



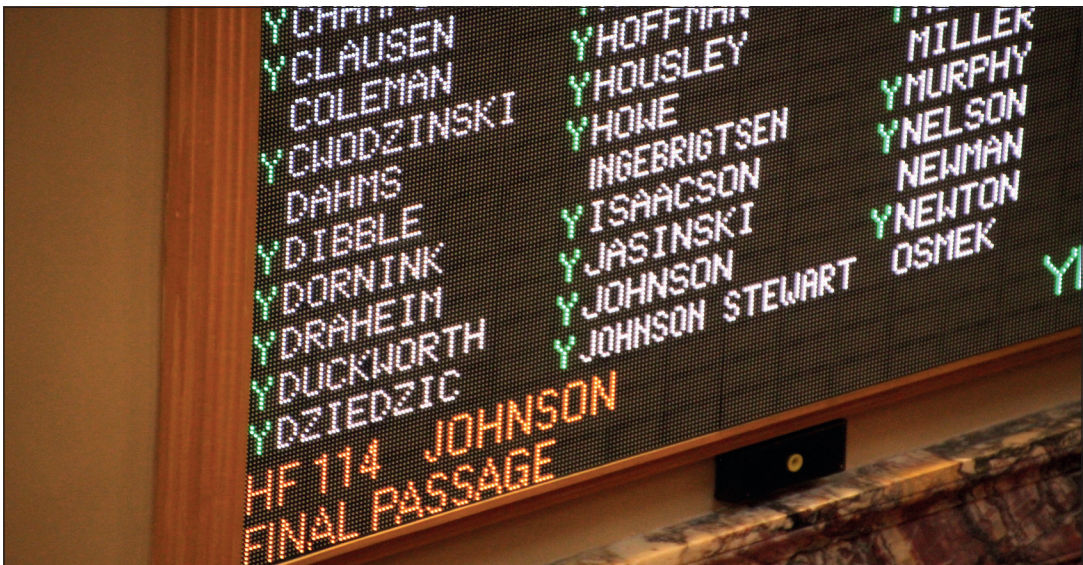
Even though COVID-19 has curtailed business at the State Capitol, Gene Dornink of Hayfield has begun his legislative career in the Minnesota Senate. On Thursday, Dornink's 12-year-old son, Josiah, joined him on the Senate floor to learn about his dad's new job as a senator. Dornink earned the District 27 Senate seat after defeating veteran Sen. Dan Sparks of Austin in last fall's election.

Freshman senator hits the floor running

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For freshman Sen. Gene Dornink, inexperience isn't keeping him from staying active and getting to work in the Minnesota Senate. Only a month into the legislative session, Dornink, R-Hayfield, has authored 11 bills and co-authored several others.

And Dornink is paying particular attention to his own district, which encompasses southern Dodge County, the City of Blooming Prairie and most of Freeborn and Mower counties. He has submitted a bill that would complete Austin's funding request for bonding dollars to help offset the cost of the city's Wastewater Treatment Facility renovation project. Besides authoring bills, Dornink keeps busy with several important committees, including agriculture, labor, capital investments and human services licensing policy. With COVID-19 forcing lawmakers to work remotely in many cases, Dornink struggles to get up to speed. "We're not



The Minnesota Senate is in full swing, though things look very different than in the past. Only a handful of senators are allowed on the floor while the rest watch on closed-circuit TVs in nearby conference rooms. When they are called upon to vote, they enter the chambers and vote before returning to the conference rooms.

getting the training we normally would get," he said. "We can't meet the people and the relationships aren't as good." On this particular day, Dornink met up with Sen. Chuck Wiger, D-Maplewood, for the first time to share personal information in a hallway between the state office building and the Capitol while en route to the Senate floor. It has become one of the only ways he can meet fellow senators in a year that is anything but normal. "I want to know them by face," Dornink said of meeting other senators. Dornink said he doesn't feel cheated by not having a traditional start to his legislative career in light of the pandemic that has crippled the state. "I'm just honored to be here," he said. "Just go with the flow and be flexible." Besides, Dornink says, he's not "a pomp and circumstance guy" who needs all the

pageantry that often comes with the legislative session's start. "I don't want to be that guy that's full of himself," he said. "I want to lead by example. I'm not going to tell you to do something that I wouldn't do myself," he added. As the senators dig into the session, the key priorities for republicans are recovering from COVID-19, keeping life affordable and supporting families. Dornink said recovering from COVID will include reopening schools, protecting seniors, supporting small businesses and reforming emergency powers within the state government. Another priority that republicans have dug their heels into is balancing the state budget without raising taxes. Dornink said the \$1.3 billion shortfall could be resolved with budget cuts and by using budget reserves. Zoom meetings consume much of Dornink's day. He meets with lobbyists and concerned citizens over Zoom to learn about the issues facing Minnesotans.

SEE FRESHMAN, A9

'I knew it was fire instantly'

Family evacuates before home goes up in flames

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Daniel Reese was working in his home office in Owatonna late Thursday morning when his wife, Sandra, texted him to come over to another part of the house immediately. He thought maybe there were some deer in the back yard like often happens, but Sandra was hearing strange noises coming from the upper part of the house. As soon as Daniel heard the noise, he knew it was trouble.



The home of the Daniel Reese family in Owatonna was extensively damaged by fire on Feb.11.

Benedictine achieves highest rating in industry

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For Lisa Kern, achieving a five-star rating is a milestone that is especially gratifying. Kern has been with the same care center organization that has gone through many changes over her 28-year career and never before has reached a five-star status. That's until last week. The Benedictine Living Community in Owatonna has attained a five-star quality rating from the Centers for Medicare and Med-

SEE BENEDICTINE, A10

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AREA DEATHS

Lois Gordan, 65, London
Norma Avis Oylo, 87, Owatonna

Serving
Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

Entrepreneurship is alive and well here

Owatonna has long been known as a hotbed of innovation. And for the second consecutive year, the business community is celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit of its past and present leaders.

Joining last year's inaugural class in the Steele County Entrepreneurs Hall of Fame are this year's inductees:

- The Gandrud family of Gandy Company,
- The Kaplan family of Owatonna Tool Company,
- Otto Josten of Jostens,
- Carol Nelson of National Hydro-Ax and Cybex, and
- The Lange family of Owatonna Canning Company and Festal Farms.

Jostens, the oldest of this year's class, was founded by Otto Josten as a watch-repair business in 1897 and later renamed Josten Manufacturing Company in 1900. His first product was a scholastic pin. For more than 100 years now, the company has been the preeminent supplier of class rings, yearbooks and graduation products.

Each of the companies in the Class of 2021 exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit needed to succeed, and their founders illustrate the best of the best. Fortunately, Steele County benefitted from their passion and self-reliance.

Forbes Magazine recently reported that entrepreneurship is on the rise, as new business applications reached their highest level in over a decade.

Seems these times of financial uncertainty have encouraged entrepreneurship on a grand scale.

National Entrepreneurship Week is a perfect time to celebrate past success stories and to focus on the personal traits and community assets that can help new businesses flourish well into the future.

