

Canvas Bag Designs at the New Richland Public Library Feb. 26
Transform a canvas bag into a custom tote that reflects you at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26. Connect with other totes while you add vibrant patterns, intricate illustrations, or inspiring quotes. Ages 13-18.

Winter Farmers Market at FarmAmerica Feb. 28
There will be a winter farmers market at FarmAmerica from 8 a.m. till noon Saturday, Feb. 28. Find locally grown, baked and made while supporting our local producers. FarmAmerica is located at 7567 16th Ave., Waseca.

Dad's Belgium Waffles at Postopidian Lutheran Church of Ellendale Sunday, March 8
There will be a Dad's Belgium Waffles breakfast at the Postopidian Lutheran Church from 9 a.m. on Sunday, March 8. Cost is \$10, 3 yrs and under free. There will be waffles, sausage, juice, coffee and milk, and it's all you can eat.

Food Shelf Benefit at Ellendale United Methodist Church Sunday, March 8
There will be a food shelf benefit at the Ellendale United Methodist Church from 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 8. Free will donations and a food shelf meal will be served. Raffle prizes will be sold at the door or from food shelf volunteers.

4-H Bingo at the Walder Community Center March 8
The Walder Poppy Poppo 4-H Club will be holding a 4-H Bingo event at the Walder Community Center starting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 8. Exciting prizes and homemade snacks.

Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2026 Board Meeting March 12
The SWCD will be holding its monthly board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 12. The meetings will be held at the SWCD offices located at 308 North State Street - Door 4.

Waseca County Farm & City Luncheon at FarmAmerica Thursday, March 19
The county farm and city luncheon at FarmAmerica will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 19 to acknowledge the hardworking individuals who continue to move our ag industry forward. Tickets are \$20 per person and must be purchased in advance at the Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. The deadline to purchase tickets is March 9. Must have a ticket to attend.

A word from The Word
Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away.
Song of Songs 8:7



HEART FULL OF FOOD - The Cross of Glory Lutheran Church of Hartland held a Community Valentine's Brunch on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026. Pictured from left: Angela Bell, Carol Light, Ann Lynne, Judy Wynne, Nancy Harris, Ashley Jacobson, and Shauna Heescher, who are all members of the Women of the Altar Guild.

Valentine's Brunch sees good attendance

By BEN REVERMANN Staff Writer
Members of the Cross of Glory Lutheran Church of Hartland held their third annual Valentine's Day brunch over the breakfast and lunch hours on Sunday, Feb. 22. They had between 75-85 people come through

their line and every table in the room was abuzz with conversation. Upon walking into the dining room, there was a pretty table in the front lined with pink and red paper, fancy dishes and lots of desserts, including cookies, cakes, pies, and donuts. Carol Light was the lady in

charge for the day; she helped organize the event, and gave credit for the work to all members of the church's "Altar Guild."
"This was free for anyone who wanted to show up today," said Light, "but we were accepting free will donations. All of the food you

see was prepared and donated by us as individuals or paid for by the Altar Guild."
Giving a quick tour of their facility-looking and very clean kitchen, Light
Brunch continued on 5



Beginning next year, robes of this design will be worn by NRHEG vocal music students at some of their performances. Modifications will include "tubed" sleeves with no ruffs and silver-colored piping at the edges of the collar and cuffs. Music boosters have been working to raise funds for the robes over the past 18 months or more.

NRHEG addresses attendance, purchase of new choir robes

By DES BENTLY Staff Writer
During their Feb. 17 meeting, members of the NRHEG School Board voted to contribute the final \$1,500 needed toward the \$3,500 cost of purchasing 75 robes for use by the high school vocal music program.
Choir location and music department teachers Kristin Rieder and Seth Schaefer have been leading fundraising efforts since the beginning of the 2025-26 school year; that work has produced \$4,000 in donations. The new purchase will allow the retirement of red and white robes which are more than 40 years old.
During his report, high school principal Grant Berg let board members know NRHEG's will be hosting a regional large group music contest on Monday, March 2, which will feature bands and choirs from area schools. Because the secondary building will be needed for the contest, school will not be in session that day and staff will meet for in-service trainings.
Berg also mentioned Feb. 23 to 28 has been declared "National TEA Week." Special events and activities will take place throughout the week.
Also part of the Feb. 17 meeting was an initial reading of new policies regarding student attendance. Berg and elementary principal Dr. Kimberly Meyer have both made contributions to the new policy whose intent, Berg said, is to "change the consequences" surrounding repeated or unexcused absences.
Facing inconsistent attendance is a problem faced by school districts across the state and that it's "the worst it's ever been," Berg stated the policies increase communication between the school and families, calling for letters and phone calls to parents to emphasize the importance of students being in school as much as possible.
During the discussion, board member Kelly DeLoraine observed that families and students' attitude toward attendance became less strict beginning with the changes imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic early in 2020. "It can be a battle getting kids to come to school," she observed.

School Board NRHEG

County continued on 7

SMIF seeking applications for Early Literacy grants

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), in partnership with publishing companies Capstone and ARGO, is accepting applications for its Early Literacy Grant program. This grant is designed to support early literacy efforts that enhance school readiness for children birth to age eight by providing children with books. Nonprofit organizations working with these children and their families in SMIF's 26-county region are encouraged to apply.
This funding opportunity seeks to support organizations working with children, youth and families that have been historically underserved and under-served due to structural inequities. Priority will be given to proposals that center children, youth and families who represent disproportionate barriers related to income, race and ethnicity, geography, language or access to culturally responsive supports.
Proposals that strengthen parental awareness of early literacy needs, including communication and language development, include a parent education component, offer new and creative ways to reach children, youth and families and/or collaborate with other organizations to provide literacy enhancements will be prioritized.
"Birth to age eight is a critical learning time," shared Kelly Fishburn, SMIF Early Childhood vice president. "When we invest in early literacy, we invest in children's confidence, curiosity and lifelong opportunity. How we show up for children in these earliest years shapes not only their future, but the



EARLY LEARNING - Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation is partnering with Capstone and ARGO to accept applications for its Early Literacy Grant program.

Identify Frosty for share of \$1,500

It's time again for the annual Waseca High and County Identify Frosty event. Continue reading for week two's clues.
Who is Frosty?
Identify Frosty and win some cash! Prize money totaling \$1,500.00 is waiting to be won. Frosty is a Waseca County resident chosen to be an ambassador for the Waseca High & County Festival. Follow the clues and guess FROSTY's name.
The grand prize is \$100.00. If you are at the official announcement.
Frosty continued on 2

SMIF continued on 5



FenceLines

by Mark Bernard

I’ve just been fakin’ it, not really makin’ it

The scurs’ Weather Eye under-achieved last week as Old Man Winter’s icy grip returned. Does he maintain that grip, or does he loosen it up a tad? Starting Thursday, mostly sunny with highs in the low 40’s and lows in the upper 20’s. Mostly sunny Friday with highs in the low 50’s with lows in the upper teens. Partly sunny on Saturday with highs in the mid-20’s with lows around 5 above. Sunday, partly sunny with highs in the low 20’s and lows in the mid-teens. Mostly cloudy on Monday with a slight chance of snow. Highs in the upper 20’s with lows in the upper teens. Tuesday, cloudy with a good chance of snow. Highs in the low 30’s with lows in the mid-teens. Mostly cloudy on Wednesday with highs in the upper 20’s and lows in the upper teens. On February 28th the sun will set at 6 p.m. CST. On March 3rd, we will have our Full Moon for the month as well as the potential to see a lunar eclipse at around 5:30 a.m. The normal high for March 3rd is 32 and the normal low is 16. The scurs have their alarm clocks set for the eclipse. If it’s cloudy they will roll over and go back to sleep.

