NRHEG
Star Eagle

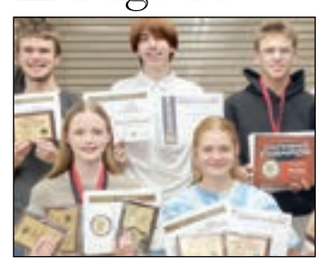
SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA

No. 48 Vol. CXL $2 Office in New Richland, Minnesota 56072 Thursday, November 26, 2026

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Cross Country

The Steele County Toys for Tots Program Toy Drive open now through Dec. 10

New, unwrapped toys may be placed in donation boxes through Thursday, Dec. 10. Find a complete list of box locations at the Steele County Toys for Tots website: https://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/donate-toys.aspx Those interested in receiving a toy donation box, call Donation Site Manager Mike at 507-456-0972.

Turkey Trot Family Fun Run at New Richland High School Thursday, Nov. 26

Join the Panther High School Team and Youth Wrestling club for a two-mile Turkey Trot and Family Fun Run in New Richland at 8 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 26. They will depart from the back parking lot by the wrestling room. Donations are welcome and will directly support the New Richland Care Center - Flood Relief.

NRHEG Community Ed Cookies with Santa, Nov. 28

NRHEG Community Ed is sponsoring "Cookies with Santa" the morning of Nov. 28 at the Secondary school in New Richland. Mr. and Mrs. Claus will be present from 10 to 11:30 for photos and good wishes. Participants can write letters to Santa, make crafts, decorate cookies and play games; there will also be a gift market. No charge to attend.

Geneva Wild Game Feed Tent Fundraiser Thursday, Dec. 3

The Geneva Bar and Grill will hold a wild game feed fundraiser under a heated tent starting at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3. Includes bingo, drawings, bullseye prizes and food for purchase.

Home for the Holidays Dec. 4 and 5

The New Richland Area Foundation's annual concert will take place at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4 and again at 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5 at New Richland's Trinity Lutheran Church. There will also be a cocktail hour from 4:30 to 6:30 on Saturday at the Steeple Event Center. All funds will go directly to the New Richland Area Disaster Response Fund.

Wild Game Feed at Geneva Grill and Bar Saturday, Dec. 5

There will be a Wild Game Feed at the Geneva Bar and Grill starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5. Alligator, pheasant, duck, frog legs, goose, fish, venison and wild turkey. Questions call 507-256-7278.

Holiday Bingo Night at Ellendale Community Center Saturday, Dec. 5

The Ellendale Area Heritage Society will hold their Holiday Bingo Night at the Community Center Saturday, Dec. 5. Cash prizes and refreshments available.

A word from The Word

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Cor. 15:58







COMMUNITY TOGETHER - Left, Allie Larson and Jo Lerberg sold tickets at the door during the Ellendale Community Celebration on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2026. Middle, Arlen Brekke, Michelle Sletten and Coleen Brekke were helped in the kitchen. Right, Dan Nelson and Barbra Mrotz greeted community members and answered questions about the Ellendale Area Heritage Preservation Society and some of its projects. Star Eagle photos by Ben Revermann

Ellendale's community celebration brings people closer together

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The mood was warm and welcoming at the Ellendale Community Center on Saturday, Nov. 21 for the Ellendale Foundation's "Community Celebration."

Right inside the doors were Allie Larson and Jo Lerberg, Foundation members. Said Larson, "It's a community gathering and rib fest to get to know your neighbors. But not just that; you can also get to know the different organizations we have in town and what they have to offer. There's also an opportunity to sign up for one of them if you want."

Around the corner, Coleen Brekke, Michelle Sletten and Arlen Brekke were in the kitchen getting things ready. It was about 4:15 p.m. and the gathering didn't start for 15 minutes. Coleen was moving sheets of tinfoil as she said, "We have the eating area set up for around 80 people. Last spring there was another event like this, and they had planned food for 40 people and ran out halfway through because so many showed up. We'll see how it goes tonight. Hopefully we have enough." Sletten commented on the menu, "Tonight, thanks to Lerberg's, our RibFest features a rack of ribs for $20, which includes a side of potato or macaroni salad."

The Community Foundation supplied free ice cream and apple cider.

Local organizations who were present were the Ellendale Lions Club and the Heritage Society. Dan Nelson stood behind the Heritage Society's table, ready to answer questions guests might have. "I've been in this area all my life," said Nelson. Barbra Mrotz was also there to answer questions about the Historic Rural School Locations: "Over the years all these smaller districts, like Thompson, Berlin, Brick, Cooleyville, for example, as those populations dwindled, people left those areas and they had to consolidate." She had flyers with the years and the dates, featuring some of the schools she was talking about. She also had photos of students who attended them years ago, and photos of the schools themselves, many of which do not exist any longer.

Allison Mueilenburg of the Ellendale Community Action Group was present and getting things ready. Scott Swanson of the First Lutheran Church of Ellendale was checking the clock, which continued to click closer to 4:30 p.m. It looked as though this group had everything well in hand as they waited for everyone to arrive.

Famous artist, former Star Eagle Production Manager Reed Waller dies at age 77

By ELI LUTGENS
Editorial

My friend, famous artist, former Star Eagle production manager Reed Waller died Tuesday morning, November 17, 2026. He was 77 years old.

Born August 3, 1949 to Doug and Dorothy Waller, Reed was a matter-of-fact individual.

"If you think there's an easier way to do something, there is," Reed liked to say. "The first 90 percent of a project takes 90 percent of the time. The final 10 percent takes the same amount of time."

Reed was famous for authoring Omaha the Cat Dancer, a comic series that was published from 1984 through 1993. Its final chapters were completed in 2006; the series was nominated for numerous Eisner Awards.

Reed settled in New Richland for most of his life, working for half the publishers in the 140-year history of the New Richland Star, later Star Eagle. They would all tell you he played a vital and important role to the newspaper, and through it, the community.



Waller

He attended school in New Richland and at Waseca Ag School.

Reed would tell you he did and accomplished everything he

Waller continued on 2

A death, serious injuries result after county ag accidents

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

Jesse Baer, 50, of Minnesota Lake, was killed Nov. 16 in an accident that occurred at a farmsite along 310th Avenue in Wilton Township, southwest of Waseca, as reported by the Waseca County Sheriff's office.

Baer was apparently in the process of loading corn from an elevator into a semi owned by his employer, Pemberton Grain, when the bottom cone of the elevator separated violently from its mount, causing the contents of the bin to empty so quickly and with such force that it apparently shoved Baer up against and then under the semi trailer. The 10,000 bushel bin, which had been filled to 7,000 bushels, apparently imploded as the corn evacuated, breaking apart and striking a nearby corn dryer that had been in operation at the time.

Baer was discovered by coworker Dustin Freitag, who had become concerned because he had not heard from Baer since he had been on his way to the site shortly after 9 a.m.; a 911 call regarding the incident was received prior to noon.

Emergency responders found that Baer was deceased, and proceeded to contact his next of kin as well as appropriate authorities, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Baer and his life companion Jenny Mueller had been together

Accident continued on 3

Michelle Bruhn teaches gardening at New Richland Library

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Ramsey County Master Gardener Michelle Bruhn highlighted her book "Small Scale Homesteading" at the New Richland Library on Monday, Nov. 16. She answered questions about efficiently growing and using garden produce and gave tips on getting started.

Bruhn has been homesteading for the past 10 years or so. During college she spent four years in Sweden on a farm, where the diet consisted of goods grown on site. Once she returned to the States, she took a trip to Walmart while pregnant and says she could not believe how "sterile" American food looked. For eight years she wrote for Parade of Homes magazine and learned through library visits how to eat healthier. "I was pregnant and very conscious about what I was putting into my body because it wasn't just for me; it was also for my baby." The library introduced her to the White Bear Lake Farmers Market. "I learned not only how to build a garden and grow my own healthy food," she said. "I also learned how to preserve it."

She stresses, "Don't try to do all of the things." Giving examples like succession planting, companion planting, pollinator planting, vertical gardening, she suggested, "Start with what you know and grow



GROWING Q&A - Master gardener, homesteader, and writer Michelle Bruhn, gave a homesteading question-and-answer session at the New Richland library on Monday, Nov. 16, 2026. Pictured from left: Michelle Bruhn, Fawn Eiler, and Alearah Neumann. Star Eagle photo by Ben Revermann

Gardening continued on 4



Fence Lines

by Mark Bernard

This is the day of the expanding man

The scurs had the Weather Eye tracking with a cooler undertone this past Sunday. Does it indicate a glimpse of Old Man Winter this week or are we stuck with Jack Frost on the windshield? Starting Thanksgiving Day, partly sunny with highs in the upper 30's and lows in the low 20's. Mostly sunny Black Friday with highs in the low 40's and lows in the low 30's. Partly sunny on Saturday with highs in the mid-40's and lows in the low 30's. Sunday, partly sunny with highs in the low 40's and lows in the upper 20's. Mostly cloudy on Monday with highs in the low 40's and lows in the upper 20's. Tuesday, mostly cloudy with a decent chance of rain/freezing rain. Highs in the low 40's with lows in the upper 20's. Mostly cloudy Wednesday with freezing drizzle. Highs in the mid-40's with lows in the low 30's. On December 1st, we'll see our loss of daylight slow to just under one minute and 30 seconds. The normal high for December 1st is 33, and the normal low is 18. The scurs will be noshing their pumpkin pie on the veranda.

Rainfall this past weekend put a halt on remaining field operations for the time being. Amounts ranging from .7" - .9" locally fell late Saturday and early Sunday a.m., making an already damp soil even wetter on the soil surface.