Hats off to the Owatonna Area Business Development Center for spearheading this year's celebration. Video segments on National Entrepreneurship Week will be aired on Owatonna Live each day at 11 a.m. this week.

Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, the actual banquet to induct the 2021 class of inductees won't take place until later this year. The winner of the 2020 Entrepreneur of the Year award also will also announced at that time. Finalists for this year's honor are Scott Limberg and Limberg Productions; Foremost Brewing; Dan Kubista and Wagners Lunch; Scott and Jolayne Mohs; and Scott Hagland and Straight River Coffee.

Perhaps the delay will give all of us time to pause and think about how Owatonna might look today if those being honored for their entrepreneurial spirits hadn't taken a chance on themselves, their skills, their companies and our community.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER
Senator Gene Dornink, R-Hayfield, is hopeful that the fighting can stop and everyone begins working together for a better Minnesota.



Hot Pursuit

RICK BUSSLER

As one of Minnesota's newest senators, Gene Dornink is focused on sharing new ideas and fresh energy to the political fray that's polarized the legislature in recent years.

Dornink has the right ideas as he begins his newest adventure. He says it boils down to serving, listening and solving problems.

My only concern is that the political discord currently sweeping our country doesn't trample his enthusiasm and ideas. Politics is dividing our country in ways we never envisioned.

Last week, I sat down with Dornink in his Capitol office to get an idea of how he's adjusting to his legislative career after defeating long-time Sen. Dan Sparks in last fall's election. Dornink, who is from Dodge County, is one of 10 freshmen

Senator vows to work together

senators to take office this year.

"I feel at home here," Dornink said. "I want to do the best I can while I'm here."

Dornink's path to becoming senator has been a long time in coming.

In his early 20s, he thought he would run for political office. But, as what happens with many young people, life took him in other directions.

Fast-forward about 30 years. In 2010, people began encouraging Dornink to run for office. He thought about it some more and finally decided to run in 2016. He lost to Sparks, but decided to make another run at it in 2020.

Dornink devoted "a lot of time and money" to his senate campaign. "I worked hard enough to win," he said.

He knows he has his challenges ahead.

The senator wants to focus on listening to the people he serves.

"I'm working to represent the whole district," said Dornink.

"That's hard to do, but if you are honest and listen to their issues. We're not always going to agree, but if we can find common ground."

Listening and dealing with people is all about tone, according to Dornink. He said it's important not to elevate the conversation and keep things on an even keel. "Respect another person and don't get pulled in when they raise the tone."

Dornink said he's learned some of these skills in his own life by raising 12 children. He believes having unity with diversity can be accomplished. "We're all diverse, but we can be unified," he stressed.

Something that struck me about Dornink is his values in life. He is focused on strong family values. He hasn't drunk alcohol for many years because of issues that arose within his family from it.

He and his wife have also been involved with Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge, a group devoted to restoring

hope to people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. The experience has opened his eyes to the serious problem facing many people. "I didn't realize how addictive drugs were," Dornink said, adding mental health and addiction are big issues facing our state.

They have even adopted five teens over the years, four of which have gotten married.

"I'm not going to change the world, but I can change one person," he said.

And that philosophy will probably hold true in the political arena that Dornink has found himself in.

Let's all hope the fighting can stop and working together can begin.

Dornink vows to do his part. And that's a good thing.

Anything less will be at the detriment of all Minnesotans seeking the government to go in hot pursuit of helping them survive this horrible period in our history.

YOUR VIEW

Times is a great local newspaper

We want to thank you and Mitchell Breuer for the wonderful article and picture of our grandson, Brayden, in the Steele County Times (Feb. 10 edition). As you know, we are very proud of him! I will be laminating this article to keep with the ones I laminated during football the last three seasons! Such a great keepsake for him and us to have! A lot of great pictures of him!

Keep up the great work you are doing with your weekly newspaper. We always look forward to reading it. It is a "great local newspaper" with interesting articles!

Roland & Ann Truelson
Owatonna



YOUR VIEW

Historical Society extends heartfelt thanks

We have wonderful news: the Jerry's mural fundraiser has been a success! With the INCREDIBLE support of our local businesses and community members, we have exceeded our goal!

I want to thank each and every one of you who donated, shared,

or helped to spread the word of what we are doing here at the SCHS. It is all because of you that we were able to raise the funds needed to move and install the Jerry's mural, as well as create displays to tell its story and have money ready for future maintenance!

We will be planning a public unveiling party for later in the spring-time (let's be honest, it's too cold outside for a party right now) that will also be a time for us to unveil other new improvements at the History Center. Until then, PLEASE come

down to see it for yourself! Don't forget to get a ticket and check out our exhibit hall as well. Our current exhibits on Rural Schools and the American Legion are available to view and tell interesting and unique stories from the county.

Again, I offer my

heartfelt thanks to all of you for helping to make this possible. The mural truly is a centerpiece of our building now and we are beyond excited to be its home. We will care for it for generations to come, allowing the public to enjoy it far into the future.

A special thanks to

Rocon Construction, Viracon, the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, and Tom Brick for your great work, support, and guidance throughout this process.

Kellen Hinrichsen
Steele County Historical Society



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A state and national award winning weekly	
	
2021 —16 awards 2020 —9 state awards 2019 —7 state awards 2018 —6 state and 4 national awards 2017 —2 state and 3 national awards 2016 —8 state and 6 national awards	MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION 2015 —7 state and 4 national awards 2014 —3 state and 3 national awards 2013 —7 state and 2 national awards 2012 —2 state awards 2011 —4 national awards
(Awards presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Associations)	

COVID vaccine shortage lingers on

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Senior citizens are growing increasingly frustrated with the lack of COVID-19 vaccine to the point where they are taking matters into their own hands. Last week, a 90-year-old man from Steele County drove nearly five hours, one way to Bemidji to get a COVID shot, said Amy Caron, the county's public health director. "He was that desperate to get his shot," Caron said. "It's unfortunate that he had to do that." Caron shares in his frustration. She and her staff are just as upset that they can't help out more with vaccinating the 65 and older population. But the lack of vaccine keeps them from being able to do so. "We recognize the frustration of our older population," Caron said. "There is nothing we can do." Things don't look much better this week either. Steele County has received only 100 first doses of vaccine. Those shots will be given to school personnel and childcare providers, Caron said. At least 600 more doses are needed for those groups before the county can even move on to the senior citizens, she said. It's even bleaker in Dodge County, where health officials did not receive any new vaccine doses this week. Caron reminds people that the counties are at the mercy of the state in getting vaccines. Each week the state determines how many doses will be sent to each county. SEE COVID VACCINE, A6

COVID-19 VACCINE WATCH
Steele: 1,202
Dodge: 1,012
Source: Steele County Public Health