The Full Moon as mentioned above is due on March 3rd. It goes by several names, the most common of which is the Full Worm Moon. It is during this moon that earthworms commonly begin coming to the soil surface once again and leaving their castings. Given the temperatures, it is also known as the Full Sugar Moon or Sap Moon as maple trees are tapped for the sap that runs during the temperatures common this time of year. The Ojibwe called it the Snow Crust Moon or the Wild Goose Moon. The Sioux knew this as The Sore Eye Moon or The Moon when Buffalo Cows drop their Calves. At the ranch, it’s known as The Moon when Ewes drop their Lambs. Outside, especially when they’re not shorn yet.

We hit a bump in the road on our quest for spring. After being spoiled by several 50+ degree days, we descended back into more normal temperatures for this time of year. Still, we sawed off a week’s worth of winter and helped average out some of the below normal temperature days. Indeed, the frost depth at the SROC in Waseca became shallower, measured at 13” on February 18th, 7” on the 20th, then back to 10” on the 23rd after the cold weekend. While disheartening perhaps, not unexpected. It looks like we can expect more of the same for much of the 1st half of March anyway. February precipitation continues to be well below normal, and forecasts don’t bode well for that improving much before month’s end. Not hearing very many complaints either. Too busy holding their breath for March.

The lambing season at the ranch continues to be a struggle in the light of Cache Valley virus. We’ve had several stillborn lambs and several more that aren’t quite right physically and possibly mentally. One of the hallmarks of this disease is altered brain development that can manifest itself in numerous ways. We had one lamb that we thought was getting milk from

the ewe. As all lambs do, they’ll punch at the ewe’s udder several times to get her to let the milk down, then grab onto the teat. We had one that did the first part right, but was apparently faking it. He wasn’t grabbing on and was going backwards physically in a hurry. Not until we milked the ewe out and bottle fed him did he figure out that he had his own personal milk supply at his disposal without our help.

I recently attended an oat production meeting where Jochum Wiesma spoke, covering many aspects of oat production. He also mentioned wild oats. This is a weed many have never seen as it’s been nonexistent here in southern MN during their lifetime. Working in the Durum Triangle area of North Dakota for 3 years I saw what a problem it could be. Wild oats were fairly easy to spot in fields sowed with a press drill with double disk openers. If there were plants appearing to be small grain between the drill rows, odds were they were wild oats. There were still some who used hoe drills, however. Those tended to scatter the small grain seed more randomly, not in perfect rows. There was a field of semi-dwarf Lloyd durum seed wheat seeded with a hoe drill by Rock Lake. It looked fantastic early on. When the durum headed out, the wild oats headed out over the top of it. Ugly.

The awns on wild oats look relatively innocuous. They’re actually a main part of the mechanism that makes wild oats such a difficult weed to control. Upon wetting, the awns unwind and literally screw the wild oat seed into the ground. The seed typically survives in the soil for about 5 years. A few can last up to 10 years though and quickly repopulate a field if you’re not on top of your weed control game. Wild oats are still common in northern MN and ND despite all the glyphosate used on corn and soybeans now being grown there. Something gleaned from Jochum’s presentation is that the sharp awns of wild oats are detrimental for producing food grade oats. They are very sharp and difficult to remove from the domesticated oats. One plus for food grade oats raised here in SC MN. The only wild oats here are likely to be those sown on Friday and Saturday nights.

Poppy’s “fake spring” so far has consisted of helping to fill birdfeeders. Picking up sticks and covering plants that were in danger of being frozen came on Saturday and precipitated some serious napping afterwards. There are copious amounts of dog poop littering the front yard, something that happens when the snowblower doesn’t get used very often. After 40 years of dogs using the front yard as their personal toilet, it might be interesting to see what the soil fertility levels are like relative to other areas. There’s probably a reason the grass is some of the thickest in the entire lawn. Even though she’s smaller than most of her predecessors, Poppy has certainly been doing her fair share to maintain the soil fertility.

See you next week...real good then.



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

Going through file photos

I was recently asked whether I have any “file photos” of some parks and public attractions in the Waseca area. It would not have worked to go take new photos at this time because the pictures were meant to depict the area as it looks in summer.

I take a lot of pictures, both for the sake of the NRHEG Star Eagle and Waseca County Pioneer newspapers and because I can barely resist taking pictures of attractive and appealing things. Alongside that, most of the photos I have taken for the last decade or so have been conveniently stored in certain online applications—so referencing them did not require digging out any dusty boxes or photo albums. Instead, it was a matter of opening the application and scrolling. The electronic system even knew the date each photo was taken and could tell me where I was at the time.

Since it was so easy to investigate, I set to work, not realizing what an enjoyable journey I was beginning.

As I came across likely options, I sent them via email to the person who had placed the request. I probably drove her to

distraction as her computer repeatedly signalled she had received yet another email from me.

Honestly, I am grateful for the request. I had never before had a reason to scroll so far into the annals of my photographic past. Since the pictures are in reverse chronological order (most recent first), I watched my grandchildren and other family members grow younger. Equally importantly, I traveled backward in time to the places and events that comprised my past decade.

It would be difficult to count the number of times I made spontaneous noises of recognition or fondness. Children playing in the park during a summer birthday party. Northern lights above a lake. Swans in flight lit from above by sunlight. My sons and grandchildren swimming in a pool below a waterfall. My now deceased mother holding my nephew when he was an infant. The USS Arizona memorial at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Our family posed in front of the cabin which we used to borrow, and have now come to own. Vehicles I used to drive, but had essentially forgotten



ROBIN FILES - A photo Deb found among her files while looking through them to find appealing images for an acquaintance.

about. Spring flowers. Autumn leaves. Roiling storm clouds. Robins during a spring snowfall eating dried crabapples still hanging in the tree. Sunrises and sunsets galore, each beautiful and dramatic in its own way. Sandhill cranes wading among

cattails. Faces up close making silly expressions.

I spent a delightful couple hours reviewing and remembering. What a privilege it is to be able to record moments and look at them again later.

Unknown science behind the pain



Just a Thought...

by Eli Lutgens

I only intend to ever put up with discomfort like that in the future if the pain is for my future children/spouse.

After three years of mystery pain, it seems with the help of a lot of research and many, many doctor visits, we might know what’s wrong with me. Splenic Flexure Disorder. My enlarged spleen and my stomach pinch together against my insides causing a lot of pressure and pain. This is caused from standing for too long or sitting in a slouched position, most identifiable from driving a vehicle. There are a number of things I am now doing to combat this problem.

One, I don’t drive after I’ve eaten food, as, if there’s nothing in my stomach, it doesn’t hurt as much because there’s nothing leaving my stomach to get pinched or stuck. Mikhail asked me how I did my vacation driving. Well, I didn’t eat before or during my drives, and if I did, it was very light. Also, I now sit with a rolled up towel behind me

while I drive.

There are a number of other things I do to help not hurt every day. Mainly, my only goal for 2026 is to be healthier and in less pain. So far, I feel some progress has been made.

