATOR

For the last 10 years, the Democrat majority has controlled State of Minnesota policies and spending. In that time period, our state budget has **GROWN 73%**, while our population has only grown 6.2%, boys are welcome in girls sports and locker rooms, and unfunded state mandates are increasing property and income taxes. Then there is FRAUD...

I hope you agree this MADNESS has to stop!

I respectfully request Democrat, Independent, and Republican votes to continue my work to bring common sense spending and decision making back to Minnesota.

 **VOTE GENE DORNINK NOV. 3**

Paid for by Dornink for Minnesota Sate Senate Committee District 23

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