COVID shuttered farm show again

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For the second straight year, the North American Farm and Power Show in Owatonna has been shuttered by COVID-19. On Thursday, Tradexpos, Inc. of Austin announced the cancellation of this year's farm show, originally slated for March 18-20 at the Steele County Fairgrounds in Owatonna. The farm show was one of the first events to be canceled in 2020 when the pandemic began in March. In making the announcement, the show's director, Brock Nelson, said, "The North American Farm and Power Show has met an unfortunate demise." Nelson said his team had been ardently preparing for the show, and most preparations were complete. "Unfortunately, Minnesota's COVID-19 status, although improved, is still not enough to safely justify a large event," he said. While Tradexpos held off on making a decision as long as possible, Nelson said it's important that exhibitors have enough advanced notice to adjust their marketing plans and undo their preparation for the show. "Everyone involved wants to have the show; however, we understand the current conditions regarding the pandemic," said Nelson. Tradexpos began in 1989 and produces four indoor agricultural tradeshow across the Midwest. Besides the show in Owatonna, there are also shows in Fort Wayne, Ind., Topeka, Kan. and the Wichita show in Mulvane, Kan. So far, the only other show that has been canceled is Fort Wayne. The Topeka show is in April, while the Wichita show takes place in December. The largest show operated by Tradexpos is Fort Wayne featuring nearly 1,100 booths. The Owatonna show offers 310 booths. Nelson said the Owatonna show has been going for at least 18 years. Tradexpos purchased the show, which originally started in the Twin Cities, from the Minnesota and South Dakota Equipment Dealers Association. Tradexpos is already planning for next year's show, which will be March 17-19 at the Four Seasons Center in Owatonna. Asked if he thinks things will be better in 2022, Nelson replied, half jokingly, "I don't know how it can get any worse. I guess aliens could attack."


FILE PHOTO

It's been two years since vendors have been able to display their wares at the North American Farm Power Show in Owatonna.

Klobuchar reintroduces bill supporting seniors

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn) reintroduced two bills to help support seniors during the coronavirus pandemic. The Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act, introduced with Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Tina Smith (D-Minn), will provide financial relief to caregivers by creating a tax credit for the costs of caring for an aging relative, while the Senior Corps Distance Volunteering Act, introduced with Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), will ensure seniors can continue to safely volunteer during the coronavirus pandemic through remote and virtual volunteer activities. As a population particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus, seniors and their caregivers face unique challenges. In-person caregiving now comes with increased health risks and, often, monetary costs. Many seniors – the single largest group of national service participants – have been unable to continue volunteer activities, distancing them from their communities and causing organizations to face volunteer shortages. "We know that this pandemic has taken a toll on seniors and their caregivers, both emotionally and financially," said Klobuchar. "This legislation will allow seniors to stay connected to their communities and offset the cost of caregiving to ensure those who look after seniors – often family members – are able not just to take care of others, but also themselves." Throughout her time in the Senate, Klobuchar has been fighting to ensure that older Americans can live with dignity, access to good health care, and the peace of mind that their personal information is safe. In January, Klobuchar and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced the Protecting Seniors from Emergency Scams Act, which would direct the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to report scams targeting seniors during the pandemic to Congress and make recommendations on how to prevent future scams during emergencies. Last Congress, this legislation to help fight scams designed to strip seniors of their assets passed the House and Senate.

The State of Minnesota has expanded the level of detail available on its COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard to provide more granular information on doses shipped to and administered by each of the state's vaccine providers. The new dashboard elements detail the number of doses each provider has received and show each provider's progress toward the efficiency goals recently established by Gov. Tim Walz. The dashboard can be found here: <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/data>. The dashboard reflects the state's commitment to transparency and is an effective tool for holding the state and providers accountable on progress toward the efficient and effective distribution of vaccines. More detailed data can also highlight opportunities to better focus resources in the state's vaccination efforts. "What gets measured gets done. Minnesotans deserve to know where vaccine is in Minnesota, and how efficiently and effectively providers are getting those shots to the people who need them," Walz said. "The goals we have set are ambitious, but reasonable – and now Minnesotans can track when our providers achieve them." The new dashboard provides clarity on the categories of Minnesota's vaccine providers; more clearly reflects the number of doses held by each provider, and for how long; and uses more recent American Community Survey population estimates to track the state's progress toward vaccinating 80% of the state's vaccine-eligible residents. Minnesota providers have ramped up how quickly they are administering the doses they have on hand since Walz announced his goals of providers administering 90 percent of vaccine doses within 72-hour and all vaccine within seven days of receiving it. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Minnesota is 14th among states for the number of doses administered per 100,000. And the doses administered per day in Minnesota has also increased since the goals were announced. Both metrics represent improvements since Walz announced the goals on Jan. 25.

State improves vaccine data transparency

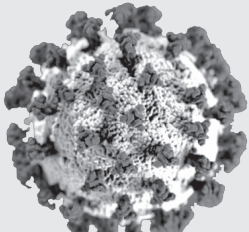
GUEST COLUMN

It's time for a plan to reopen the state

BY PEGGY BENNETT

We are nearly one year into the COVID-19 pandemic and it certainly has been a tough and arduous year. The sadness of losing loved ones, especially the heavy numbers of so many of our grandparents in nursing homes, has been tough to watch. So, too, has it been difficult to watch the incredible loneliness of our elders as they have remained isolated for months on end in care facilities throughout the state. My heart also breaks as we have witnessed the incredible hardships and trials that our many small businesses throughout the state have had to endure due to the Governor's executive orders. Many businesses have already had to close permanently due to these hardships, and many more are on the brink of closing. Long-time employees have lost their favorite jobs and watched their life savings being drained while on unemployment. I believe we are finally seeing light at the end of the tunnel with the continued decline in cases and the advent of the new vaccines. As the vaccine rollouts continue, I hope that we will see a continued drop in virus cases and a move toward reopening our society. It is time to have a plan to start opening up our state. The states around us have been open for some time and their infection rates have been very consistent with Minnesota's peaks and declines. There really is little difference between our border states and Minnesota except that our state has been locked down tight and theirs have not. It's time for our children to be in school. The CDC says it's safe. The WHO says it's safe. Our seniors need to be able to experience their iconic last year with their friends in the hallways as they prepare for graduation. Kindergartners need to be able to experience that first year in person to meet and get to know their favorite teacher. It's time to have a plan to start opening up our state. Earlier this week, House Republicans unveiled a plan for reopening businesses in our state with the goal of returning full operations to our job providers within a few months. Some will say it's too fast and some will say it's not fast enough, but I say at least it's a plan – and plans give hope. People need hope right now. There comes a time when we need to trust people to do the right thing, and the majority of people will do the right thing if given that opportunity. It's time to begin our plan to open up the state. The Minnesota House Republicans recently voted on a bill that would remove the Governor's ability to unilaterally keep schools closed and put those decisions in the hands of local school districts, and I supported the plan. The proposal ultimately failed on a party-line vote, with House Democrats voting in favor of allowing the governor to keep his school closing authority. While many rural schools have returned full time to the classroom, many suburban and inner city schools have not. As stated earlier, the science is showing that too many kids are struggling mightily in distance learning, both from a mental health and an academic perspective. School boards are best equipped to make school closing decisions, which is why I voted in favor of local control yesterday.

Peggy Bennett is a state representative serving Minnesota District 27A, which covers the City of Blooming Prairie, southern Dodge County and most of Freeborn County.