I’m grateful Mikhail told me to go home. It was not until about 24 hours later that I physically felt my left side release and the pain pass. I was quite miserable for that entire period of time, simply from all of the

standing around. (I am told gravity pulls my insides together when I am standing. But, when I’m walking around it’s fine because then everything is moving around.)

I really don’t know the science behind it. All I’ve been able to do is recognize what works and what doesn’t.

For anyone else who has dealt with chronic pain of any sorts, you have my sympathy.

On a lighter note, I have been eating a very healthy diet now for a couple months, getting a great number of steps per day, and overall do feel better doing all of these things.

"Healing starts with a single breath and a hopeful thought." — Unknown

■ Frosty

from Page 1

masking at the Waseca VWF @8:30 p.m., on Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, you will win an additional \$50.00. The first correct guesses from Janesville, New Richland and Waseca win \$150.00; and if you are at the unmasking, you will win an additional \$50.00. Only five names will be drawn for \$100 – must be present to win.

Five names are drawn to win \$50.00 – attendance at the unmasking is not necessary.

Contest rules Clues are published by the Waseca County Pioneer; NRHEG Star Eagle, Facebook; and Waseca County News; Waseca Chamber of Commerce; KOWZ/KRUE radio; Waseca Sleigh & Cutter Festival.

2. One guess allowed each week.

3. Each entry must have name and complete address of person making the guess. Entries without complete information are not valid.

4. Entrant must live in Waseca County and be over 18 years of age.

5. If there are multiple correct guesses, a drawing will be made to determine the winner.

6. If there are no correct guesses, a drawing will be made from all en-

tries received.

7. Entries must be received before 3:00 p.m. February 27, 2026.

8. Submit entries to:

a. WASECA: Submit entry at Waseca Music; 111 South State, Waseca, MN 56093; or via mail.

b. JANESVILLE: Mail or drop off at Waseca Music; mark your entry as Janesville.

c. NEW RICHLAND: Drop off at NRHEG STAR EAGLE NEWS; or mail to Waseca Music - mark your entry as New Richland.

Frosty sponsors: iWealth – Brad Connors; Domino’s; Latham Place; Mediacom; Lake Shore Inn; and Xcel Energy. Please thank these sponsors for supporting the 29th

Annual Frosty Contest!

Frosty: Week 6 Clue

This final week

Offers a final clue

Frosty’s identity -

Do you know too?

Retired after 34 years in the field,

But still in the thick of things,

Still working for the greater good,

Excited for what the future brings.

Days are anything but relaxing,

Frosty with full hands and full heart,

3 grown children, 7 grandkids

And 1 more soon added to the flowchart.

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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FAX: 507-463-0504, email: steagle@hickorytech.net

USPS No. 382-040, address: 128 North Broadway

Mail: PO Box 248, New Richland, MN 56072

DEADLINES: STAR EAGLE: Noon Monday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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Compostings

by Al Batt

The benefits of house burping

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING
I was walking an Alaskan trail when I met a bear. All I had in my backpack was a can of fly spray, so I sprayed the bear.
What happened?
The bear flew away.
DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE
I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. The wind nearly took my nose off. I leaned into it so hard, I may never stand straight again. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. So that leaves those folks off the curling squad. Olympic curling stones are made of granite quarried on Ailsa Craig, an uninhabited volcanic island in Scotland's Firth of Clyde. Ailsa Craig translates to "fairy rock" in Gaelic. Curling stones must weigh between 38 and 44 pounds. On average, 42 pounds, equivalent to the weight of about 131 baseballs. A stone costs \$960 and up. Sadly, a Minnesota curler's ingestion of performance-enhancing tater tot hotdish led to his disqualification.

Sloths don't curl or watch curling. Costa Rica is a mecca for sloths like me. I spent time watching other sloths do a lot of little. Birds of a feather flock together. Sloth is one of the seven deadly sins, but the two kinds of sloths in Costa Rica, the two-toed and the three-toed, are nobody's deadly sin. No sloth has ever medaled in the Olympics because they're among the slowest-moving mammals in the world. On average, a sloth moves 41 yards per day. Sloths are folivores, meaning they consume leaves, twigs and buds exclusively, and they have four-chambered stomachs similar to the digestive systems of ruminants such as domestic cattle. When it needs to, a sloth creeps down a tree, and once on the ground, it digs a hole, defecates in it, and covers it with leaf litter. Then, it's a sluggish climb back up the tree. Sloths appear mottled green due to algae growing on their fur. They sleep in the trees and reportedly snooze 15-20 hours per day, but recent studies show they sleep only 8-10 hours. It's believed sloths sleep so much because they can't get Netflix in the trees.

I'VE LEARNED
We never have normal weather. "You like potayto, I like potahto; you like tomayto, I like tomahto; potayto, potahto, tomayto, to-mahto, let's call the whole thing off!" I've never heard anyone call a spud a "potahto."

MEETING ADJOURNED
"We are made kind by being kind."—Eric Hoffer.

NATURE NOTES
Fox and gray squirrels are scatter-hoarders. They hide food in many small caches scattered across the landscape. Fox squirrels are the largest tree squirrels native to North America and are calmer than the grays, which are more squirrelly. The agility and skittishness of a gray squirrel have given it the nickname "cat squirrel," which I've heard it called in Texas. A UC Berkeley study published in the journal Royal Society of Open Science found that tree squirrels use a mnemonic technique called "spatial chunking" to sort and bury nuts by size, type and possibly by nutritional value and taste. It's a meticulous preparation to survive a harsh winter. One squirrel can bury 3,000 to 10,000 nuts, and its tremendous spatial memory and excellent sense of smell allow it to retrieve 26 to 95% of the nuts it had squirreled away. Central Connecticut State University research reported that an eastern gray squirrel engages in deceptive caching by digging a hole and pretending to drop a nut in it, before covering the hole. They do this covert action to fool other squirrels who might be watching. Both the owners and thieves move the caches. Squirrels listen to the sounds of birds like robins, jays and chickadees, and use them as alarms or all-clear signals.

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT
I went to my childhood home, knocked on the door, and asked the residents if I could come in and look around. They said, "No," and slammed the door in my face. My parents are the worst.

HOUSE BURPING
We hear about people saving the best for last, but my wife, when given a box of assorted chocolates, saves the worst for last.

HOUSE BURPING
House burping is a wellness trend involving opening doors and windows on opposite sides of a home for 5–10 minutes daily to flush out stale air, reduce humidity, and prevent mold/carbon dioxide buildup. The cross-breeze improves indoor air quality. House burping can also be achieved by allowing a group of young boys to drink as much root beer as they want.

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Ellendale's new fire hall nears completion

By KAY FATE
Steele County Times

This spring, expect a stronger-than-usual breeze from the southwest – specifically, from Ellendale.

It will be the collective sigh of relief when all of the work is complete on the city's new fire hall, more than 30 years in the making.

"The oldest blueprints I have are from '94," said Fire Chief Logan Busho. "Steve and I have been working on [the current plan] for eight years, so it's been a process. I'm ready for it to be done."

He's talking about Steve Engel, city clerk/treasurer – and former mayor of the town – who's been on the front line of the planning and financing pieces of the project.

Evolving plans
The work on the latest iteration of a fire hall began in 2017 with a call to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has resources for rural fire departments.

"We were actually looking at (spending) \$250,000," Engel said, and the USDA suggested city officials travel to Nerstrand, which had just built a new fire hall.