Anhydrous ammonia applications were already marginal in places prior to that. The mud tracked on area roads was a clue that conditions weren't exactly perfect. There may be some opportunity yet for primary tillage to take place once soils begin to freeze. The bulk of the remaining harvest was completed prior to the rain with operators not wanting to get caught with their pants down. Tillage can wait if it needs to be done at all in some cases.

Despite our best efforts, there are always things to wrap up before winter at the ranch. A lot has been done, including digging the cannas and stashing them for next year. A deer guard was put in place around the young Honeygold apple tree. There were also some tulips and crocuses moved before last weekend's rain. Came close to grinding up the remaining leaves before the rain, but it got here just ahead of schedule. The sheep need to come home from the neighbor's place, and the barns need to be cleaned yet. Now some of that will need to be done when the ground is frozen, however. Getting stuck where everyone can see and put it on social media generates zero style points.

It's been a gradual move into winter bird watching mode. With some of the nice weather last week, there was probably as much activity on the birdbath as there was at the feeders most days. Robins swinging through, along with small groups of cedar waxwings, enjoyed a drink and a bath. They also took advantage of the nannyberries and crabapples. By Sunday with the weather about to change, the winter bird crew was more evident. Suet feeders hosted the woodpeckers, and the sunflower feeders were in near constant use by blue jays, nuthatches, house finches and the occasional goldfinch. Chickadees continue to be conspicuously absent, although I suspect that will change eventually. It always has.

45 years ago at Thanksgiving time, I was living in Rugby, ND contemplating the future. It was a huge change after living in St. Paul for the better part of 5 years. There wasn't near the traffic, although I lived on a street where grain trucks rumbled past on their way to the elevator. Something that stands out in my mind was the huge cottonwood stump in the backyard. I didn't own a lawnmower, so I'd borrow one from Miltenberger's, the owners of the property. When mowing that fall, I spied a large fungal mass growing out of the stump unlike any I'd seen before. It was identified as a clump of pleurotus or oyster mushrooms by my then boss, who knew his fungi. I'd saved a clump to add to a Canada goose I'd shot and roasted for Thanksgiving when my folks visited me. Now that was livin'.

These days we tend to cocoon at home for a day after a long, hard growing season. For most guys, it marks the day when our waistlines begin to expand after burning off all the leftover Halloween candy. Sure, there are lots of things yet to accomplish at the ranch, but it's a day to reflect, rest and relax, rather than answer questions via text messages and phone calls. The only major undertaking for the day aside from creating lots of leftovers is to deposit the pumpkins and gourds in the pasture, so the sheep can devour them. It's become a time-honored tradition over the years. I've been told by several on their way to find Black Friday bargains that they look forward to seeing the sheep enjoying their Thanksgiving leftovers every year. We're just glad to have the stuff out of the yard.

Thanksgiving is definitely one of Poppy's favorite holidays. There are usually several tidbits that accidentally (or not) hit the floor. She is a wonderful little cordless vacuum when there are spills. Then there are the turkey giblets that comprise her Thanksgiving treat annually, just as they have for all our dogs over the past 40 + years. Of course there's also the "people-time." Being able to snuggle up to and nap on her favorite humans for most of the day doesn't happen with great frequency. A warm Corgi on your lap feels pretty nice after doing chores in the cold anytime, but it's something to be thankful for on a special day.

See you next week...real good then.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

A surreal first snow of the season

I saw my first snow of the season on Sunday.

The moment was rather surreal. I was sitting at the table writing articles for the newspaper; in the background–as I often do when I write–I had some serene instrumental music playing. I happened to look up and noticed a single, white item about the size of my pinky nail drifting downward past the window. Its slight back and forth motion seemed to be in time with the music.

I looked out across the landscape and saw no other flakes, so I told myself it was probably a piece of ash from among the smoke of the wood fire we were using to heat the cabin. It's not that I was in denial; I was just distracted.

I looked up again a bit later to see there was no longer any room for uncertainty. Especially against the dark-colored backdrop of the evergreens along the lakeshore, the view was dotted with slow-falling, white flakes, all still seeming to be in time with my music.

It was what some call a "Christmas" snow, the pretty, friendly type that gets included in the Hallmark movies, and that many southerners probably picture when they hear the word "snow," but which all northerners know is a rare and unusual phenomenon.

Given that the thermometer said it was 34 degrees outside, the lake is still completely fluid, and the ground has barely seen frost, it was very easy to appreciate the gentle beauty of it without letting my mind wander to a time when that same, flaky event might mean I have to worry whether I will be able to drive out through the narrow, winding, tightly-tree-lined road that leads to the cabin and its windows looking out over the lake.

It did lead me to recall last year's winter at the cabin, though.

I thought of how the furniture and walls of the cabin are as cold as the outdoor temperature when we arrive, and how long it takes for the whole space to heat up. I remembered picking up a comfortably warmed couch cushion and realizing the underside was still ice cold. I thought of how lovely it is to be in a warm cabin looking out over a frozen landscape, and how easy it is to appreciate the season's beauty when you are standing next to a wood stove looking out a picture window.

And then I got a warm sense of how fortunate we are to live where there are four seasons and we are given three months to appreciate–and endure–each of them in turn.

How differently would we see our places in the world if we lived on a part of it where it never grows cold?

At least here and now as I write with peaceful music playing and the birds coming to the feeders hanging outside, it brings me gentle delight to realize I am part of a cycle–that I am traveling the winding trail all mortals must follow, and the milestones along the path are the colors of the seasons I am passing through.



WANTED VISITOR - One of Deb's most anticipated visitors at her cabin bird feeder is this pileated woodpecker who enjoys the suet basket. The suet is hung high in the trees because bears occasionally stop by looking for a snack.

Star Eagle photo by Deb Bently

Thank you for a lifetime of friendship



Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

Honestly, there's so much to say about Reed Waller that I can't write in the paper.

Reed died peacefully in his sleep, on my birthday last week, Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

He was my friend first and employee second. I first met Reed when I was six years old, when Dad brought me into the New Richland Star office.

I thought he looked like Santa Claus.

So many thoughts are rushing through my mind, even now, a week after the fact as I try to put feelings and thoughts into words.

Reed was there the day I put my first newspaper together.

He was my first employee. (Aside from Melanie, our copy editor at the Star Eagle.)

He taught me so much. I loved and cared about him dearly.

I often call Reed's little quips or comments, "Reedisms."

Some days, in an office, there is little work to do. Reed and I spent many hours during those times talking. He shared what feels like every life story he ever had with me. I enjoyed every second of those stories. I was blessed and lucky to call Reed my friend.

I asked Reed one time what he thought happens after we die.

He was holding a cup of coffee. I was at the back table of the office.

Reed scoffed, and confidently announced:

"Nothing."

One of my friends and I stopped at the office one night when I was probably 19 years old. He had read Reed's work, was a fan and had no idea Reed worked for me. I introduced Reed and said he was "kinda famous."

Reed was offended and scoffed at me again.

Reed was not "kind of famous"; he was famous.

I never made the mistake of referring to Reed as "kinda famous" again.

Reed would wander over to my desk to chat every day or vice versa during the decade that we worked together. I recognized then, as I do now, that Reed was a special person. A relationship to value and appreciate.

Please, mourn people while they are alive. Leave no words unsaid, no feelings unshared. Life is too valuable and too finite to live with those regrets.

Thank you, Reed, for a lifetime of friendship.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters of comment to
Star Eagle, P.O. Box 248, New Richland, MN 56072
or email us at **steagle@hickorytech.net.**

Dear Editor,

As retired healthcare professionals, we have seen the effects of tobacco and nicotine use within our community over the years. That's why we're paying close attention to the proposed changes to Waseca County's tobacco ordinance.

Nicotine addiction is a serious public health concern, especially for our young people. Once someone begins using nicotine regularly, quitting can be incredibly difficult. Preventing that addiction in the first place is something we can help do by having the right policies in place.

For decades, we've seen the tobacco industry continue to find new ways to market flavored-tobacco products that appeal to young people. Vapes and nicotine pouches come in a variety of flavors, including mint, menthol and even candy-like flavors like watermelon, berry and cotton candy. These flavors can make products seem less harmful than they are and entice a young person to try them. Most young people have never smoked a cigarette before vaping.

While the products may have changed over the years, the concerns remain the same: young people are being targeted and becoming addicted.

What concerns us most from a medical perspective is that our kids don't know the long-term impact these products can have on their health and well-being. Their brains are still developing, and tobacco and nicotine can harm the areas responsible for attention, learning and impulse control. For a young person who may have tried a product because of an appealing flavor, what starts as occasional or social use can become a difficult habit to break very quickly. Data show that 8 in 10 youth who have tried tobacco started with a flavored product.

As Waseca County Commissioners consider changes to the tobacco ordinance, it's important for them to pass a comprehensive policy. We need to address restrictions for all flavored tobacco products, not exempt certain flavors because the tobacco industry is trying to make a business case for why they should stay on the shelves.

We understand that this proposal may raise concerns for local businesses and adult consumers.

As Commissioners weigh those concerns, we hope that they put the health of our young people first and make the right call when they vote on the ordinance on December 1.

Our young people deserve to grow up in a county where they know we put their health and well-being above the profits of the tobacco industry.

From,

Author: Vicki Neidt, RN; Linda Armstrong, RN; Linda Cone, RN; Barb Roesler, RN; Cheryl Pratt, EdD, RN; Sandra Lauring, MD

■ Waller

from Page 1

wanted to do in life.

He was a rock star and famous artist.

Reed's final days were spent at Prairie Senior Cottages in New Richland. To quote his cousin and closest family member Miriam White, they made Reed's final years enjoyable.

Reed was preceded in death by his parents, Doug and Dorothy Waller, and grandparents, Fred and Connie Jensen. He is survived by three cousins, Miriam White of Albert Lea, Jon McMillan of Portsmouth, NH, and Heidi Case of Boynton Beach, FL.