World..... 109,000,000

Deaths 2,400,000

Recovered..... 61,100,000

U.S.27,700,000

Deaths 485,000

Recovered..... 16,630,000

MN 474,000

Deaths 6,444

Recovered.....447,420

Steele..... 2,947

Deaths 11

Recovered..... 2,853

Dodge 1,489

Deaths 4

Recovered..... 1,421

Freeborn..... 2,716

Deaths 24

Recovered.....

Mower..... 3,937

Deaths 30

Recovered.....

AS OF FEB. 15, 2021

COVID-19 UPDATE

BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

Trespassing: On Feb. 5, Owatonna Police arrested a subject for trespassing in the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW at 4:54 a.m.



Behind The Badge
SHERIFF SCOTT ROSE

We’ve had a lot of people this past week sending messages asking why the Dodge County Sheriff’s Office wasn’t on the Dateline show.

First of all, our staff did an INCREDIBLE job with this case and it’s investigation. I would put them up against any big city or county investigations team, and I couldn’t be more proud of the work they did. They are incredibly talented people who worked day and night for weeks on this case. Our investigator’s work received high praise from the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office – their amazing work played a huge part

Why weren't we on Dateline NBC?

in us being able to avoid a trial. We have some truly amazing men and women serving here who genuinely care about the communities and the people we serve. Dateline titled its 2-hour show “The Woman in the Bar.” Here in Dodge County, for the Riess family, Lois wasn’t “The woman in the bar.” Regardless of whatever mental break caused her to do what she did, she’s still their mom, and she killed their dad. They not only lost their father and grandfather, they essentially lost their mother and grandmother as well in this terrible nightmare. Lois and David’s kids are still trying to process this, and always will be. The grandkids who dearly loved David and Lois, who spent a great deal of time at grandma and grandpa’s house, are now trying to process all of this.

This family is still struggling to heal the

best they can. If we had talked to Dateline (or any of the other numerous tabloid TV shows who’ve been calling), our appearance would have done nothing more than help them sell advertisement, which frankly does nothing to help this family. In reality, unless the family is involved to help tell the story, shows like this simply re-victimize them over and over again.

Unfortunately, the true reality is these national network tabloids don’t care about victim’s families like the Riess or Hutchinson family. They don’t care about Dodge County – they’d never heard of Dodge County until this happened. All they care about is getting the story and selling advertisement. This is evident by their relentless calls and emails to this office and to this family over the past several months and years.

Some of these national organizations even flew to Minneapolis, rented a car, and then called me on their way down to Mantorville to tell me they were on their way to visit with me – assuming that we would want to meet with them, like other agencies have done with other high profile cases. Well, we’re not like other agencies, and we refused every time.

Long story short, our number one priority with this case is the Riess family. That’s why we didn’t participate. Please keep this family in your thoughts and prayers as they work through the healing process and figure out what their new normal looks like.

Your Sheriff,
Scott

Scott Rose is in his second term as sheriff of Dodge County. His office was the lead agency in the Riess murder investigation.

CRIME BRIEF

Man suspected of violating order found hiding in closet

A man suspected of violating a court order was taken into custody after found hiding in the closet, police said.

Abraam Rodriguez, 20, of Owatonna has been charged with violating a domestic abuse no contact order, also referred to as a DANCOC violation.

Owatonna Police responded to a home in the 1400 block of North Cedar Avenue on Feb. 7 regarding a domestic disturbance. A woman reported that Rodriguez was inside the home holding on



to a child and not letting the child go. A DANCO was currently in place, prohibiting Rodriguez from having contact with the woman and child or being at the residence, according to police.

Officers entered the home to search for Rodriguez when they found him hiding in a bedroom closet. In an interview with police, Rodriguez admitted to knowing the order was in place and was hiding because he wasn’t supposed to be there, police said.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of Feb. 1 with Judge Joseph A. Bueltel presiding: Shayne D. Bowers, 31, St. Cloud, previously appeared and was convicted of felony theft and felony receiving stolen property. Bowers was sentenced to \$475 and 30 months in St. Cloud State Prison. Andy J. Hiebert, 44, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of heroin and misdemeanor DWI. He was sentenced to \$375, 31 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, maintain employment, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, electronic home monitor, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, no possession of firearms and 5 years of supervised probation; The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Feb. 1 – 7:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Estabon Ambriz Jr., 19, Blooming Prairie, possession of marijuana, \$125; Lisa M. Beach, 29, Ellendale, speeding, \$125; Jessica M. Forage, 27, St. Cloud, expired tabs, \$105; William P. Okweari, 49, Austin, revoked license, \$275; Roger J. Staffeldt, 71, Elkton, cancelled license, \$275; Jordan D. Stevens, 26, Owatonna, expired registration, \$105; Portillo Teodoro, 43, Lakeville, invalid license and failure to keep to the right, \$225; Tonya R. Thompson, 44, Austin, revoked license, \$275; Trace A. Tollefson, 23, Preston, speeding, \$215; Candace M. Wicks, 35, Austin, prohibited passing, \$125.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Mohamed A. Abdullahi, 20, Bloomington, speeding, \$135; Umar H. Ahmed, 30, Eagan, no insurance, \$275; Fathiya O. Ali, 36, St. Paul, speeding and revoked license, \$415; Eric G. Avila, 27, Medford, speeding and suspended license, \$415; Mesha R. Bragg, 28, Kansas City, MO, no license, \$175; Marcell M. Branch, 48,

Little Canada, speeding, \$115; Malik H. Brown, 28, Philadelphia, PA, CMV driver under influence, \$200 and 6 months of unsupervised probation; Emily A. Busho, 23, Ellendale, speeding, \$135; Jose E. Castellanos Flores, 30, Des Moines, IA, no license, \$175; Humberto Castillo Vasquez, 21, Abbott, TX, no license, \$175; Timothy J. Cheng, 22, Guilford, CT, speeding, \$135; Christopher G. Cole, 22, Minneapolis, revoked license and possession of marijuana, \$425; Ramon A. Corral, 31, West Palm Beach, FL, speeding, \$135; Joey De Jesus Allicea, 50, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Richard B. Detlie, 52, Faribault, seat belt, \$100; Jesus Donis, 34, St. Paul, speeding, \$135; Jaryd J. Eichinger, 34, Ankeny, IA, speeding, \$125; Boris W. Enyong, 34, Eagan, speeding, \$135; Brian T. Etzenhouser, 20, Overland Park, KS, speeding, \$135; Jacquelyn L. Ford, 51, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Deanna M. Fugate, 49, Osage, IA, speeding and no license, \$315; Baltazar Guzman Delcid, 39, Fridley, no license, \$175; Noah A. Harazin, 33, Silver Lake, revoked license, \$275; Amy L. Hentges, 45, Lakeville, speeding, \$125; Tina M. Hill, 54, Anoka, speeding, expired tabs and no insurance, \$365; Omar A. Ibarra Monreal, 27, Carrollton, TX, no license, \$175; Jori P. Inns, 33, Rexburg, ID, speeding, \$115; Gwendolyn E. Johns, 34, Mankato, speeding and revoked license, \$415; Laura C. Johns, 22, Kingwood, TX, speeding, \$215; Anne M. Jones, 49, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135; Jeremy J. Kelsey, 44, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Brandon J. Kirby, 28, Sweet Home, OR, failure to obey traffic signs, \$115; Kiley B. Krueger, 29, Phillips, WI, speeding, \$135; Fiye A. Ku, 38, Albert Lea, no license and revoked license, \$375; Joshua T. Loiacano, 24, Cottage Grove, speeding, \$215; Patricia L. Long, 74, St. Paul, speeding, \$135; Rodolfo Mendoza Munoz, 26, Maplewood, revoked license, \$275; Roger L. Middleton, 51, Fargo, ND, no license, \$175; Reanna J. Miller, 25, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Krishawn N. Mitchell, 37, Lees Summit, MO, speeding, \$215; Shaeyeaquela D. Monea Bassette, 24, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$115; Linda M. Montez, 56, Austin, speeding, \$115; Nathan O. Mosoti, 30, Big Lake, speeding, no