Before much else was accomplished, "things changed," he said, "and prices started going up."

Still, the USDA offered loans of up to \$450,000, which would mean the city wouldn't have to bond for the cost. Engel knew the city couldn't come up with enough money through property taxes alone.

Prices continued to climb as Engel and Busho sent the required paperwork to the USDA.

"It was ungodly," Engel said. "I sent them 38 different documents – just to qualify to ask for the money – and we still weren't approved."

All options for the building were discussed, including stick-built, steel and prestressed concrete.

The deciding factors, Engel said, were cost, longevity and fire-prevention.

The new hall would sit on city-owned property immediately east of the existing fire hall.

Other lots in town were available for EFD to use, Busho said, "but then we would lose having the old building right next door."

With the decisions made, it was time to build.

Dollar signs
Construction on the building began last



Ellendale Fire Department Chief Logan Busho stands in the empty bays of the city's new fire hall, which is expected to be operational this spring. The old hall is more than 50 years old, small and outdated; this facility will allow the department room to grow. Photo by Kay Fate

summer, and will be completed this spring.

The new Ellendale fire hall is steel, has a life span of 80 years and cost just a hair over \$900,000.

As Engel and Busho worked on providing the required documents to the USDA, the project's price tag quickly passed the \$450,000 mark, forcing the city to bond for the financing.

During COVID, "there was one month where the price of materials jumped \$70,000," Busho said.

When considering a building of prestressed concrete, "we hit a million (dollars), figuring on paper, within 10 minutes, and that was back in 2018," Engel said.

The most difficult part of the process for Busho, a third-generation firefighter, was figuring out the funding.

"When we started, we looked at trying to get grants," Busho said, but grants were only considered for cities with a median income of \$20,000 or less.

The fire department, through its charitable gambling association, "donated quite a chunk of it," and the city's prior budgeting has provided another \$90,000 toward the cost.

The Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association and the Minnesota State Fire Department Association says the state ranks 48th in state-wide funding for departments.

Bonding it was, with payments of \$65,000 annually for 20 years.

"We borrowed \$760,000, plus insurance," Engel said. The add-ons and contingencies have tacked on another \$100,000.

Still, there have been savings, including not connecting the old fire hall, built in 1974, with the new structure.

Though they sit just a few feet apart, connecting the buildings would have required installing new sprinkler and carbon monoxide systems in the old hall – at a cost of \$150,000, Busho said.

The details
Ellendale's new fire hall stands out in a block of tan and white buildings, with its dark red exterior and angled roofline.

The four-bay, 5,300-square-foot building has a meeting room, office and two bathrooms on the main floor. Plug-ins drop from the two-story ceiling for the trucks, "and as soon as we start the truck, they pop out and retract," said Josh Otto, who has been with the EFD for 11 years.

A set of stairs lead up to an open loft space that houses the HVAC system – with plenty of room for storage and potential additional meeting space.

Otto was not on the fire hall building committee, but said its members frequently brought proposals to the rest of the department.

"Most of the guys were just excited to get one going," he said. "It took so long; and it was like, 'wow, we actually might be getting a new hall.'"

The interior allows for power washing equipment without worrying about moisture buildup and mold; the current fire hall has block walls – and a moisture problem.

"We probably have a couple months' worth of work on our own stuff, once we get in there," Busho said, including setting up the offices. The new lockers won't arrive until April.

"There's many times we figured this day would never come, you know? So if it takes a little longer, that's fine," he said.

The general contractor, APX Construction Group, "won't sign it over until their punch list is complete," Busho said. "Once we take it over, then any damage inside is on us."

The Mankato-based contractor will be back in the coming weeks to fix some exterior things, then will do the asphalt approaches

Firehall continued on 7

County EDA looks at area projects

By DEB BENTLY
Staff Writer

During a brief meeting the morning of Feb. 18, members Patti Schuch, Brad Krause, Russ Frederick, Matt Harrington and Chris Osterloh of the Waseca County Economic Development Authority (EDA) received an update from Planning and Zoning department administrator Tina Wilson regarding numerous ongoing initiatives which Wilson has assisted or interacted with.

She mentioned a Feb. 10 visit by a delegation from Quebec whose purpose was to build relationships with communities in the U.S. Local representatives joined the Canadians in touring both the

Guardian Energy ethanol plant near Janesville and Berry Pallets in Waseca.

Wilson also provided an update regarding the Workforce Development Center currently being planned for the lowest floor of the county Human Services Building on Elm Avenue West.

Because the work is being completed using federal grant money, various conditions must be met before each step of the process can continue. Wilson anticipated that construction work can be let out for bids within the next few weeks.

She also mentioned that the project is one of only two nationwide which is moving forward

fairly smoothly, and that she and other county representatives will be presenting information about the process that was followed during a national conference in July.

Members of the EDA also discussed their idea for a publication meant to inform the public about the many programs and opportunities available under the Authority's umbrella.

Schuch suggested the brochure should be as clear and succinct as possible, drawing readers' attention to the EDA, and encouraging them to make contact to find out more. The brochure is still in the planning stages, but the intent is to distribute it throughout the county once it's complete.

Wilson also mentioned a recent meeting organized by New Richland city council member Jason Casey, who called area farmers and business people together at a Feb. 11 gathering attended by about 25 people at the New Richland City Hall. Casey asked the group to share ideas and information pertinent to a possible farmers' cooperative to grow camelina as a local crop, and perhaps even to work toward having a processing plant built somewhere in the area. Camelina is used by many Minnesota farmers as a cover crop, but can also be grown to maturity and harvested. The seeds are used in making sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).





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Local church invites all to Bible study with ‘The Chosen’

A group of 20 or more has begun gathering regularly at First Lutheran Church in Waldorf to watch episodes of the Christian series “The Chosen” and use it as a basis for short Bible study sessions. The group will meet again at 6 p.m. on March 15. At that time, season one, episode 5 will be viewed. The meeting after that will be 6 p.m. March 29.

The sessions began in January and are held every other Sunday in the basement of First Lutheran Church. The video is shown on a 6-foot-tall screen and popcorn is served at no cost.

Session leader Rev. Larry Sipe says he believes the show will help viewers “gain a deeper understanding of God’s love for mankind and especially for themselves.” The series is produced by Dallas Jensen, who has been making Christian films for decades. In its fifth season and available online, the series depicts Christ and the apostles, adding elements about their daily lives and personalities which are not mentioned in the Bible, but are not in contradiction to information and circumstances provided in the New Testament.

Regarding the dramatizations, Sipe observes, “One of the appealing aspects is we get to see how human Jesus was, that he laughed, played, had friends, joked around, not just that he is God, but also that he is man. Another appealing aspect for me is that ‘The Chosen’ shows how much we have in common with the great heroes of the Gospels, Peter, who made the great confession that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God, had a wife and marital problems. ‘The Chosen’ does a good job at helping us understand what life was like under Roman occupation and the sense of longing for a savior/messiah/deliverer.”

Sipe goes on to say the dramatized version inspires viewers to read the Gospels for themselves; it also offers a low pressure opportunity to invite family members and friends to connect or reconnect with the central occurrences of Jesus’ life.

Annual meatball supper fundraiser returns

The History Center of Freeborn County (HCFC) will host its annual meatball supper from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, February 27 at the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge, 1623 West Main Street, Albert Lea.