There will be an open house "Time of Remembrance" at Prairie Senior Cottages, 113 Ash Ave. S., New Richland, MN 56072 on Wednesday, December 2, from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.

NRHEG Star Eagle

SERVING THE NEW RICHLAND-HARTLAND-ELLENDALE-GENEVA AREA
and the communities of Waseca, Otisco, Hope, Clarks Grove, Matawan, Freeborn and Waldorf

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES
$57 Per Year, Waseca, Steele, & Freeborn Counties
$67 State of Minnesota • $77 Outside Minnesota

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Compostings

by Al Batt

‘Count your rainbows, not your thunderstorms’

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS’ CLUB MEETING

It looks like your neighbor is going to have quite the Christmas lights display.

It’s always a dandy, and it’s just 1/2 mile away from me.

What are you going to put up to match that?

A sign on my lawn that reads, “Please see my Christmas lights display in 1/2 mile.”

DRIVING BY BRUCE’S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I drove by a recently opened Chick-fil-A offering dual drive-thru lanes, with both lanes stretched to their maximums. It’s never too early to get in line again. So many vehicles are getting food daily. It’s just a matter of time, if it hasn’t happened already, before someone’s car stalls in a drive-thru. If we find ourselves in the elite group that has never been in a stalled vehicle in a drive-thru, we should be thankful. That’s another one of the endless reasons to be thankful on Thanksgiving and on all other days.

Thanksgiving meals can be so good, they nearly distract me from the other blessings. Erma Bombeck wrote, “Thanksgiving dinners take eighteen hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes.”

Nancy Sorlie’s obituary said that one of her favorite quotes was "Count your rainbows and not your thunderstorms."

Thank you for the good advice, Nancy. We miss you.

I’VE LEARNED

My neighbor, Crandall, worries about his short attention span, but he doesn’t worry about it for long.

The CDC said the adult cigarette smoking rate in the U.S. fell to 9.1% in 2025 from 9.9% in 2024.

You know you’re getting older if you increase the font on your cellphone to where you’re reading one letter at a time.

According to the USDA, Minnesota raises the most turkeys of any state. North Carolina is second.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

At this time of year when I am thankful old recipes are being recycled, I think of family members—present and past. My mother loved to hear jokes–good or bad. Her laugh was always better than the jokes. She could find a tee-hee’s nest with a ha-ha’s egg in it.

I have never been cut in half by a magician, but I have worn blue jeans on Thanksgiving. Same thing.

My doctor threw my X-rays down and said, “Just what I'm afraid of!” I asked,

What, Doc! WHAT!!!” He replied, “Skeletons!”

I told my wife that I’d been spending much of my time writing science fiction. She said, “Wow, that sounds difficult.” I said, “Not really. It’s just two words.”

Knock Knock.

Who's there?

Arthur.

Arthur who?

Arthur any Thanksgiving leftovers?

IN GRANDSON NEWS

Crosby Batt, a middle linebacker, tight end and captain on the New Ulm Eagles gridiron squad, earned a spot on the 2026 All-District AAAA Football Team. This Student School Board Member is the son of Brian and Laura Batt.

NATURE NOTES

I am thankful for the blessings of nature.

Virginia opossums don’t hibernate, and they suffer from frostbite. Opossums are marsupials, which give birth to young that complete development inside the mother's pouch. Opossums have built-in parking.

A hundred years ago, the red-bellied woodpecker was primarily a bird of the southeastern U.S. and at the northwestern extent of its range in southern Minnesota. The species has expanded its range northward and westward, and is now encountered in all 87 counties of Minnesota and into Canada. Climate change has been identified as a primary driver of these expansions. Warmer winters increase the chances of a bird surviving to the breeding season.

According to State Farm, West Virginia drivers have the highest likelihood of an animal collision, a spot the state has held for over a decade. The insurer tracks collisions with all animals, though deer are by far the most commonly struck. Nationally, the odds are 1 in 145. Here are the 10 states with the highest odds for July 2025 through June 2026: 1. West Virginia: 1 in 46 2. Montana: 1 in 54 3. Wisconsin: 1 in 62 4. Pennsylvania: 1 in 64 5. Michigan: 1 in 68 6. Iowa: 1 in 81 7. Mississippi: 1 in 81 8. Virginia: 1 in 81 9. Maine: 1 in 85 10. South Dakota: 1 in 86. Minnesota came in 12th with a driver having a 1 in 91 chance of hitting an animal. So, if you didn’t hit one this year, it’s another reason to be thankful.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Dave and Deb Manning were kind enough to send this quote from Abraham Joshua Heschel, “When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I’m old, I admire kind people. “

John F. Kennedy said, “We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.”

I am thankful for you, dear reader.

Happy Thanksgiving, y’all!

Freeborn Legion Auxiliary meets in memory

The Freeborn American Legion Auxiliary #552 met at the Freeborn American Legion Hall on November 14, 2026. President Sandy Anderson led us in the pledges. The Charter was undraped in memory of Lela Peterson. The Charter was draped in memory of Nancy Millang. The Secretary's Report and the Treasurer's Report were read and accepted. A motion was made and seconded to donate $50 to the Hospice Tree Project in memory of deceased Auxiliary members.

Other bills to pay were approved as follows: the Per Capita Dues, the District Dues, and to Sandy Anderson for coffee shop supplies, and for Veterans Day cards for next year.

Membership report was stated that we lost some members. We have 48 paid members and our goal is set at 56. We are still waiting for 4 members to renew.

President Sandy did send "Veteran's Day" cards to members of the Freeborn American Legion. Sandy has filed the taxes for our organization.

We went through the list of organizations that benefit from the morning Coffee Shop which is held Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The Coffee Shop is in the Freeborn City/Township building and sponsored by the Freeborn American Legion Auxiliary.

Since our meeting followed our Community Coffee Time, a discussion was held on how it went and if we would do it again next year. This decision will be made at the September meeting.

Everything is in place for our December 6 events that are held at the Freeborn American Legion, which start out with a visit from Santa at 3 p.m., during which the Auxiliary will serve cookies, coffee, and juice. Following Santa approximately at 4:30 there will be the Hospice ceremony with the reading of the names and the lighting of the Hospice Tree. A Community potluck follows the reading with Bingo starting around 6 p.m. To 8 p.m., which ends the evening.

Our next meeting is March 20, 2027 at the Freeborn Legion Hall.

Respectfully Submitted
Sandy Anderson
President

ZED by Duane M. Abel



www.corkeycomics.com

RNDC receives 2026 Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations

Mankato, MN - Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) has recently been recognized with a 2026 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for its Food Rescue in Southern Minnesota program.

“We are honored to receive this recognition from NADO and grateful for their continued commitment to highlighting the important work happening in communities across the country,” said Jessica Beyer, RNDC Interim Executive Director. “The success of Food Rescue in southern Minnesota is a testament to the power of regional collaboration. This work wouldn't be possible without many regional partners and supporters. Together, we're not only reducing food waste and addressing food insecurity, but also building stronger, more resilient communities across southern Minnesota.”

The Food Rescue in Southern Minnesota program is a regional initiative that recovers surplus food at commercial scale and redistributes it to local food access partners, reducing waste and addressing rising food insecurity. Led by RNDC Regional Food Rescue Coordinator Tom Polich, the effort involves coordinating with logistics companies and partners to capture large quantities of usable food from supply chain disruptions such as over-ordering or product damage. Its impact has been significant, diverting food from landfills while supporting food shelves facing dramatically increased demand across the region.

“There is a tremendous amount of good, usable food that never makes it to someone's table, while at the same time, our local food shelves are seeing more demand than ever,” said Tom Polich, RNDC Regional Food Rescue Coordinator. “This program is about closing that gap. By working together with our partners, we're able to turn food that might otherwise go to waste into a valuable resource for families and communities across southern Minnesota. Receiving this award is a great recognition of what we can accomplish when organizations come together to address a shared need.”



HELPING THE COMMUNITY - The Region Nine Development Commission has recently been recognized with a 2026 Impact Award for its *Food Rescue in Southern Minnesota* program.

Presented annually, the NADO Impact Awards honor regional development organizations and their partners for strengthening communities, building regional resilience, and enhancing local economies through creative approaches to economic and community development. NADO is a Washington, DC-based membership association of regional development organizations that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies.

■ Accident

from Page 1

for 25 years. He is survived by four adult children, his parents, four siblings, and numerous others. A Celebration of Life in his memory began at 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, at Main Street Plaza in Pemberton.

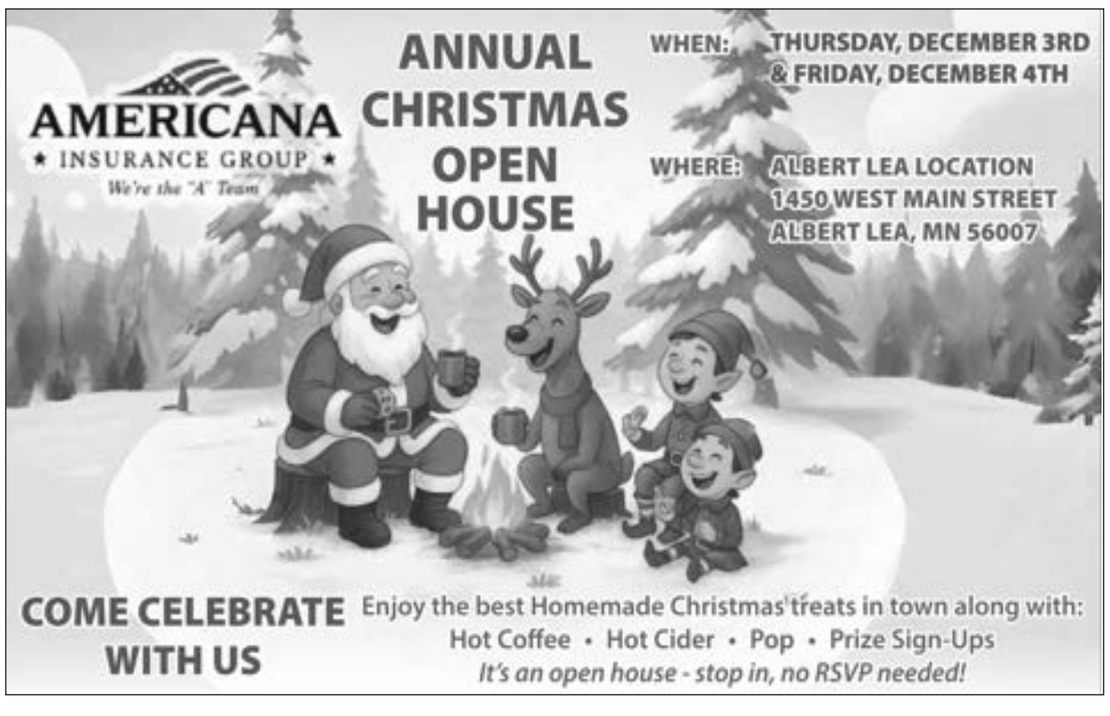
Baer was a 1994 graduate of Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School.