insurance and revoked license, \$535; Dennis J. Murray, 38, Mankato, illegal u-turn, no license and stolen plates, \$525; Elma Obic, 33, Johnston, IA, seat belt, \$100; Halid Obic, 31, Johnston, IA, speeding, \$125; Abdullahi A. Omar, 32, Mankato, revoked license, \$275; Daysha H. Pedersen, 31, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Reggie D. Pickett, 30, Waseca, suspended license and no insurance, \$475; Gerald H. Pulver, 76, Rochester, following vehicle too closely, \$125; Richard B. Rhymes, 38, Crete, IL, speeding, \$135; Marlin Rodriguez, 29, Albert Lea, seat belt, no insurance and revoked license, \$500; Michael S. Ross, 30, Ames, IA, speeding, \$115; Jack L. Ryan, 19, Woodbury, speeding, \$135; George E. Saldana, 23, Little Falls, revoked license and speeding, \$335; Catrina Y. Smith, 30, St. Paul, speeding, no insurance, child passenger restraint system violation and revoked license, \$585; Ryan B. Smith, 37, Rosemount, speeding, no insurance and revoked license, \$535; Ryan P. Stinnett, 21, Ellendale, speeding and revoked license, \$315; Lori A. Strouth, 53, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Passion P. Thomas, 32, St. Paul, revoked license, \$275; Francis B. Trem, 26, Altoona, IA, speeding, \$125; Ashley B. Trunnell, 49, Waseca, unsafe lane usage, \$125; Heather M. Walters, 45, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; Mohamed A. Well, 24, Faribault, speeding and no license, \$235; Nadim Zarazua-Hernandez, 22, Omaha, NE, speeding, \$215.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Musdaf A. Ahmed, 23, Mankato, failure to yield, \$125; Lasandra P. Anderson Thomas Harris, 33, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Donald B. Bodenweiser, 54, Geneva, seat belt, \$100; Daqwon R. Brown, 22, Owatonna, no insurance and following vehicle too closely, \$125, 2 days in county jail and 1 year of supervised probation; Jaylen M. Case, 27, Cottage Grove, stop sign, \$125; Cadnaan M. Deeq, 22, Minneapolis, suspended license, \$275; Jonah M. Deml, 23, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; James E. Dominguez, 24, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Jamie D.

Drache, 59, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Ashley A. Edwards, 35, Waseca, speeding, \$125; Zachary J. Eisen, 27, Owatonna, revoked license and seat belt, \$300; Lindsay K. Falvey, 28, Owatonna, expired tabs and registration violation, \$405; Mario A. Fernandez-Guerra, 35, Owatonna, DWI, \$300, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation; Jessica M. Fleck, 29, Mankato, open bottle, \$175; Sophia Maria C. Garza, 18, Owatonna, failure to signal sudden stop, \$125; Corey J. Gilbertson, 20, Medford, revoked license, \$275; Jacob D. Goerd, 20, Owatonna, unsafe passing, \$125; Molly A. Hensrud, 30, Ottertail, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Andy J. Hiebert, 44, Owatonna, DWI, Chelsey G. Howard, 25, Mt Sterling, KY, expired tabs, \$105; Bwe D. Htoo, 23, Austin, speeding, \$115; Benjamin J. Hunt, 31, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Dakota R. Joseph, 27, Rochester, no insurance, \$275; Bryan D. Karki, 27, Owatonna, possession of paraphernalia and synthetic cannabinoid, \$175; Allyson C. Koomick, 50, Rochester, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Lorraine M. Kral, 46, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Shamera D. Lane, 20, Owatonna, speeding, no insurance and invalid license, \$425; Michael J. Livingston, 30, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Danae A. Lujan, 22, Blooming Prairie, theft, \$75 and 19 days in county jail; Michael Machicote-Blas, 38, speeding, no insurance and revoked license, \$515; Cesar R. Martinez, 27, Owatonna, violation of no contact order, stay of adjudication, diversion program and 1 year of supervised probation; Rosalinda E. Martinez, 39, Owatonna, careless driving, \$200; David M. Mattson-Fuller, 22, Austin, invalid license and no insurance, \$375; Mahad A. Mohamoud, 27, North Mankato, open bottle, \$175; Thomas J. Nuszloch, 64, Owatonna, collision with unattended vehicle, \$125; Amanda K. Preble, 25, Ellendale, revoked license, stay of adjudication, diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring

without conviction; Roberto R. Rivera Pena, 28, Waseca, suspended license, \$275; Armando S. Rivera, 49, Reynoldsburg, OH, speeding and invalid license, \$225; Takia S. Smith, 35, Owatonna, DWI, \$406, 6 days in county jail and 3 years of supervised probation; Meghan E. Spitzack, 31, Owatonna, parking violation, \$37; Jennifer M. Tollefson, 33, Owatonna, DWI, \$300, 1 day in county jail, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 1 year of supervised probation; John C. Vazquez Brito, 20, Owatonna, invalid license and headlights violation, \$215; Dion E. Wadley, 21, Marshall, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Anthony G. Wunderlich, 35, Faribault, revoked license, \$275.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Abdirahman H. Ali, 22, Shakopee, speeding, \$125; Aziza A. Ali, 29, St. Paul, speeding, failure to drive in single lane, invalid license and no insurance, \$485; Tracy D. Baumann, 58, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Jonathan Bautista, 17, Medford, stop sign and speeding, \$165; Emily A. Busho, 23, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Oscar I. Cortez Carreon, 35, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Emmitt C. Culver, 16, Owatonna, headlamps violation, \$115; Joshua F. Darst, 19, Bloomington, speeding, \$215; Jonah M. Deml, 23, Owatonna, speeding, no insurance and revoked license, \$535; Jawuan D. Dennison, 24, Elkton, MD, speeding, \$115; Joshua R. Drabek, 31, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Ashley A. Edwards, 35, Waseca, speeding, \$215; Steven A. Edwards, 29, Austin, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Jose Esquivel Jr., 19, Owatonna, speeding and permit violation, \$185; Samuel C. Gillespie, 20, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Michael W. Green, 31, Crystal, suspended license, \$275; David Htoo, 21, St. Paul, speeding, permit violation and no insurance, \$385; Alex M. Huerta, 27, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; McKenzie M. Jansen, 22, Waseca, speeding, \$215; Blake W. Marshall, 22, Eden Prairie, expired tabs, \$105; Michele A. Merlin, 46, Minneapolis, open bottle, \$175; Daniel J. Meyer, 41, Faribault, speeding and revoked