The meal will include meatballs, mashed potatoes, gravy, veggie and a dinner roll. Tickets are \$12 per person and can be purchased at the history center or through HCFC board members. If you would like to purchase tickets by phone with a credit card, please call 507/373-8003.

The event will also feature a silent auction with items from local businesses.

■ Brunch

from Page 1

pointed to the biscuits and gravy, then to the four egg bakes sitting side by side on the counter, “We had a French toast bake, a gluten free bake, a sausage and cheese bake.” Light’s granddaughter Brynn was following her around, occasionally yanking on her grandmother’s shirt for attention. Little Brynn added, “I liked the peach yogurt and the cookies best.”

Pastor Marcia Pedersen walked through; she shared an observation about the church service earlier, “There were more faces in the

Where are the young church members?

Genie and I take our turn at serving coffee and goodies at Central Freeborn Lutheran Church rural Albert Lea Sunday morning February 15, 2026. We notice those in attendance are older in comparison to those attending the coffee hour 10-15 years ago. Where are the younger Central Freeborn Lutheran Church members?

Genie and I attend the Blue Earth River conference annual assembly of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America held at Ascension Lutheran church in Albert Lea on Sunday afternoon February 15, 2026. We notice those in attendance are older in age compared to those in attendance 10-15 years ago. (I am not comparing the ages of the clergy attending versus the ages of the Clergy 10-15 years ago. I suspect the average age of the clergy is younger.) Where are the younger eligible Evangelical members??

I have gotten to know many people over my lifetime, aging from 18-88. They retire, and, if no major health problem, they retire to some other place than southern



FACT OR FICTION

...you decide
by Bob Hanson, Emeritus

“If you repeat what you have read here, it may be used against you.”

Minnesota- usually the southern United States or the West Coast (California).

Why are the older people (on the average) leaving Minnesota??

These observations have a double barrel effect on Minnesota. 1. The younger people are not involved in the community. 2. The older people upon retirement are leaving Minnesota.

The leadership of Good Earth Villagers by Spring Valley, Minnesota was present at Ascension Lutheran Church in Albert Lea with statistics of their experience in 2025. The budget was \$1,366,756.71. Congratulations were involved with 29 congregations holding retreats there.

(Genie and I have been involved there over many years. Genie was the camp nurse for 3-4

years. Genie and I stayed overnight for two years.)

The local TV weatherman has a great way of looking at the weather; for example: We had a fake spring with no snow, outside flowers peeking through next to houses, and now a second winter, followed by a second spring and the first really warm weather beginning July!! (For example, we had iris outside on the west side of our house with green shoots!!)

For you early birds ready for the Twins; F.R.O.G. (Fully Rely on God) out of Central Freeborn Lutheran Church, rural Albert Lea plans on taking a bus to Lutheran night at the Twins ballgame August 11, 2026. (The details will be coming out later.)

After two days of high temperature, the same local weatherman

gave a forecast regarding Valentine's Day of: If it got any nicer, it would be summer!!

Hey NRHEG Basketball girl fans - Genie and I are pulling for you - we want to see you be state champs!!

There is currently a lot of chatter in regards to rifles being OK to hunt deer within this area. Personally I don't think rifles should be allowed in Southern Minnesota - there is too much open range and a rifle bullet can travel a lot further than a shotgun slug.

Have you noticed the brilliant sunsets??

An interesting recorded message on Presidents' Day Monday, February 16, 2026. “We are honoring Presidents' Day. Please do the same by calling back Tuesday, February 17, 2026. Thank You.”

Bob is a retired AAL (Aid Association for Lutherans) agent, currently working on his master's degree in Volunteering. His wife, Genie, is a retired RN, currently working on her doctor's degree in Volunteering. They have two children, Deb in North Carolina, and Dan in New York. Bob says if you enjoy his column, let him know. If you don't enjoy it, keep on reading, it can get worse. Words of wisdom: There is always room for God.

HERITAGE BITS



The Ellendale Baptist Church and “Early” Street Repair.

The Baptists of Ellendale were patient people. The area Baptist Society was organized in 1869, but was without a house of worship until 1895. In that year, a substantial church building was erected in Berlin Township about two miles north of the present site of Ellendale. In the summer of 1901, the Baptist Church was pulled to Ellendale to its present site of the Winfred Bergdale home where Reverend C.V. Smith served as the first pastor for a two-year period. His successor, Reverend N.E. Chapman served only one year before ill health forced him to resign. The turnover continued with the next pastor, Reverend Peltringill, presiding over only four services before he took ill with pneumonia and died. The church was without a regular minister from that time on, with occasional services conducted by pastors from neighboring churches. The Baptist Society kept hoping for the resumption of regular services and the church remained in good repair and debt-free when it finally became the Christian Church in 1920. The church was taken down when Albert Miller built his house on its site in 1928.

In this photo from approximately 1901, Ralph L. Bliton (Left) is working on the road with his team “Ben” and “Cub,” while street supervisor James Burns (right) is overseeing the work. Ralph was the son-in-law of William G.W. Bragg and had brought a team of his own when he moved to Ellendale from his parents’ farm near Northwood, Iowa. (2/26/26)

■ SMIF

from Page 1

ners at ABDO and Capstone for helping us strengthen our region through literacy.”

“Capstone’s southern Minnesota roots run deep. This community is truly something special and we’re proud to enter into our 24th year of partnership with Southern Minne-

sota Initiative Foundation to support children’s literacy,” said Gail Beer, Capstone vice president of customer relations and operations. “Research shows that access to books is critically important in a child’s development. SMIF is making a difference for the children in our community and Capstone remains honored to be a part of it.”

“Donating books to the Early Literacy Grant is always a highlight of our year,” said DeMar Borth, COO for ABDO. “Each book is an opportunity for a child to learn, connect

and grow.”

In 2002, Capstone helped launch the BookStart program, working with SMIF to distribute thousands of books to children in the region over a period of fifteen years. In 2018, the Early Literacy Grant was formed as a new collaborative effort between SMIF and the two Mankato-based publishing companies to put even more books into the hands of young children. SMIF has also previously partnered with both Capstone and ABDO on collectively distributing more than one hundred thousand

books across the region through grants and programming.

Applications are due to SMIF by March 17, 2026 at 2 p.m. The book pickup dates for awarded organizations will be held on June 16, 17, 24 and 25, 2026 in Owatonna. For more information or to apply, visit www.smifoundation.org. For questions about what SMIF might fund, contact Margaret Radel, Early Childhood Project & Grants Coordinator, at 507.455.3215 or email at margaretr@smifoundation.org.



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PLAYOFF ATMOSPHERE — The NRHEG girls' basketball team got a taste of playoff intensity in an 85-71 loss to Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's last Thursday in New Richland. At left, the Panthers' Gabby Schlaak drives the lane. In the middle, Ezra Boerner looks to make a pass. At right, Camryn VanMaldeghe, who scored 46 points, lines up for one of many three-pointers for the senior.

Photos by Jim Lutgens

Panthers can't hold off SESM in top-five battle

By JIM LUTGENS
Sports Editor

If the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva girls' basketball team wasn't ready for postseason play, it is now.

The Panthers, ranked No. 3 in the state in Class A, faced their toughest opponent of the season last Thursday before a packed New Richland gymnasium and in the end dropped an 85-71 decision to Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's, rated No. 4 among the state's Class A schools.

It was, according to NRHEG head coach Onika Peterson, a game of runs that saw the Panthers race to a 38-28 halftime advantage, which the Knights kept chipping away at in the second half before finally pulling away

with free throws in the final minutes.