In an unrelated incident on Friday, Nov. 13, Antonio Perez of Faribault, an employee of Eaton Ag LLC, was transported by helicopter to St. Mary’s Hospital in Rochester around 9 a.m. after being accidentally run over by a pickup truck at a hog farm along 375th Avenue in St. Mary township west of Waseca.

Perez was among a number of Eaton Ag semi drivers who had brought vehicles to the site as part of a manure pumping project.

The pickup was in reverse to change its location when it was realized Perez was underneath; the driver had not seen him standing anywhere in the vicinity of the truck before beginning to back up. St. Mary’s Hospital declined providing an update on his condition.





OBITUARIES

Virgil Thofson

Virgil Delaine Thofson, age 89, passed away on Tuesday, November 17, 2026. A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25, 2026 at Cross of Glory Lutheran Church in Hartland, with visitation one hour before the service. Pastor Marcia Pederson will officiate. Burial will be at Hartland Cemetery.



Virgil Thofson

Virgil was born on March 23, 1937 in rural Hartland to Hamilton and Esther (Tukua) Thofson. He grew up in the Hartland and New Richland area and graduated from New Richland High School. He then served his country in the Air Force Strategic Air Command from 1955 to 1959. After his service, Virgil farmed, working the land for more than 65 years. In 1963, he married Arlene Brenno at Our Savior's Church in Austin.

Virgil and Arlene loved to travel together. Over the years they visited Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Canada and Mexico, along with many states, including Hawaii and Alaska. Branson was a favorite spot they went back to for many years.

When he wasn't traveling or farming, Virgil enjoyed darts, horseshoes, bowling, fishing, golfing, snowmobiling, and cheering on the Vikings and Gophers. He was a member of the New Richland Sportsmen Club, a Life Member of the American Legion and a former member of the Elks Club.

Virgil was a faithful man, and gave his time to Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, serving as a trustee, deacon and usher, and he also served on the Hartland Cemetery Board.

Virgil was preceded in death by his parents, Hamilton and Esther Thofson; brothers Donald Thofson, Earl (Mildred) Thofson and Verlyn Thofson; sister and brother-in-law Marjorie and Donald Schoeppler; brother-in-law Gary Brenno; and father- and mother-in-law Fordyce and Beverly Brenno.

He is survived by his wife, Arlene; brother- and sister-in-law Neil and Arlene Brenno; sister-in-law Kristi Thofson; and many nieces, nephews and close friends.

The family would like to thank the staff at St. John's Lutheran Community and St. Croix Hospice for their compassionate care and kindness shown to Virgil.

Reed Waller

Reed Douglas Waller, age 77, passed away on November 17, 2026 at Prairie Cottages in New Richland, MN.

Reed was born to Douglas and Dorothy Waller on August 3, 1949. He attended school in New Richland and at Waseca Ag School. He was a talented artist and musician. He played and sang in rock bands in the 60's and 70's. He was an accomplished artist, illustrating "Omaha the Cat Dancer," a comic book series published from 1984 through 1993. Nominated for multiple Eisner Awards, "Omaha's" final chapters were in 2006.

Reed's most recent occupation was with the New Richland Star Eagle, where he was the Production Manager.

Reed was proceeded in death by his parents, Doug and Dorothy Waller, and grandparents, Fred and Connie Jensen. He is survived by three cousins, Miriam White of Albert Lea, Jon McMillan of Portsmouth, NH, and Heidi Case of Boynton Beach, FL.

We especially want to thank Zoe, Chad, and the wonderful staff at Prairie Senior Cottages in New Richland who took such good care of Reed and made his last years enjoyable.

Thank you, as well, to Reed's many special friends including Cory Kaupa, Pam and Larry Goehring, Eli Lutgens at the Star Eagle, Geri Sullivan, and JJ Brutsman. You were all very important to Reed. Bless you all!

There will be an Open House "Time of Remembrance" at Prairie Senior Cottages, 113 Ash Ave. S., New Richland, MN 56072 on Wednesday, December 2 from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.



Reed Waller

Derek Dittrich

Derek Scott Dittrich passed away on Thursday, November 19, 2026 at Methodist Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, surrounded by his family, following a courageous year-long battle with cancer.

Visitation and funeral services will be held at the Ellendale United Methodist Church in Ellendale, Minnesota. Visitation will take place on Sunday, November 29 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The funeral service will be held on Monday, November 30, at 11 a.m. Pastor Randy Cirksena will be officiating.

Derek was born on July 30, 1988. He grew up in the countryside south of Owatonna and graduated from Owatonna High School in 2007. He was known for his outgoing personality, sense of humor, loyalty, protective nature, and love for the Green Bay Packers. He had a big heart, could make friends wherever he went, and was always up for an adventure.

Derek spent many years working at his family's restaurant, George's of Geneva. He was married to Emily Kortz in 2013 who he later divorced, but together they had three beautiful daughters. The two operated the LunchBox Diner in New Richland for a year before Derek began his career at Verizon in Owatonna. He also worked at Daikin, and his last job was at Olympic Fire Protection.

Derek enjoyed camping, fishing, hunting, football, gaming, drawing, storm chasing, and spending time with family and friends. He especially enjoyed Monday nights at his parents' home with his daughters and his brother's family.

Being a father meant everything to him. He loved spending time with his girls, making memories, and experiencing life's adventures together. They were his world and his greatest motivation throughout his battle with cancer.

Derek is survived by his beloved daughters Sawyer, Rowynn, and Chandler; his parents, Steve and Jodie Dittrich; his older brother Codi Dittrich (Katie Moore); his nieces Aubrey and Edyn; his nephew Rory; his very special friend Anna Pettit; his dog Harlow; and many extended family members and friends.

He was preceded in death by his beloved grandparents Donly and JoAnne Cromwell and Gene and Carole Dittrich; and his cousin Brandon Grunwald, all of whom held a special place in his heart.

Derek will forever be remembered for his laughter, his stubborn spirit, his loyalty, and the love he had for his children and family. Thirty-eight years was not nearly enough, but the love Derek gave and the memories he created will last forever.



Derek Dittrich

Rest peacefully, Derek. You were so deeply loved and will be forever missed.

Salvation Army Kettle Campaign

Waseca County Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive will begin on Black Friday, November 27 with bellringing at Waseca Walmart on Black Friday and Saturdays until Christmas. Times are 10 a.m. til 6 p.m. In addition, counter kettles will be set out at various locations in Janesville, New Richland and Waseca.

Again this year we will be hosting the Emergency Services Bellringing Challenge on Saturday, December 5. Each of the emergency services (Police, Fire and Sheriff) will ring for 2 hours and the department that raises the most will get their name on a traveling plaque. The plaque will be displayed during the year in their building. Please support your favorite department and let them know how you appreciate all they do for all of us.

We still have some bellringing spots available. If interested, you can sign up on line at salvationarmyusa.org and if you see the kettle unmanned you are welcome to put on the apron and ring away.

This year in addition to bellringing, the Salvation Army raised funds and collected school supplies for the Back Pack program. We distributed over 120 backpacks. The money collected from the kettle drive goes to help with transportation, housing and personal living needs. Your help and financial support makes a big difference to those in need.

■ Gardening

from Page 1

with that. Other things will come, but if you try to do all of it at once, you can be overwhelmed." She said the usual progression for those starting out is to begin with flowers, then move on to herbs and veggies, then fruits and harder to grow veggies. "But start with what you know."

Bruhn admits homestead gardening can be intimidating, "Like maple tapping, it can be really scary to start doing it when you don't know how. Did you know it takes 40 gallons of maple sap to make a gallon of maple syrup once it's boiled down?"

She gave many facts like, "Carrots and peas can germinate in temperatures as low as 40 degrees. If you would like to harvest herbs like garlic onion chives, dry out the stalks first, because chopping them up too early will release chemicals that can ruin it." There's also a psychology to growing your own vegetables. "People are less likely to throw away older vegetables because they grew them themselves; they don't want to waste them."

Bruhn says she wanted to share the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that can come with growing one's own food. She started the website, www.forksinthedirt.com, whose mission statement reads: "Foster the evolution of connections between people, plants and the communities they grow in through education, events and hands-on opportunities."

Bruhn's book, "Small Scale Homesteading" is available on Amazon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters of comment to
Star Eagle, P.O. Box 248, New Richland, MN 56072
or email us at **steagle@hickorytech.net.**

Dear Editor,

The preliminary property tax statements recently sent to residents understandably generated concern. Seeing a proposed increase of more than 23% on a tax statement would cause anyone to take a second look. However, I want to assure residents that the percentage shown on those preliminary statements resulted from a software error and does not reflect the budget direction the New Richland City Council is currently pursuing.