license, \$335; Timothy L. Millhouse, 51, Ellendale, revoked license, stay of adjudication, \$50, 5 hours of community service and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Oscar Morales, 31, Austin, invalid license, \$175; Jordan J. Muldoon, 31, Montgomery, suspended license, \$275; Devonte B. Phillips, 25, Hanska, revoked license, \$275; Nicholas M. Riley, 31, Eagan, speeding, \$115; Carmelino H. Ruiz, 39, Tulsa, OK, invalid license, \$175; Marcelo C. Salinas, 52, Morristown, cancelled license, \$275; Devon T. Sather, 20, Medford, revoked license, \$275; Matthew A. Schinigo, 16, West Concord, speeding, \$135; Yasir M. Shafi, 20, Minneapolis, speeding and suspended license, \$475; Juan J. Solano Jr., 21, Clear Lake, IA, invalid license, \$175; Alesha S. Stigney, 20, Austin, speeding, \$125; Richard M. Thamert, 78, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Lilianne Thanh, 40, Blaine, speeding and unsafe passing, \$185; Sarah M. Vanhoudt, 35, Janesville, speeding, \$135; Lana M. Vincent, 34, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$115; Trase R. Wencil, 23, New Richland, speeding, \$115; Tessa M. Winters, 24, Milwaukee, WI, invalid license, \$175; Darian K. Zimmerman, 24, Rochester, speeding, \$215; Ethan C. Zimmerman, 20, Waseca, speeding, \$215.

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Feb. 5 Vandalism: Property damage was reported at Oak Ave. S. and Main St. W. at 2:23 a.m.
Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 10:58 a.m.
Shoplifting: At 11:46 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.
Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 6:50 p.m.
Feb. 6 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 1600 block of Linn Ave. SW at 2:46 a.m.
Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 8:20 p.m.

SEE BLOTTER, A11

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Do I Need to Sign-Up for Medicare If I'm Still Working?



Dear Savvy Senior,
I will turn 65 in a few months and plan to keep working for several more years. I have good health insurance from my employer now. Do I have to sign up for Medicare when I reach 65?
Looking Ahead

Dear Looking,
Whether you need to enroll in Medicare at 65 if you continue to work and have health insurance through your job depends on how large your employer is. The same rules apply if your health insurance comes from your spouse's job.

But first, let's review the basics. Remember that original Medicare has two parts: Part A, which provides hospital coverage and is free for most people. And Part B, which covers doctor's bills, lab tests and outpatient care. Part B also has a monthly premium, which is \$148.50 for most beneficiaries in 2021, but is higher for individuals earning above \$88,000.

If you're already receiving Social Security, you'll automatically be enrolled in parts A and B when you turn 65, and you'll receive your Medicare card in the mail. It will include instructions to return it if you have work coverage that qualifies you for late enrollment. If you aren't yet receiving Social Security, you will have to apply, which you can do online at [SSA.gov/medicare](https://ssa.gov/medicare).

If you plan to continue working past the age of 65 and have health insurance from your job, your first step is to ask your benefits manager or human resources department how your employer insurance works with Medicare. In most cases, you should at least take Medicare Part A because it's free. (Note: If you're funding a health savings account you may not want to take Part A because you can't make contributions after you enroll). But to decide whether to take Part B or not will depend on the size of your employer.

Small Employer

If your current employer has fewer than 20 employees, Medicare will be your primary insurer and you should enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period. This is a seven-month period that includes the three months before, the month of, and the three months after your 65th birthday.

If you miss the seven-month sign-up window, you'll have to wait until the next general enrollment period, which runs from Jan. 1 to March 31 with benefits beginning the follow-

ing July 1. You'll also incur a 10 percent penalty for each year you wait beyond your initial enrollment period, which will be tacked on to your monthly Part B premium.

Large Employer

If your employer has 20 or more employees, your employer's group health plan will be your primary insurer as long as you remain an active employee. If this is the case, you don't need to enroll in Part B when you turn 65 if you're satisfied with the coverage you are getting through your job. But if you do decide to enroll in Medicare, it will supplement your employer insurance by paying secondary on all of your claims.

Once your employment or group health coverage ends, you will then have eight months to sign up for Part B without a penalty. This is known as the Special Enrollment Period.

Check Drug Coverage

You also need to verify your prescription drug coverage. Call your benefits manager or insurance company to find out if your employer's prescription drug coverage is considered "creditable." If it is, you don't need to enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. If it isn't, you should purchase a plan (see [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://medicare.gov/plan-compare)) during your initial enrollment period or you'll incur a premium penalty (1 percent of the average national premium for every month you don't have coverage) if you enroll later.

If you have more questions or need help, contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see [ShiptaCenter.org](https://shiatacenter.org)), which offers free Medicare counseling. Or call the Medicare Rights Center helpline at 800-333-4114.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.



Torpedo team strikes



SUBMITTED PHOTO

In 1998, the Owatonna Torpedo team consisting of seven students at Owatonna High School earned second place out of 63 entries in the Super Mileage Challenge with 677.75 mpg. The team consisted of from left: Carl Wieman, Dan Wieman, Brian Prins, Joe Peterson, Eric Martin, Nick Christenson, Shane Shinabarger, Denise Wieman and Matt Wieman. Carl and Denise Wieman of Owatonna served as advisers of the team, which raced at the Brainerd International Raceway. Originally built at Mankato State University, the Owatonna Torpedo was fitted with a Briggs & Stratton 3.5 hp engine by the students. Other drive train and safety modifications were made as an educational project. The team was sponsored by OTC in Owatonna.

History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago Feb. 16, 2011

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Blooming Prairie Women of Today made a splash for cancer research on Sunday. Chapter president, Lynn Borchert, and members Naomi Smith, Catherine Imm and Brandy Munson jumped into the frigid waters of Beaver Lake near Ellendale. The women had to bring a minimum donation of \$50 with all proceeds going to breast cancer research. Donations were coming in right up to the plunge, at last count they had raised \$350.

Blooming Prairie athletes of this week are: Tyla Jones, she has been a consistent rebounder for the Blossoms girls and scored 15 points in the two BP victories in last week action; Luke Hueman, he had one of his better games in the victory at WP last Friday. He scored 5 points and pulled down 8 rebounds in the conference game.

20 Years Ago Feb. 14, 2001

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

A few of our local students named to the Dean's List are: Jessica Wondrich, Biology and Lisa Meshke, Pre-business at Iowa State University; Joseph Malherek, Liberal Arts at University of Minnesota; Emily Smith, English Education at Crown College.

Emily Spinler, 1997 graduate of Blooming Prairie, was named the 2000 Minnesota winner of the Minnesota Wildlife Society conservationist award. She received the honor as the top wildlife student in all of Minnesota colleges pursuing courses in conservation management. She is the daughter of Kevin and Joyce Spinler.

Kraling and Renae Christianson.