The Panthers' record fell to 24-3 while the Knights improved to 25-1.

"It was truly a game of runs," said Peterson. "We had a great first half. We came out strong, defended at a high level, and executed well."

They held Knights top scorers Mathowitz and Schieffert to 14 and nine points, respectively, which Peterson was pleased to see through the first half.

"Sleepy Eye-St. Mary's plays a very aggressive and disciplined man-to-man defense," said Peterson. "We knocked down nine three-pointers tonight, which kept us in a great rhythm offensively, but at times we struggled finishing at the rim. I'm extremely

proud of how our girls continue to compete. It was a great game overall."

The Knights finally forged the lead in a five-minute stretch in the second half.

"During that stretch, we struggled to convert some good looks," said Peterson. "Against a strong team, those small windows make a big difference. In a dream scenario, we'll get another opportunity to face them, but we have a lot of work ahead of us."

Camryn VanMaldeghe had a huge game offensively for NRHEG, pouring in 46 points to go along with three rebounds, four assists and two steals. Her twin sister, Quinn, led the team in rebounding with 19, adding seven points, five steals and four

assists. Gabby Schlaak also reached double figures in scoring with 12 points.

Panther totals: Schlaak 12P, 1R, 3S, 1A; Ezra Boerner 2P, 1A; Q.VanMaldeghe 7P, 19R, 5S, 4A; Clara Buendorf 1R, 1A; C.VanMaldeghe 46P, 3R, 4S, 2A; Chloe Stork 4P, 3R.

The Panthers are seeded atop Section 1A, and faced eighth-seeded Houston Monday at the Rochester Recreation Center. The winner plays in the semifinals Saturday at 4 p.m. at Rochester. The section crown and state tournament berth will be decided March 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Rochester.

"Section 1 is loaded with talented teams," said Peterson. "We'll need to show up ready to compete every single night."

The good thing?

"Our girls," said Peterson, "love to compete."

The state tournament is March 11-14 at Williams Arena, the University of Minnesota's Maturi Pavilion, and Concordia University's Gangelhoff Center.

Said Peterson, "In a dream scenario, we face Sleepy Eye St. Mary's again."

Hayfield/Shaeffer Academy is seeded No. 2 in Section 1A, followed by Southland, Lewiston-Altura, Spring Grove, Fillmore Central, Lanesboro, Houston, Bethlehem Academy, Alden-Conger/Glenville-Emmons, Kingsland, Grand Meadow, Wabasha-Kellogg and LeRoy-Ostrander.

Panthers send three to state

Three NRHEG High School wrestlers have advanced to the state tournament from Saturday's Section 2A tournament in Janesville.

Winning section championships were freshman Owen Schlaak at 107 pounds and junior Ryan Schlaak at 189. Graham Jacobson, an eighth-grader was the runner-up at 114 to earn a return trip to state.

The top two finishers at each weight qualified for state.

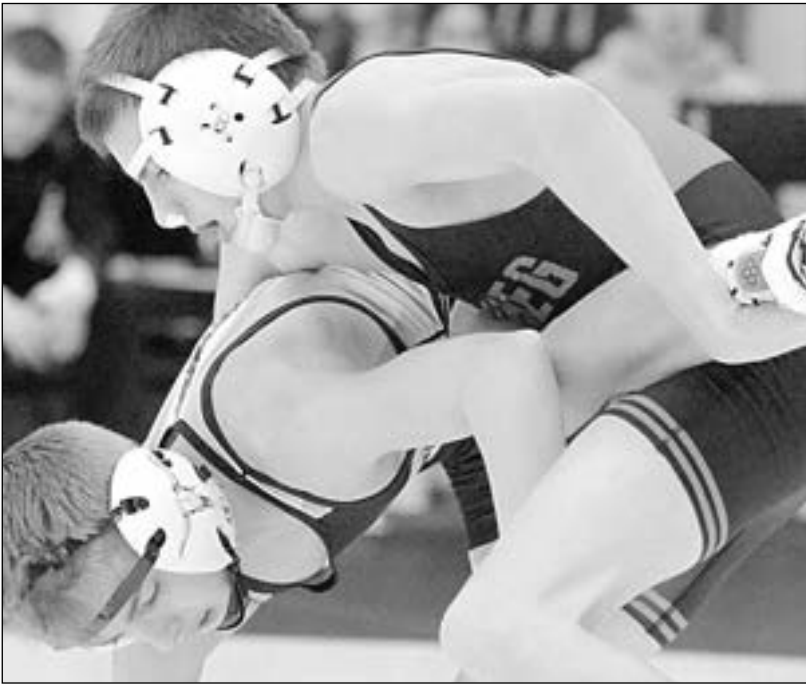
The Panthers had four fifth-place finishers in seventh-grader Bo Holland at 127, junior Chase

Johannsen at 139, sophomore Noah Weller at 127, and senior Wyatt Larson at 215.

Also wrestling but not placing for NRHEG: Dakota Schlaak, 133; Wyatt Hendrickson, 152; and Khaiden Madesn, 160.

Owen Schlaak will take a 29-5 season record to the state tournament at Grand Casino Arena (formerly Xcel Energy Center) in St. Paul. Ryan Schlaak has a 31-4 record. Jacobson will take an impressive 43 victories to state.

The state tournament runs Feb. 25-28.



STATE QUALIFIERS — NRHEG's Ryan Schlaak (on bottom at left), and Owen Schlaak (on top at right) have advanced to the state wrestling tournament after winning Section 2A championships Saturday at Janesville.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

Slow-starting Panthers fall at WEM

NRHEG boys' can't contain Nicollet in 95-50 loss at New Richland

The first half was rough for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva boys' basketball team in the final game of the regular season at WEM last Friday.

"We struggled mightily on the defensive end," said Panthers coach Dan Schmidt. "We had a tough time talking through our switches, as well as letting ourselves drift out of help-side defense. That, coupled with not getting shots to fall on the other end of the court, put us in a tough hole."

The second half was better, but not good enough to catch the Buccaneers as WEM held on for a 74-52 victory.

The Panthers came out in the second half with better energy on the defensive end and held WEM to 27 second-half points.

Coach Schmidt was able to substitute freely in the second half, and he liked what he saw.

"We struggled mightily on the defensive end." — NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt

"We let some guys play that don't see a lot of minutes, and they really stepped up the last 7-8 minutes and worked hard," said the coach. "It was good to see them play the way they did, and I'm proud of the effort they played with."

Brendan Schmidt and Sean Lassahn led the Panthers with 10 points apiece. Brooks Gilliland added eight, Calvin Nissen seven. A.J. Deen scored what Coach Schmidt called a quiet six points, but he came up big on the boards with 11 rebounds.

NRHEG totals: A.J. Deen 6P, 11R, 5A, 3 blocked shots; Dom Olson 3P, 1R, 2A 1 steal; Nissen 7P, 1R, 3A, 2S; Brooks Gilliland 8P,

3R, 1A, 1S; Fynn Baumann 1P, 3R; B.Schmidt 10P, 3R, 1A; David Deen 2R; Brock Holland 2P, 6R; Jackson McGannon 1B; Lassahn 10P, 2R, 1S; Levi Whiteside 5P, 1R.

The Panthers took on a tough Nicollet squad Saturday, Feb. 14 afternoon and lost 95-50 at New Richland.