The City Council remains firmly committed to keeping this year's overall tax rate increase below 10%, and we are confident we will achieve that goal. In fact, the City's general operating levy is expected to decrease, while the debt service levy will remain approximately the same as last year. The difference many residents will notice comes primarily from proposed capital fund requests.

Capital fund requests are different from day-to-day operating expenses. They are generally one-time purchases or investments in durable assets that serve the community for many years. This year's requests focus on several important needs that will improve city services, protect infrastructure, and position New Richland for future success.

One of the largest proposed investments is replacing the antiquated software that manages utility billing and the City's accounting functions. If you've looked at your utility bill over the past year and scratched your head, you're not alone. City staff and elected officials have shared many of the same frustrations. Modern software will greatly improve billing accuracy, customer service, financial reporting, and budget forecasting. Better forecasting also means tighter budget controls and the potential for lower tax levies in future years.

Another significant request is a comprehensive study of our streets, water system, sewer collection system, and wastewater treatment facility. While most residents would likely agree there is plenty of room for improvement, completing this study is a critical first step toward qualifying for state and federal assistance programs. Those programs can help fund major infrastructure improvements at a significantly lower cost to local taxpayers.

Other proposed capital purchases include replacing the City's 1997 pickup truck, which has faithfully served New Richland for nearly three decades while plowing snow and supporting daily operations. Additional requests include gas-monitoring equipment for maintenance staff, water testing equipment, replacement firefighter turnout gear, and an air-conditioning system for the wastewater treatment facility to protect sensitive electronic controls.

These investments are not luxuries. They are practical, long-term improvements that maintain essential services, improve safety, and help position our community for future growth. The City Council remains committed to fiscal responsibility and transparent communication as we finalize the 2027 budget and tax levy. If you have any questions, please reach out to City Hall at (507)465-3514.

From,
Tyler Lendt
City Administrator
City of New Richland, Minnesota

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Farm & City Days invites community to first Stewardship gathering

NEW RICHLAND, MN — Farm & City Days invites everyone who cares about the New Richland community to its inaugural Stewardship Gathering on Sunday, November 29, from 4–6 p.m. at NR Liquor Company.

This casual gathering is an opportunity for neighbors, community groups, businesses, and individuals to get acquainted, share ideas, and discover ways to support one another. Whether you're already involved in the community or simply curious about getting connected, you're welcome.

As New Richland approaches its 150th anniversary in 2027, Farm & City Days hopes to encourage new connections and a spirit of shared stewardship that extends well beyond the annual celebration.

No RSVP is needed. Come as you are, enjoy some snacks and conversation, and stay as long as you like.

Come with ideas, leave with connections.

Hosted by Farm & City Days.

HERITAGE BITS



Pictured is the Ellendale Street Fair in the early 1900s. Photo by Steve Pence.



The area's emergency calls are now being routed to a newly constructed 911 center outside of the county.
Photo by Steele County Times

911 center moves out of Owatonna

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

After decades of emergency radio communications originating from Owatonna, the area's emergency calls are now being routed to a newly constructed 911 center outside the county.

The Rice Steele 911 Center began operations at a new center in Faribault on Nov. 4, according to Brian Becker, administrator of the center. "The transition was fairly seamless," he said.

The center handles all police, fire and EMS dispatching for all communities in both Rice and Steele counties. The center handles about 300 calls per day or 110,000 per year.

Since 2000, the joint 911 center operated from the second floor of the Law Enforcement Center on Pearl Street in Owatonna. During that time, the center had been renovated and updated at least three times, Becker said.

"We outgrew it," he said of the old center. "It had been set up for four (dispatch) positions, and we ended up crowding in seven," he noted.

The new center will have the capacity of eight dispatch workstations with room to expand to 15. "If there is growth or other counties wanting to consolidate their dispatch, we can handle it," said Becker, who has been leading the center since 2023. "We are in a good position to absorb more."

Currently, the center is handling emergency communications for Winona County from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through at least mid-January. Becker said one telecommunicator, formerly known as dispatchers, is assigned to handle Winona County.

Becker said the local center is also in active discussions with other neighboring counties, including Mower, to absorb dispatching services.

As for the old center, Becker said it belongs to the City of Owatonna. The second floor offers 3,135 square feet of space. The old equipment will be moved out by December, he said.

While Becker considers the space at the old center as usable, he cautions that there are maintenance issues with the roof and HVAC system. "It's an old building and there is a lot of upkeep with that building," he said, adding officials with the Owatonna Police Department have been checking out the extra space.

Residents should be aware there is a new non-emergency number for public safety matters: 507-209-0380.

But Becker said citizens will see no change when calling 911.

"If you call 911, it's still the same service, just a different building," he said.

The center employs 18 full-time and 4 part-time telecommunicators, 4 supervisors and 3 administrative staff, including Becker. He said there is only one telecommunicator position currently unfilled.

New Non-Emergency Number
507-209-0380

Calls routed to the new 911 center in Faribault

School improvements top NRHEG agenda

By DEB BENTLY
Staff writer

School Board NRHEG

During their Nov. 16 meeting, members of the NRHEG school board approved the $412,000 low bid by Jackson and Associates to perform roof repairs at the Elementary building in Ellendale. Also approved was a bid of $185,000 to have W.L. Hall Company of Hopkins replace the skylights at the Secondary site in New Richland. Skylights are located above the building's media center and the high school student locker area.

The school district will be issuing bonds to cover the combined costs of the projects.

The district also decided to contract with the local company Olson Masonry for 2026-27 snow removal needs.

Teaching and learning coordinator Mandra Peterson shared information about the district's Comprehensive achievement and civic readiness (CACR) goals. The Minnesota state offices require that all districts set goals in five achievement areas and then provide an annual report summarizing their progress.

Goal categories range from preschool all the way to graduation and examine circumstances such as whether young children have attended preschool prior to beginning kindergarten and what activities or events high-schoolers are taking part in as they consider their future careers. Peterson reported that four of the district's five goals were met by the end of the 2025-26 school year.

During her administrative report, elementary school principal Dr. Kimberly Meyer informed board members that a student council is being formed, with students able either to nominate others or themselves to be on the ballot.

High school vocal music instructor Krista Reeder summarized plans for a spring, 2028 music department trip to Disney World. The trip would include a group performance at Disney Springs, behind-the-scenes tours, a performance by Cirque de Soleil, and more.

Because the trip would be scheduled across a weekend and a staff development day, students would be gone six days, but miss only three days of school.

Reeder provided a preliminary estimate that between 45 and 60 students would take part. The cost per participant would be $2,675; once they have signed up, students will be able to deposit money or earn credits toward the trip by working at the school concession stand to spread the cost out over time.

New Minnesota school requirement gives more students access to mental health education

MPR

Starting this academic year, Minnesota schools are required to provide instruction on mental health to students in grades four through 12. But what does that actually look like in schools?

At Eastern Heights Elementary School in St. Paul, one lesson got fourth and fifth graders out of their chairs, doing an exercise to learn how to differentiate feelings that are normal and ones that merit asking for help.

"Alright, first feeling … happiness!" said their school counselor, Julia Mullan. "Do you think that's an overwhelming feeling or everyday feeling?"

Students shuffle to one side of the room marked "everyday" or the other side marked "overwhelming."

It's all part of Mullan's mental health lesson.

In 2024, Minnesota legislators passed an education bill that included a new requirement for schools to teach fourth through 12th graders about mental health starting in the 2026-27 school year. It requires age-appropriate lessons about mental health and on self-harm and suicide prevention.

'Mental health is the foundation'

"I wish they would have done it a long time ago," Mullan said about the state implementing the requirement. "I think, as school counselors, we are advocating and supporting kids to be successful academically, social-emotionally, and with their futures, career and college and post-secondary wise — and mental health is the foundation of that."

As an elementary school counselor for over a decade, Mullan has already made mental health education the norm at Eastern Heights. But she knows that's not the case for many schools.



School counselor Julia Mullan gives a mental health lesson from Erika's Lighthouse, teaching elementary school students at Eastern Heights Elementary School how to differentiate normal and big feelings on Nov. 17. Photo by MPR

"This offers all students at least some access to knowledge and education about mental health, regardless of where they are in Minnesota, regardless if they have mental health professionals in their school. It kind of just opens up that door for them to explore more about it," Mullan said.

The law came after a Minnesota Department of Education survey found students reported struggling with burnout, anxiety, depression and worry. Between 2016 and 2022, the department has reported a significant decrease in student mental health with marginal improvements in the years since.

Factors like COVID-19 and online learning contributed to worsened mental health. Recently, professionals have pointed to Operation Metro Surge having an impact on students' mental health.

Schools continued on 10

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A Day in the Country
HAPPENINGS IN THE LOCAL AG COMMUNITY

2026 farming season in review



The 2026 Harvest was unlike any other, setting a new high-water mark foremost producers.
Photo by Deb Bently

By MARK BERNARD
Staff Writer

The 2026 Harvest was unlike any other, setting a new high-water mark foremost producers. The crop looked good from the road and once harvest started, it was every bit as good as it looked. Soybean yields were Illinois-like. Corn yields were equally as impressive with small areas where heavy rains fell early on that caused yields to be depressed. Not surprising as combines rolled and yields began to tell the tale. How did we arrive with the record crop that materialized out of this growing season?

We went into winter in 2025 with a soil profile that was deceptively full in many places. The shallow to nonexistent frost depth in November and December allowed much of the snowfall to melt into the ground. Winter '25 – '26 snowfall overall was roughly 10" below normal, while the frost depth reached 26" in early February due to cold temps and the lack of snow cover. The snow that did fall tended to melt and what didn't evaporate percolated into the soil rather than running off.