Mrs. Millie Fredrickson, home economics teacher at Blooming Prairie High School for the past 14 years, was nominated to represent BPHS in the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award. Mrs. Fredrickson is held in high esteem by her fellow teachers, students, parents and members of the community. Her enthusiasm and dedication in serving and improving our school and community, make her a very deserving nominee.

75 Years Ago Feb. 14, 1946

FRANK KREJOI, PUBLISHER

Lawrence and Kenneth Lysne, brothers, recently discharged from military service, have formed a partnership in the building, house moving, repairing and all types of construction. They have opened a downtown office in the old Coggins building, formerly Betlach's feed store. They need no introduction to the Times readers. They are local young men who have made good in their chosen vocations and when building materials are released will be the busiest firm in this section of Minnesota.

The Girls Athletic Association sponsored a dance and play-night party Friday evening. The evening was spent playing volleyball, relays and dancing after the basketball game. The committees members responsible were: ticket committee Charlotte Brantley, Verna Trom, Jane Cipra; Refreshments, Barbara Brantley, Marian Fjerstad and Alice Magladry; Cleaning, Jean Harding, Betty Motl, Glenda Kubista, Marian Yentsch, Carl Mueller and Dorothy Meyer; music, Margaret Johnson, Arlene Strand, Beverly Johnson, Lucille Diesch and Eleanor Kubista.

50 Years Ago Feb. 17, 1971

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJOI, PUBLISHERS

Girl Scout Troop 382 entertained the Brownie Troop at a Valentine party bridging ceremony. Troop 382 is working on their Troop dramatics badge and presented a play called "The Valentine Rivals". Members of the cast are, Lori Amundson, Denise Farr, Annette King, Michelle Noble, Kathy Sheedy, Nina Clark, Karen Wencl, Ginger Jelinek, Heidi Iverson, Dawn DeBeau, Teresa Higgins, Joan

Owatonna Photo News —

31 Years Ago Feb. 8, 1990

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

A group of business students of Owatonna High School recently attended the Region 9 Spring Leadership Conference of Business Professionals of America in Rochester, gaining recognition in various areas of competition. Students receiving recognition are: Laurel Kammrath, Shane Danielson, Stacy Anhorn,

Carmen Kjos, Jennie Fretham, Carrie Ketterling, Betty Menchow, Nicole Jirele, Denise Cox, Heather Dressen, Julie Waldhauser and Stacy Arndt. The students' advisor is Judith Morrison and Ron Boe, Business Education Instructor.

The National Farmers Organization awards were presented in Owatonna Tuesday to a number of area residents, recognizing proficiency in dairy farming. Those receiving awards are: Terry Wagner, outstanding milk quality; Michael Wencl, 100 Club dairy award; Jack Noble of the Noble Dairy Farm, outstanding milk quality; Curtiss Sieberg, 100 Club dairy award.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

HOME OF THE SHINING KNIGHTS

Students of the Week

Declan 4TH GRADE



DECLAN is a great example of a St. Mary's Shining Knight. He has a very kind heart and treats others with kindness and respect. Declan gets along well with everyone and has their best interests in mind. I think everyone that knows Declan can consider him a friend. In the classroom, Declan works hard to improve his skills. He is someone that is always willing to help with various tasks in the classroom. Declan works hard to be the best person he can be and that shows each and every day. I am proud to call Declan our 4th Grade classroom Shining Knight! Congratulations Declan on an honor well deserved.

Parents are Byron & Jacque | Declan was nominated by Mrs. Wobschall

Mason 3RD GRADE

Way to go MASON! You are our 3rd grade Shining Knight! Mason is a hard-working student. He is always on task, with his hand up to answer the next question. He holds himself to a high standard, progressing through his studies with enthusiasm and determination. He is always up for a new adventure and thoroughly enjoyed our latest snowshoeing expedition! His enthusiasm is not only in the classroom, but also extends to the football field as well. He enjoys receiving the ball but is also good at sharing it with his teammates. He is a great example of what it means to be a SMS student.



Parents are Josh & Shannon | Josie was nominated by Mrs. Lattery



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Bennett reminds residents of energy assistance program

With temperatures now in the single digits, Rep. Peggy Bennett (R-Albert Lea) said this is the perfect time to remind residents who are having difficulty paying their bills that heating assistance is available.

“Far too many families are struggling financially due to COVID-19,” Bennett said. “For those who are living on limited incomes, I want to make sure they understand they don’t have to choose between paying the heating bill or buying groceries this winter.”

Bennett said the Low Income Energy Assistance Program serves both renters and homeowners, providing

financial assistance to pay past due energy bills to avoid disconnection, to purchase emergency fuel, or to repair or replace a homeowner’s malfunctioning furnace.

Eligibility is based on the household’s past 3 months of income and assets are not counted. Benefit amounts are based on the household’s heating costs, household size, and income, with an average benefit of roughly \$500.

The application period is open until May 31. To determine eligibility or to learn more about the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, visit: mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp.

USDA suspends foreclosures

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is suspending past-due debt collections and foreclosures for nearly 10 percent of all farmers borrowing under Farm Service Agency programs.

In addition to stopping foreclosures in progress, the USDA will temporarily suspend wage garnishments and foreclosures that do not require court proceedings and halt referring foreclosures to the Justice Department until the end of the pandemic.

COVID VACCINE: shortage lingers on

FROM A3

mines how much each county will receive. Caron pointed out how Steele County has received only 200 more doses than neighboring Dodge County since the vaccination became available even though Steele is twice as big as Dodge.

As the frustration builds over getting more vaccine, another death occurred in Steele County. According to Caron, a woman in her 80s living in a long-term care facility died of COVID-19 complications last week. The woman’s death marked the 11th in the county since the pandemic began.

Overall, the number

of new cases has leveled off. Steele County reported only 31 new cases last week, bringing the county’s total to 2,947. Of those cases, 2,853 are out of isolation.

In Dodge County, there were 20 new cases making the county’s new total 1,489 with 1,421 out of isolation. Dodge’s death total remains at four.

Freeborn County had 37 new cases this past week for a total of 2,716 since the pandemic began. Mower County experienced 35 new cases and one death in the past week, bringing the county’s new case total to 3,937 and 30 deaths.

Dornink introduces firefighter assistance bill

A bill has been introduced by Sen. Gene Dornink (R-Hayfield) establishing a program to provide payments to firefighters with cancer or heart disease, counseling for firefighters, and firefighter training. This would be included in the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program.

“I am pleased to be the sponsor for this important legislation providing support to our firefighters,” said Dornink. “The physical, mental, and emotional toll their career takes on them

needs to be prioritized to ensure the highest level of safety for our Hometown Heroes.”

Supporting emergency responders is a priority for the Minnesota Senate not only now, but continuously throughout the future. Providing monetary support for firefighters diagnosed with cancer or heart disease, offering customized counseling, and new training programs to teach safety practices for their physical health are a few ways this program will assist firefighters.