"We knew it was going to be a tough game, with a 2:30 p.m. start time coming off of a game the night before, and with Nicollet being as good as they are," said Schmidt. "We looked tired and two or three steps slow all afternoon, and were never really in it."

Schmidt praised the play of the Raiders.

"Nicollet does a great job of constantly cutting to the basket, and we just couldn't keep up," he said. "We spend a lot of time talking about the translation from practice to game, and it's a mindset that we have to start exhibiting."

Nissen led with 19 points. Gilliland was close behind with 17.

Panther totals: A.J. Deen 4 points, 8 rebounds, 2 assists; Olson 3P, 1R; Nissen 19P, 1R, 1A; Gilliland 17P, 4R, 2A, 2 steals; Baumann 3R; B.Schmidt 1 steal, 1 blocked shot; D.Deen 1A; Holland 4P, 4R, 1A; Reid Sandry 3P; Lassahn 1R, 1S; Whiteside 1R, 1S.

The Panthers await seeding for playoffs. The Panthers could possibly end up with a home game Friday, or a bye to Tuesday, March 3, depending on where they end up.



MONSTER GAME ON THE BOARDS — NRHEG's A.J. Deen scored what coach Dan Schmidt called a quiet six points, but had a big game rebounding with 11 at Waterville last Friday.

Photo by Jim Lutgens

Woods and Water

by Dick Herfindahl
Outdoor Writer

Campfires are a necessity for enjoyment

I now have a miniature Barfley in the house. You only have 18 inches as it is now behind me and I am looking forward to seeing what he does. I am now looking forward to spring more than ever. Just the thought of open water makes me feel rejuvenated and ready for another fishing season.

When it gets to be this time of year, the dreaded cabin fever starts to set in. My only way to find it off is to think about spring and the beginning of open water fishing. When I say spring, I would always be a "hard water" type of guy, in the thought of casting a lure and hearing the "plink" of my lure hitting the water is what keeps me somewhat sane. I find that looking forward to fishing, summer and the cabin makes my winter go by just a little bit faster. I have always been a dreamer, which goes a long way toward preserving my sanity.

In my younger days when the family was much younger, I looked forward to vacationing up north. We did a lot of camping in those days, and we always looked forward to that.

Camping was a lot cheaper than

camping a cabin, and eating around a campfire made the experience very special. We ate breakfast in the camper and ate around the campfire at night. Roasting hotdogs on the campfire was a tradition with us. A few beans along with some potato salad was a staple when it came to camping. We would make 5 more for a sweet snack after supper. The kids really looked forward to these and the grownups kind of liked them. They were a sweet and sticky snack, but not, so good. Campfires were the center for all the camping that we did. Our second oldest grandson, Taylor, always wanted to be the first one to start the fire in the morning. The boys would sit around the fire until it was time to fish, hunt or explore the woods.

Hanging out with my grandkids made me feel young again. I always enjoyed sharing what knowledge that I had about the outdoors with them.

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.



Here a picture of the family at the campsite. Shown here is my son Brad, grandson Dylan, grandma, son Brian, grandsons Trevor, Taylor, Grant and Brad's dog Bud. Another picture is of my son Brad helping his daughter start a fire.

LOOKING BACK

25 years ago



Winning the Grand Prize of \$100 given away during the annual St. Olaf Lake Ice Fishing Derby, sponsored by the New Richland area Sportsman's Club, Sunday afternoon was Tristen Thurnan of New Richland.

• JV and Division C of Proberton announce the engagement of their daughter, Sarah Cuy, to Jason Muschka, son of Bob and Sandy Muschka of Vainmont. Sarah is a 1997 graduate of Intercede-Stoddard-Pemberton High School. Jason is a 1996 graduate of Fairmont High School.

• Ashley Nigam leads after completing a vault in the gymnastics triangular the Panther Gymnastics team entered in Wadena, earlier this month.



50 years ago
• The Colts of Wadena-Pemberton defeated the Lake Crystal team, 56-47 in the first round of play in District 6A basketball Tournament action at Mankato State University Monday evening. The Colts shot a hot 30 percent from the free throw line, while their opponents were shooting 75 percent. Scoring in double figures for the Colts were Pete Hanson with 12, Scott Jones, 23 and Bob Dragon, 10.



• These New Richland-Hartland High school band members will attend the Doran Band Festival at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, February 28-March 1. They are from the left, Judy Tolleson, C-Flater, JoAnn Haun, Elna Christensen, and Elna Christensen, all from Decorah. Each will play a solo for adjudication. The public is invited to the 7:30 p.m. Monday evening concert at Luther.

75 years ago
• A registered Quaternary crew, Boulder Bridge Winery, owned by Harold Holstad, Wadena, won 10,113 pounds of milk and 551 pounds of butterfat in the county's breadbasket. Harold is a member of the Woodville Brothers 4-H club in Wadena County and showed this butter at the Wadena County Fair, State Fair and the Wadena Show last year as a 4-H club project.

BERLIN TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING,
ELECTION, AND BOARD OF
CANVASS MEETING

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Berlin Township, County of Steele, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 30, 2026. In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until the third Tuesday in March.

The Election Poll hours will be open from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. at which time the voters will elect:

One (1) Supervisor for a (3) year term

One (1) Clerk for a (2) year term

The Annual Meeting will meet at 8:15 P.M. to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Annual Election and Meeting will be held at the following location:

Elendale Community Building

The Board of Canvass will meet on March 30, 2026 to certify the official election results.

Helen Schmidt

Berlin Township Clerk

Attend the Church of your Choice!

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10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

ST. PETER EVANGELICAL

LUTHERAN CHURCH
Elendale, Minnesota
Rev. Scott Williams, Pastor
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

TRINITY EVANGELICAL

LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Phil & Loph
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

LESLIE RIVER

LUTHERAN CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Don Nordahl
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

VISTA LUTHERAN

CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Don Nordahl
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

VISTA EVANGELICAL

CONVENT CHURCH
New Richland, Minnesota
Pastor Don Nordahl
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

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Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
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HARTLAND

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LUTHERAN
Hartland, Minnesota
Pastor Phil & Loph
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

MANCHESTER

EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
Manchrest, Minnesota
Pastor Phil & Loph
Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

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Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

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Sunday - 9 a.m. Sunday School,
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Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

ELLENDALE UNITED

SEVENTH DAY
ADVENTIST
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Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

CENTRAL FREEDOM

LUTHERAN CHURCH
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

EAST FREEDOM

LUTHERAN
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

FAMILY OF FAITH

CONVENT CHURCH
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

FIRST LUTHERAN

Manchrest, Minnesota
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN

Church, Minnesota
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

FAMILY OF FAITH CON-
VENT CHURCH
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

JOHN LUTHERAN, ELCA

Elendale, Minnesota
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN

Church, Minnesota
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

POSTOPPIAN

LUTHERAN
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

FIRST LUTHERAN, LCMC

Church, Minnesota
Pastor John Lohr
Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesday - 7:15 p.m. Supper
10:30 a.m. Bible Study

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

DATE OF MORTGAGE: October 14, 2022

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$205,623.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Colton C. Eustice, a married man

MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for American Portfolio Mortgage Corporation

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING:

Recorded on February 8, 2023 as Document Number A332886 in the Office of the County Recorder of Waseca County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Amerihome Mortgage Company, LLC by assignment recorded on April 25, 2024 as Document Number A336738 in the Office of the County Recorder of Waseca County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: The North One Half of Lots (11) and Twelve (12), Block Nine (9), First Addition to the Village, now City of Waseca, Minnesota, according to the map or plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the Register of Deeds in and for Waseca County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 201 6TH ST SE, WASECA, MN 56093

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Waseca County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$233,270.73

TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: American Portfolio Mortgage Corporation

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: Amerihome Mortgage Company, LLC

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17.276.1140

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 1003336-0000078258-4

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an

execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: April 23, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Waseca County Sheriff's Office, 122 3rd Ave. NW, Waseca, MN 56093.

to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months from the date of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial

order, you must vacate the premises by 11:59 p.m. on October 23, 2026.