Any of our temporary snow cover was gone by St. Patrick's Day. March precipitation as snow melt and rainfall added additional moisture to the soil profile. The dry early April allowed planters to roll early with a narrow window the when heavier rains shut them down around the 24th. Light rainfall amounts allowed soil conditions to remain mellow although some questions were popping up about emergence.

May started out cool and dry, making one wonder if we weren't in for a long overdue drought. it remained dry until midmonth, allowing everyone to get planting and pre-herbicide operations accomplished. Beneficial rain picked up through the 25th, activating most of the pre-herbicides nicely. The total in New Richland for May was 2.89". The normal for the SROC in Waseca for May is 4.47". Corn emergence resulted in adequate but not perfect stands, reinforcing the rationale behind planting additional seed to cover for such situations.

Rainfall for the month of June was slightly below normal. In New Richland, it was 3.53"" vs. normal of 5.38" at the SROC in Waseca. Ideal conditions allowed application of side-dress nitrogen as well as postemerge application of herbicides. As in 2025, with corn in the upper $3 to low $4 per bushel and fertilizer prices high, few were excited about throwing additional money at the corn crop.

May and June really set the table for what was to come. A drier start meant a deeper root system on the corn and less potential for disease in both crops. The relatively seasonal temperatures in May and June coupled with slightly below normal precip allowed nitrate mineralized from the organic matter to accumulate in the upper soil profile. It moved down gradually, feeding the crop in a measured fashion. Once July arrived the root systems were nearing full development around tasseling time. Nitrate was carried deeper into the soil profile where the corn root systems were ready and waiting for it.

Just as in 2025, herbicide applications were made in a timely fashion. The fingerprints of weed pressure from the 2024 growing season two years prior were still evident. Many corn fields in 2024 got a pre down and that was it. Precip was well above normal in July 2026 as it was in 2025. Rainfall in New Richland tallied 8.08". Normal rainfall for July at the SROC is 4.93". Fungicide was applied on more cornfields post-tassel this past season as memories of Southern rust from 2025 lingered in farmer's minds.

August was more normal rainfall-wise. 4.68" fell with most of it measured during the first 10 days of the month. Then September arrived. Near normal amounts of rain were detected in the first two weeks as the crop matured and we appeared to be headed towards an earlier than normal harvest. Then the skies opened up on the 18th & 19th, flooding New Richland along MN Hwy 30. A few miles either side of that and rainfall amounts were more manageable but nonetheless, soil conditions were very still very wet.

While our growing season precipitation was excessive at times, one might surmise that the wet season meant a lot of corn leaf disease. Not this time around. Unlike 2025, southern rust was late to the party. Once it was here, it didn't raise havoc largely due to that fact and the widespread fungicide applications. Northern corn leaf blight (NCLB) was detected but it also failed to gain much traction. The tar spot that everyone talks about annually was present, but infestations were limited by the heat and relatively low levels of inoculum.

One disease that was absent this season vs. 2025 was anthracnose. Foliar applied fungicides do little to control this pathogen but very few planted the same hybrids that had trouble with the disease in 2025. This disease results in poor stalk quality and reduced yield. Stalk integrity was tremendous with only slight evidence of scattered plants with crown rot in area fields.

SDS (sudden death syndrome) was expected to be a potential factor with the cool spring and early planting scenario. SDS wasn't the ogre it could've been with good soil moisture from August & early September carrying the crop to the finish line. SDS symptoms tend to be worse in seasons with a drier August. The continued prevalence of seed treatments to control SDS helped but some who had tried to economize with the low soybean prices were seeing more infection. It will likely be budgeted for the '27 soybean planting season.

A new soybean disease was reported in MN soybeans last year. Red crown rot was detected in Rock Co. The above ground symptoms look very much like SDS and BSR. Samples were submitted locally to the U of M Plant Pathology Dept. as part of a survey but no reports on the results as of this edition. The good news is the newer seed treatments to control SDS also are effective on red crown rot.

One other pest issue we haven't been too concerned about is making a subtle return to importance. Soybean cyst nematode has been detected in area fields with varieties using the PI 88788 source of resistance. The presence of cysts on the roots in season has become more frequent as it appears that source of resistance is starting to lose its effectiveness. The Peking source of resistance so far hasn't exhibited the resistance but it's only a matter of time before it too may also show signs of resistance breaking down.

Soybean aphids while detected, didn't reach treatable levels. We continue to see Mother Nature's handiwork as beneficial insects appeared to reach an equilibrium, keeping soybean aphids in check for another growing season. It was only common sense that it would take a number of years for the beneficial insects to catch up with this introduced pest. The good growing conditions also didn't hurt. Plants as healthy and growing as rapidly as this year's crop can tolerate more aphid pressure.

Our GDU accumulation for the growing season was well above normal with our growing season officially ending on October 17th with 2970 GDU's. At Waseca, the May – September Growing Degree Units totaled 2774.5 this season, 11.7% more than the normal season total of 2484.5. The wet, cloudy September slowed harvest this time around as many had anticipated an earlier start based on maturity. At the SROC, this was the cloudiest September since 1973. We also reached our season normal GDU accumulation on September 8th.

Soybean harvest began in earnest for many the first weekend in October. Same song different verse for soybean moisture this year. Warm temps at harvest with breezy conditions took soybean moisture content down into the single digits overnight. By the time many started picking corn, moisture had fallen into the low to mid-teens on the earlier maturing hybrids planted early. Aside from one brief rainy spell, corn could seemingly be harvested at will. Some with early planted early maturing corn were able to dump it directly into the bin or perform minimal drying. The only fly In the ointment: too many bushels or more than we're used to dealing with. On-farm storage got full, so farmers needed to haul corn to the elevator to make room at home. A good problem to have.

Several IL farmers who were part of the Pro Farmer Crop Tour over the years couldn't get over the black, high organic matter soils we have here in South Central MN. They often told me after seeing them that If we had their weather with this soil, we'd outyield them easily. Well, this year we got their weather.

So how did yields turn out for most? On the soybeans, yield averages were well into the 70+ bu./acre range with some averaging in the low 80's. Some pet fields may have been higher than that. These soybeans reminded me of many of the fields in IL I've looked at over the years. Lots of nodes, lots of pods per node and primarily three-bean pods with several four-bean pods, reminding you that the plants loved this growing season.

In South Central MN, corn yields were phenomenal for most. This also not unlike the Illinois crops I observed many times on the Pro Farmer Crop Tour. Not surprisingly, many farm averages in South Central MN were in the 230 – 250 bu./acre range. Slightly above normal temperatures in September and well above normal October temps dried the corn down rapidly, particularly with the unheard-of 90+ degree highs October 11th and 12th. A lot less LP was burned than expected when planting later hybrids.

Corn and soybean prices are down and fertilizer prices, particularly phosphorus prices, remain high. Operators are making more management decisions based on soil test levels rather than tossing money at the crop expecting a return. Despite these obstacles, there is some optimism. The high yields offset the poor price to some extent. Some were also able to capitalize on a brief rise in the soybean market, selling much of their crop straight out of the field. Fall fieldwork was accomplished in fairly good fashion with many continuing to reduce their reliance on primary tillage. This past growing season checked all the boxes leaving cash grain farmers in South Central MN wanting more of the same production-wise in 2027.





















A Day in the Country

HAPPENINGS IN THE LOCAL AG COMMUNITY

Local farms recognized as century farms in 2026

The Minnesota State Fair and the Minnesota Farm Bureau recognized 68 Minnesota farms as 2026 Century Farms. Qualifying farms have been in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years and are 50 acres or more. Century Farm families received a commemorative sign, as well as a certificate signed by Minnesota State Fair and Minnesota Farm Bureau presidents and Governor Tim Walz.

Since the program began in 1976, more than 11,000 Minnesota farms have been recognized as Century Farms.

Family farms are recognized as a Century Farm when three requirements are met. The farm must be: 1) at least 100 years old according to authentic land records; 2) in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years (continuous residence on the farm is not required); and 3) at least 50 acres and currently be involved in agricultural production. 2026 Century Farm families are listed by county, then by the farm's city or township, family or farm names and year of original purchase:

Aitkin County

Aitkin, Hasselius Family Farm, 1893

Tamarack, Johnson/FuQua Farm, 1915

Anoka County

Andover, The Holasek Farm, 1923

Benton County

Foley, Piotrowski Farm, 1915

Blue Earth County

Amboy, Zenk LLC, 1884

Eagle Lake, Terrell Farm, 1924

Carver County

Norwood Young America, Harms Brothers Farm, 1924

Norwood Young America, James Herrmann, 1925

Chippewa County

Maynard, Sederstrom Farm, 1923

Montevideo, Frank's Farm, 1898

Montevideo, Lynne's Farm, 1925

Montevideo, Zempel, 1925

Cottonwood County

Westbrook, Horkey Legacy Farm, 1895

Dakota County

Randolph, Doug Willie Farm, 1909

Rosemount, Greg and Sandi Fox Farm, 1925

Faribault County

Blue Earth, Franke Farms, 1870

Freeborn County

Albert Lea, Bagley Farm, 1884

Albert Lea, Oak Park Stock Farm – Thomas W. Jones & Elizabeth I. Wulff, 1874

Houston County

Caledonia, David & Lynn Myhre Family Farm, 1922

Houston, The O'Donnell-Randall Farm, 1925

Jackson County

Worthington, Duitsman Farm, 1919

Kandiyohi County

Lake Lillian, Magnuson Farm, 1876

Lac Qui Parle County

Bellingham, Nelson Family Farm, 1926

Bellingham, Nelson Farm, 1926

Madison, Wollschlager, 1925

Le Sueur County

Kilkenny, Hackett Farms, 1924

Lincoln County

Tyler, Henry's Hill, 1926

Martin County

Ceylon, Albremer LLP, 1915

Fairmont, Steuber Farm, 1900

Granada, McAdams Family Farm, 1922

Meeker County

Dassel, Forsberg Farms, 1901

Mower County

Dexter, P.W. Jensen, 1893

Taopi, Voigt Family Farm, 1920

Nicollet County

New Ulm, Palmer Hill, 1926

Nobles County

Wilmont, Fath Family Farm, 1925

Olmsted County

Hayfield, Gilbertson Farm, 1860

Rochester, Schwanke Farm, 1913

Otter Tail (East) County

New York Mills, Ehnert Farms, 1920

Otter Tail (West) County

Fergus Falls, Brause Slough, 1922

Fergus Falls, Kort Farm, 1925

Pennington County

St. Hilarie, Yonke Farm, 1926

Pine County

Hinckley, Sikkink Angus, 1916

Hinckley, Toering Farms, 1902

Pine City, Dave and Jody Karas Dairy, 1926

Pipestone County

Pipestone, Crawford Farm, 1862

Redwood County

Morgan, Wolfgang Spaeth, 1926

Renville County

Sacred Heart, Sietsema Family Farm, 1926

Rice County

New Prague, Joseph F. and Eileen C. Skluzacek, 1891

Rock County

Beaver Creek, Crawford Family, 1874

Luverne, Scott Family Farm, 1873

Roseau County

Greenbush, Anderson Farm, 1907

Wannaska, Jacobson Farms, 1926

St. Louis County

Iron, Takala Farms, Inc., 1919

Kelsey, Simek's Farm, 1925

Sherburne County

Zimmerman, Jensen Farm, 1925

Sibley County

Gaylord, Kuphal Farm, 1916

Le Sueur, Harder Farms, 1920

Steele County

Owatonna, Walter & Emma Buecksler Farm, 1924

Owatonna, Duane Dewell Schroeder, 1925

Owatonna, Ebeling Family Farms, 1926

Owatonna, Spindler Farm, 1926

Swift County

Danvers, Nagler Farm, 1926

Todd County

Eagle Bend, Oftedahl Farms, 1913

Traverse County

Wheaton, Willard & Helen Wahl, 1919

Wabasha County

Kellogg, Sullivan Farm, 1875

Waseca County

New Richland, Anderson Farm, 1926

Wilkin County

Barnesville, Maier Farms, 1926

Winona County

St. Charles, Heim Farms, 1921

Local farms recognized as sesquicentennial farms in 2026

In 2026, the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) is proud to honor 58 family farms whose legacy spans at least 150 years with the Sesquicentennial Farm award.

Established in 2008, the Sesquicentennial Farm award celebrates family farms who have sustained continuous ownership for at least 150 years, are 50 acres or larger, and are currently be involved in agricultural production. Since the program began, 681 families have earned this distinction, showcasing how Minnesota's agricultural strength has endured because of the resilience and commitment of multi-generational, family-owned farms.

Honorees will receive a commemorative certificate signed by Governor Tim Walz, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen and MFBF President Dan Glessing, along with an outdoor sign signifying Sesquicentennial Farm recognition.

A display featuring all Sesquicentennial and Century farms will be available inside the Minnesota Farm Bureau building during the 2026 Minnesota State Fair.

The Minnesota State Fair also announced its 2026 Century Farm award recipients on Friday, April 10. The press release is available on the MFBF website.

Blue Earth

Vernon Center – Warren, 1867

Brown

Sleepy Eye – Alex & Amy Braun, 1876

Dakota

Lakeville – Johnson, 1859

Dodge

Hayfield – The Bjornson Farm, 1874

Kasson – Richard A. Jensen-Alpha B. Jensen, 1868

Douglas

Nelson – Ken & Sheila Olson, 1868

Faribault

Bricelyn – Prestegard Farms, 1875

Delavan – Carson Farm, 1873

Easton – Schimek Farms, 1870

Fillmore

Wykoff – Jeffrey & Andrea Eickhoff, 1876

Freeborn

Albert Lea – Oak Park Stock Farm, 1874

Albert Lea – Scherb Farm, 1876

Freeborn – Arlo L. and Julie D. (Kvam) Wallin Farm, 1876

Glenville – Tim and Jodi Westrum, 1876

Goodhue

Zumbrota – James and Taryn Thoreson, Blake and Emily Thoreson, 1876

Houston

Houston – Kildahl-Christianson, 1856

Jackson

Jackson – The Family of Harlow and Helen Meium, 1876

Jackson – The Meium Homestead, 1876

Jackson – Dennis A. Skrove, 1869

Windom – Mark Robert Brodin, Elise Brodin Larson, 1870

Lincoln

Ivanhoe – Jonas Swenson Family Farm, 1873

Meeker

Dassel – Shirley Skalberg, 1873

Grove City – Jay & Tracey Hedtke & Family, 1876

Litchfield – Carlson Farms-Marshall, Larry, Carleton & Daniel, 1875

Litchfield – Pamela M. Nelson Radunz, 1875

Morrison

Pierz – Rauch Farms, 1874

Mower

Austin – David & Carolyn Hillier, 1875

Nicollet

Nicollet – Kevin Wels, 1871

Otter Tail

Battle Lake – Arlyn and James Hustad, 1875

Campbell – John S. Walkup, Jill Walkup, Chad Walkup, 1876

Elizabeth – Gaylen Skistad and Noreen Skistad-Stigen Farm, 1876

Fergus Falls – Gary D. Tomhave, 1876

Pelican Rapids – Rick and Jan Haugrud, 1876

Pipestone

Pipestone – Crawford Farm, 1862

Pope

Lowry – Dale & Rebecca Stivland, 1874

Starbuck – Gregory and Denise Stoen Farm, 1869

Renville

Renville – Schumacher, 1876

Sacred Heart – Oak Valley Farm-Emery Holum & Tammy Stark, 1876

Rock

Beaver Creek – Crawford Family, 1874

Luverne – Scott Family Farm, 1873

Sherburne

St. Cloud – Lietha's Riverside Acres, 1876

Stearns

Melrose – Nietfeld, 1874

Melrose – Philip and Bonnie Poepping, 1876

Paynesville – Wuertz Farm, 1876

St. Stephen – Schumer Family Farm, 1867

Steele

Owatonna – WMS Legacy Acres, 1876

Stevens

Alberta – Joe Stroman, 1876

Swift

Danvers – Robert and Jill McGeary, 1876

Wabasha

Kellogg – Sullivan Farm, 1875

Waseca

Janesville – Guse, 1875

New Richland – The Querna Farm, 1876

Wells – Russell and Michelle Groskreutz, 1876

Watonwan

St. James – Tom Blackstad-Blackstad Farm Corp., 1876

Winona

Altura – Beaver Oak Dairy, 1876

Wright

Waverly – Diers Corporation Family Farm, 1874

Waverly – Granger Family Farm, 1872

Waverly – Donald J. Larson, 1875

Waverly – Arleen M. Peterson, John T. Peterson, Wallace H. Peterson, Jr., 1875

About the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation

To ensure Minnesota's agricultural vitality, the Minnesota Farm Bureau amplifies its members' voices through engagement, grassroots advocacy and agricultural awareness. Learn more about our efforts as an advocate for our over 30,000 members and 78 county and regional Farm Bureaus at www.fbmn.org.

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Woods and Water

by Dic Her ndahl
Outdoors Writer

Enjoy the nice weather while it lasts

I believe that our area's open water fishing will soon be over until spring. I didn't get to take part in the good fall fishing that we had, but that will give me something to look forward to in the spring. Thanks to my grandson, Trevor, and my two sons, I was able to get on the water a few times this year. These are times that I can look back on and remember fondly.

For the hunters out there, muzzle loader and archery hunting will still continue, with archery going until the end of December. Hunting and fishing are sports that our youth can take part in almost year-round.

Hunting pheasants, ruffed grouse, squirrels or rabbits offer opportunities to enjoy Minnesota's outdoors at the start of winter.

"Hunting small game is a great way to spend time outdoors, enjoy Minnesota's forests and fields, and potentially bring home some excellent table fare," said Benji Kohn, hunting, fishing and shooting sports coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The pheasant hunting season is open through Jan. 3, 2027. On Dec. 1, the daily bag limit increases to three roosters, with a possession limit of nine roosters. Pheasant numbers were up nearly 20% over last year, according to the DNR August Roadside Survey, available on the DNR pheasant hunting webpage. The best places to find pheasants at this time of year are tall grass or cattail marshes. Hunters should always be cautious around ice.

Grouse hunting season is also open through Jan. 3, 2027. Wintertime grouse hunters might find success during the "golden hour," or the last hour before sunset, when ruffed grouse move out of their snow roosts to feed.

There's even more time for squirrels and rabbits in a season that stretches through Feb. 28, 2027. Winter is breeding season for squirrels, which means they are active and easier to find. Rabbit hunters tend to find the most success around thick cover like brush piles, thickets and briars. Cottontail rabbit numbers remain high and similar to last year, with populations remaining more than twice the 10-year average, according to the August Roadside Survey.

Fisher, martin and bobcat trapping opens Saturday, Dec. 12, so hunters should be aware of this season while in the woods.

Hunters can find regulations and bag limit information on the Minnesota DNR website. More information about how or where to hunt can be found on the DNR's learn to hunt webpages. Recorded webinars with tips on how to hunt pheasants, grouse, squirrels or rabbits are in the webinar archive on the outdoor skills and stewardship page of the DNR's website.

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.



Shown here is a picture of the free campsites that grouse hunters take advantage of on Arrowhead Lake in the fall.