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

Dated: February 12, 2026

AMERIHOME MORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC

Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/ *N. Kibongni Fondungallah, Esq.* Samuel R. Coleman, Esq. Alexa Marsh, Esq. Attorneys for Mortgagee 25 Dale Street North St. Paul, MN 55102 (651) 209-9760 (25-1337-FC01)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. Published in the NRHEG Star Eagle on Feb. 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26

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BATH TOWNSHIP

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING, ELECTION, AND BOARD OF CANVASS MEETING

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of Bath Township, County of Freeborn, State of Minnesota, that the Annual Election of Town Officers and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 11, 2025 at the Bath Town Hall at 29737 762nd Avenue, Clarks Grove. In case of inclement weather, the meeting and election may be postponed until March 18, 2025. If March 18 has inclement weather also, the meeting and election will be on Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

The Annual Meeting will commence at 4 P.M. to conduct all necessary business prescribed by law.

The Election Poll hours will be open from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. at which time the voters will elect:

One (1) Supervisor for a (3) year term

One (1) Treasurer for a (2) year term

The Board of Canvass will meet at 8:05 P.M. to certify the official election results.

Lisa Dunn

Bath Township Clerk

City of New Richland Summary Budget

The purpose of this report is to provide summary 2026 budget information concerning the City of New Richland to interested citizens. The budget is published in accordance to MN Statutes Section 471.6965. This budget is not complete. The complete budget may be examined at City Hall, 203 N Broadway Ave. The City Council approved this budget on December 22, 2025.

Revenues	2025 Adopted	2026 Adopted
Property Taxes	\$ 456,213	\$ 470,339
All Other Taxes	\$ 117,150	\$ 117,150
Special Assessments	\$ -	\$ 350
Licenses and Permits	\$ 28,150	\$ 29,150
Federal Grants		
State General Purpose Aid	\$ 504,229	\$ 505,266
State Categorical Aid	\$ 53,000	\$ 58,000
Grants from County and Other Local Govt	\$ 3,700	\$ 3,700
Charges for Services	\$ 147,460	\$ 158,500
Fines and Forfeits	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Interest on Investments	\$ 1,000	\$ 5,000
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 211,500	\$ 211,500
Transfers from Other Funds/Bond Sale Proceeds		
Total Revenues	\$ 1,530,402	\$ 1,566,955

Expenditures	2025 Adopted	2026 Adopted
General Government	\$ 281,787	\$ 314,385
Public Safety	\$ 615,495	\$ 609,977
Streets and Highways	\$ 255,210	\$ 279,666
Culture and Recreation	\$ 57,210	\$ 48,227
Miscellaneous Current Expenditures	\$ 235,000	\$ 235,000
Debt Service - Principal	\$ 105,000	\$ 119,000
Interest and Fiscal Charges	\$ 25,000	\$ 112,767
Transfers to Other Funds		
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,574,702	\$ 1,719,022

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NRHEG Panther Wrestling



TO STATE - The Panther Wrestlers completed an exciting day at sections with state qualifiers and section placers. Owen - 1st (state qualifier); Graham - 2nd (state qualifier); Bo - 5th; Chase - 5th; Noah - 5th; Ryan - 1st (state qualifier); Wyatt - 5th; Girls section placer: Jessie - 5th

Senator talks 2026 legislative priorities

By SEN. GENE DORNICK
Column

Friends and neighbors,
The 2026 legislative session will kick off on February 17. Minnesota operates on a two-year budget cycle, meaning the legislature passes a biennial state budget during odd-numbered years. The following even-numbered year, like 2026, focuses primarily on bonding (capital investment) and policy. This structure allows the state to allocate between setting the budget and making long-term investments in infrastructure and reform.

To understand where we are today, it's important to look back. During the 2021-2024 budget cycle, under total Democratic control, state spending increased by nearly 40%. Lawmakers spent the entire \$19 billion surplus and raised taxes and fees by \$15 billion. These decisions have consequences, and projected future deficits loomed the state to make cuts last year.

Today, the enacted 2024-27 budget stands at about \$66 billion - roughly \$6 billion less than the 2021-2024 budget. While the current session shows a modest surplus, long-term projections point to a multi-billion-

dollar shortfall if spending is not reduced.

As we enter this two-budget session, the focus turns to bonding. These investments fund critical infrastructure projects across the state. In District 23, priorities include improvements in wastewater facilities, drinking water systems, the Hwy 218 corridor, and transportation modernization. The Minnesota Bonding Center at the Federal Institute and other needed projects throughout the district. This year, a key priority for me is advancing a responsible bonding bill to strengthen core infrastructure.

Another top priority must be investigating the fraud and corruption that occurred within state programs under the WIA administration and holding those responsible accountable. Billions of taxpayer dollars meant to help the disabled, elderly, families with children, and other vulnerable Minnesotans were misused. Minnesotans deserve transparency, accountability, and confidence that their hard-earned tax dollars are being used as intended.

I continue to hear from constituents about the growing number of unfunded state mandates placed on

cities, counties, schools, businesses, and farmers. These mandates drive up property taxes, make it harder to balance local budgets, and create real hardship for Minnesotans. Many of these one-size-fits-all mandates became law during the 2021-2024 session, when Democrats had full control of the legislature. Government should partner with local governments, schools, businesses, and farmers to find practical solutions. I am hopeful that this session, legislators will make improvements to some of these mandates.

During the interim, I visited counties in the district and saw firsthand the outdated IT systems used to administer many state programs. I was shocked by how old and inefficient these systems are, especially knowing a \$19 billion surplus was once available but not used to modernize them. It's time to update these systems and make state programs more efficient.

We will also likely debate about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE was created after the 9/11 attacks with bipartisan support. It has been used by every presidential administration since. Historically, ICE relied on cooperation with state

and local law enforcement, with many arrests handled in jails rather than on the streets. Now that ICE is led by Tom Homan, I'm hoping for better cooperation all around.

The Biden administration's past border policies and local sanctuary city approaches strain federal immigration enforcement and have heightened tensions. Collaboration among all levels of law enforcement is critical to protecting public safety. At the same time, federal officers must act within the Constitution and the rule of law, and any abuse of authority must be held accountable.

Protecting civil liberties is equally important. The right to protest is a cornerstone of our constitutional republic, and peaceful demonstrations should be supported. Minnesota law is clear that private cannot interfere with public safety or the rights of others (Minn. Stat. § 609.50). Freedom of speech and public safety go hand in hand and must be upheld together.

Minnesota faces serious challenges, but this session is an opportunity to restore fiscal discipline, hold government accountable, and focus on the priorities that matter most to Minnesotans.

NOTICE

Summit Township Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026
7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall

Andy Jewison
Summit Township Clerk

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