Child's History of Waseca County

Cont. Chapter XVI, 1855. The first wedding—McDougall and 'Squire Jenkins lost on prairie all night—Ceremony postponed—Married the next evening

About dark, those who had been out to look for the 'squire returned on his trail, having followed it from his cabin. It was necessary to have supper before proceeding to tie the knot, and many were the jokes and laughs about the first marriage ceremony to be performed by our worthy bachelor justice of the peace. A considerable part of the pioneer settlers gathered in during the evening to witness the ceremony which had well nigh caused the freezing of Uncle John, as the 'squire was familiarly called.

After all had partaken of a substantial supper, the tables had been cleared off, and the "slab chairs" had been properly arranged, the 'squire stated that he was ready to proceed. The ceremony was decidedly short and to the purpose. It was even briefer than the shorter form in Booth's Manual. As near as memory serves me, it was as follows: "The parties will join hands. Mr. Ballard, do you take Miss Gregory to be your wife?" (Answer) "Yes, sir." "Miss Gregory, do you take Mr. Ballard as your husband?" (Answer—in a whisper) "Yes, sir." "All right," said Uncle John, "then you're man and wife."

After this short, but characteristic ceremony, the company seemed to be relieved of much former constraint, and the night passed in song, "going to Rome," through the "cedar swamp," playing the "honest miller," etc.; for none of those living at a distance could go home that night, and there were too many present to think of finding beds in a farm house.

When morning came, the guests cheered the newly-married couple, bade them a fond adieu, and wended their several ways to bachelor homes.

Editorial Note - Upon rummaging through the vast library of contents here at the Star Eagle, I stumbled across a very old blue book titled, "Child's History of Waseca County Minnesota for Fifty Years, 1854-1904."

After thumbing through the first several pages it was determined this book was too interesting to go back on the shelf. So, it was used as a stand for a computer monitor. Several months later, after finding a more suitable stand, I opened the book to show a reader who stopped into the office. After reading about the Horse Thief Detective Association, I made the decision that this piece of history should not be lost to time. Since then the Star Eagle has included, "a little bit of this and a little bit of that," from the book.

Eli Lutgens

LOOKING BACK

25 years ago

- Brad Goette, 29, of Hartland, started a book about a year ago and finished it six months later. He finished it with the assistance of his voice-activiated computer and special control pad. Brad worked on the book for two or three hours a night. He kept on going until the 62 page book was finished. The title of his book is "Brad's Walk Of Life." and has been published as an electronic, or e-book. Brad was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy as an infant.

- Seven members of Freeborn County 4-H clubs joined 700 other members at the 2001 Minnesota State 4-H Horse Show held at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in St. Paul. Attending from Freeborn County were Sarah Frydenlund of Hayward, Katie Gilman and Angie Jensen of Albert Lea, Kara Honsey and Anna Mattson of the Nunda Club, Monica Ignaszewski of Alden and Jamie Modene of Hartland.



- Panther cheerleaders worked hard during the fall season and were coached by Kari Buendorf. Awards were presented to the outstanding cheerleaders at the Athletic Banquet on Thursday, November 8. In the front row (Lto R) with their awards are: Katie Bergdale, most valuable base in stunt medal, senior plaque, MSHSL Silver; Michelle Dobberstein, most valuable base in stunt medal, senior plaque MSHSLGold; Lindsey Landlie MSHSL gold; back row (L to R): Kelly Lura, most valuable back in a stunt medal, MSHSL Gold; Stephanie Bursheim, most valuable flyer in a stunt medal, MSHSL Silver; Whitney Hagen, MSHSL Silver; Rachel Berg, most valuable flyer in a stunt medal, MSHSL Silver, most improved cheerleader. Not present at the time of the photo are; Michelle Misgen, Spirit Award, MSHSL Silver; and Linsey Reese MSHSL Silver.

50 years ago

- Airman First Class, Randy C. Burmeister, son of Mr. and Mrs. Warren H. Burmeister of Waldorf, has graduated at Keesler AFB, Miss., from the Air Training Commands basic course for electronics specialists. He is a 1976 graduate of Waldorf-Pemberton High School.

- Melissa Lynn Bartelt born September 17 was presented for baptism Sunday at the United Church of Christ at Waldorf. Rev. George Head officiated at the 9 a.m. service. Melissa's parents Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bartelt entertained at their home for dinner.

- A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Dean Bruder of New Richland at the Waseca Memorial Hospital on November 9. The little miss weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. and has been named Lisa Marie. She has a brother, Michael 4 ½ years and a sister Heidi, 3 years old.

75 years ago

- Their second child and son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Reb, Monday, December 17. Mr. and Mrs. Reb lives west of New Richland. Roger is the name of the older brother.

- R. L. Zimmermann of Racine was re-elected president of the Southeastern Minnesota Farm Management association at its annual election held Thursday at West Concord. More than 175 farmers from a 14-county area attend the all-day meeting.

- Kenneth Brynildson of Waseca is the new proprietor of the Olson Sheet Metal Works in New Richland. Mr. Brynildson had considerable experience in the heating and plumbing business while he and his father, Knute B. Brynildson, conducted a hardware store at Elysian for a few years.

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New Richland (507) 463-0502 132 Broadway Ave N, New Richland, MN 56072

NOTICE

Summit Township Board Meeting
Tuesday, December 1, 2026
7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall

Andy Jewison
Summit Township Clerk

CITY OF ELLENDALE, MN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of Ellendale, Minnesota, will meet in the Community Hall at 507 2nd Street South, on **Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 6:30 p.m**., for a Truth in Taxation meeting to hear public input on the Cities proposed 2027 tax levy.

A **3.67%** increase is being proposed to cover projected expenses in 2027.

Such persons that desire to be heard with reference to the proposed tax levy will be heard at this meeting.

Dated: November 16, 2026

Steve Engel
Steve Engel
City Clerk/Treasurer

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‘Ask a Trooper’: winter safety driving tips

Question: Winter is closing in on us. Can you talk about winter driving safety and give some tips?

Answer: Yes I can. Great topic and timely.

Remove snow and ice from your vehicle's hood, windows and lights before driving.

◦ Make sure your windshield wiper fluid contains antifreeze.

◦ Get the feel of the road. Try your brakes while driving slowly to test the road surface.

◦ Adjust your speed to road conditions.

◦ Avoid using cruise control on slippery roads.

If your vehicle becomes stuck on ice or snow, try to free it by "rocking" it back and forth. Keep the front wheels straight and slowly drive forward, then backward, as far as possible, without spinning the tires. Accelerate gently when the tires grip. If your vehicle starts to slide or your tires start to spin, apply the brake, and repeat this operation in the opposite direction.

You can avoid a ticket - and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson - Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

■ Schools

from Page 5

‘It’s OK to have these issues’

The education department worked with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI Minnesota, to develop guidance and lessons for the new law.

Renée Labat is the youth program coordinator at NAMI Minnesota and said the new requirement is helping with outreach to greater Minnesota, driving higher response rates and more follow-through from schools outside the Twin Cities metro area.

“I think, if I would have had something like this when I was in high school, I maybe would have reached out for help sooner because I had really incredible adults in my life that would have helped me, but I didn't know it was OK to ask for help about these things,” Labat said.

It also helps that some organizations offer free resources and lessons. NAMI Minnesota offers classes for middle and high school students. It includes information on how to help a friend seek help, who to talk to about mental health issues, and resources like 988, the national suicide prevention hotline.

Another organization, Erika’s Lighthouse, provides a free curriculum for elementary school students, teaching them about their feelings, how to name them and who they can talk to if they have big emotions.

Last month, Labat gave a mental health presentation at Discovery Charter School in Inver Grove Heights to middle schoolers.

Amy Sullivan is a teacher at Discovery Charter and observed the class.

“I see a lot of kids who are kind of afraid to ask when they have issues, when they're feeling overly sad,” Sullivan said. “I also have seen a lot of joking around because now we're hearing things like ADHD and we're hearing things like OCD and all that stuff, and I feel like it's kind of a joke … And so something like this shows them it's OK to tell somebody. It's OK to have these issues. It's OK to take medicine.”

Kids speak highly of impact

At Eastern Heights, Mullan continues her lesson. She asks if anyone already knows what mental health is.

A student, Felipe Bullock, raises his hand. “Mental health is different from your actual health, like physical health,” he said. “Mental health is where you are emotionally.”

Many of the kids MPR News spoke to had already heard of mental health, but wanted to know more. Fifth grader Josiah Morgan said he’s appreciated learning ways to help his mental health, like not using screens before bed.

“I believe that even adults could use more knowledge on their mental health because when they learn it in grade school, they'll learn it in middle school, in high school, and then if they're like in their 70s or 80s... Children could even help them understand more about what mental health is,” Josiah said.

How often schools teach about mental health is up to the district, but NAMI Minnesota said most are teaching at least once a semester or trimester.

If you or someone you know is in crisis right now, please call, text, or chat 988 to connect with a trained counselor who can help you.

NRHEG Cross Country Awards



RECOGNIZING AWARDS - Boys' Awards - Kasey Jewison: Conference Runner of the Year, Team Rookie of the Year, Captain’s Award, Summer Mileage - Colton Lermon: Most Improved, Conference Sportsmanship, Summer Mileage

Girls' Awards - Julieann Wobbrock: Team MVP, 1st Team All-Conference, 1st Team Section 2A, Captain’s Award, Academic All-State, Summer Mileage - Violette Botten: Most Improved Runner, Honorable Mention All-Conference, Captain’s Award, Summer Mileage - Rylie Cromwell: Conference Sportsmanship Award. Note: All team members received Academic All-Conference recognition. Summer Mileage awards represent running a minimum of 100 miles over the summer.

VIP Panthers of the Week



VIP PANTHERS - A big Panther shoutout to this week's VIPs! NRHEG Elementary School recently posted these students on their Facebook page, saying, “We love recognizing our students for the kindness, hard work, and Panther Pride they show each day! Keep up the great work, Panthers! We are so proud of you!”

Star Eagle is for sale at these locations:

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