Tax Guide 2021



Here are some common errors taxpayers should avoid when preparing a tax return:

- **Missing or inaccurate Social Security numbers (SSN).** Each SSN on a tax return should appear exactly as printed on the Social Security card.
- **Misspelled names.** Likewise, a name listed on a tax return should match the name on that person’s Social Security card.
- **Incorrect filing status.** Some taxpayers choose the wrong filing status. The Interactive Tax Assistant on IRS.gov can help taxpayers choose the correct status especially if more than one filing status applies. Tax software also helps prevent mistakes with filing status.
- **Math mistakes.** Math errors are some of the most common mistakes. They range from simple addition and subtraction to more complex calculations. Taxpayers should always double check their math. Better yet, tax prep software does it automatically.
- **Figuring credits or deductions.** Taxpayers can make mistakes figuring things like their earned income tax credit, child and dependent care credit, and recovery rebate credit. If someone is eligible for a recovery rebate credit – and either didn’t receive Economic Impact Payments or received less than the full amounts – they must file a 2020 tax return to claim the credit even if they don’t usually file. The Inter-

active Tax Assistant can help determine if a taxpayer is eligible for tax credits or deductions. Tax software will calculate these credits and deductions and include any required forms and schedules.

- **Incorrect bank account numbers.** Taxpayers who are due a refund should choose direct deposit. This is the fastest way for a taxpayer to get their money. However, taxpayers need to make sure they use the correct routing and account numbers on their tax return.
- **Unsigned forms.** An unsigned tax return isn’t valid. In most cases, both spouses must sign a joint return. Exceptions may apply for members of the armed forces or other taxpayers who have a valid power of attorney. Taxpayers can avoid this error by filing their return electronically and digitally signing it before sending it to the IRS.
- **Filing with an expired individual tax identification number.** If a taxpayer’s ITIN is expired, they should go ahead and file using the expired number. The IRS will process that return and treat it as a return filed on time. However, the IRS won’t allow any exemptions or credits to a return filed with an expired ITIN. Taxpayers will receive a notice telling the taxpayer to renew their number. Once the taxpayer renews the ITIN, the IRS will process return normally.

Source: IRS

Edward Jones

MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Estate Planning for Blended Families

If you’re in a blended family, you’re already aware of the emotional and financial issues involved in your daily life. But what about the future? When it’s time to do your estate planning – and it’s never too soon for that – you’ll need to be aware of the entanglements and complexities that can get in the way of your vision for leaving the legacy you desire.

You can take comfort in knowing that you’re far from alone. More than half of married or cohabiting couples with at least one living parent, or parent-in-law, and at least one adult child, have a “step-kin” relationship, according to a study from researchers at the University of Massachusetts and other schools. That’s a lot of estate-planning issues.

Nonetheless, the task does not have to be overwhelming – as long as you put sufficient time and thought into it. Here are some ideas that may help:

- *Seek fairness – but be flexible.* Even in a non-blended family, it’s not always easy to be as equitable as you’d like in your estate plans – too often, someone feels they have been treated unfairly. In a blended family, these problems can be exacerbated: Will biological children feel cheated? Will stepchildren? Keep this in mind: Fair is not always equal – and equal is not always fair. When deciding how to divide your assets, you’ll need to make some judgment calls after carefully evaluating the needs of all your family members. There’s no guarantee that everyone will be satisfied, but you’ll have done your best.
- *Communicate your wishes clearly.* When it comes to estate planning, the best surprise is no surprise – and that’s especially true in a blended family. Even if you’re the one creating your estate plans, try to involve other family members – and make your wishes and goals clear. You don’t have to be specific down to the last dollar, but you should provide a pretty good overall outline.
- *Consider establishing a revocable living trust.* Everyone’s situation is different, but many blended families find that, when making estate plans, a simple will is not enough. Consequently, you may want to establish a revocable living trust, which gives you much more control than a will when it comes to carrying out your wishes. Plus, because you have transferred your assets to the trust, you are no longer technically the owner of these assets, so there’s no reason for a court to get involved, which means your estate can likely avoid the time-consuming, expensive and very public process of probate.
- *Choose the right trustee.* If you do set up a living trust, you’ll also need to name a trustee – someone who manages the assets in the trust. Married couples often serve as co-trustees, but this can result in tensions and disagreements. As an alternative, you can hire a professional trustee – someone with the time, experience and neutrality to make appropriate decisions and who can bring new ideas to the process.

Above all else, make sure you have the right estate-planning team in place. You’ll certainly need to work with an attorney, and you may also want to bring in your tax advisor and financial professional. Estate planning can be complex – especially with a blended family – and you’ll want to make the right moves, right from the start.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Target a body mass index of less than 25
- ♥ **Watch your cholesterol**
Strive for a total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dl
- ♥ **Control your blood sugar**
Aim for fasting blood glucose less than 100 mg/dl
- ♥ **Get active**
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OWATONNA PROUD

A8 | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

All DECA members head to state

BY JONNY CLUBB
OHS MAGNET WRITER

On Jan. 24, DECA held its annual awards ceremony in the OHS Auditorium.

DECA members competed in the District 1 competition virtually Jan. 6-13. All 52 members qualified for the state competition over more than 20 events, including team and individual role plays, start-up business plans and marketing campaigns. This is the first time in program history that every member qualified for the state competition.

DECA offers a hands-on introduction into the business world. Junior DECA member Cael Dowling said, "It's a great hands-on experience that you don't get to have in any classes." Members get to learn about business in an interactive way, as well as help the community.

In years past members would compete by presenting or performing in front of a judge and then answering their questions at the end. This year, however, participants had to record their role plays and turn them into a judge. This caused some advantages and some disadvantages. DECA Adviser Mr. Scott Pierce said, "In your roleplay, you didn't get as nervous because you didn't have somebody sitting across from you. Also, kids that are good at thinking on their feet and answering questions, and are really personable can really set themselves apart. It can be good for some, but it can also hurt others."

Usually, state qualifiers would earn "points" by doing community service to earn the privilege of going to the state competition in Minneapolis. This year many service opportunities are still available, but the state competition will be held virtually. Senior and DECA Officer Jonny Wall said that his favorite thing he's done in the community is the Cash Wise barbeque event for Youth 1st. DECA participants have had many other opportunities such as leaf raking as other service projects.

To qualify for state DECA members have to finish in the top eight at districts. The state competition is generally held at a hotel in Minneapolis but will have to be held virtually this year. At state, participants must finish in the top four to qualify for nationals. This year's national competition would have been held in Anaheim, CA, but it has also been changed to a virtual event.

A press release put out by DECA said, "DECA is a group of marketing students who are working on their leadership, marketing, and entrepreneurial skills. The Owatonna Chapter has 52 members grades 9-12. The events at the conference involve roleplays, presentations, interviewing, and entrepreneurship and marketing ideas." DECA's state competition will be held virtually March 7-9.

Signing Day for athletes



SUBMITTED PHOTO

On Wednesday, Feb. 3, Owatonna High School held its "Signing Day" for all athletes continuing their sports career at a college level. OHS is proud to announce the following students and wish them luck in their future adventures: Lindsay Bangs, Nolan Burmeister, Caitlynne Bussert, Emma Dahnert, Cole Earles, Jenna Gleason, Anna Herzog, Sydney Hunst, Megan Johnson, Sarah Kingland, Lincoln Maher, Jacob Meiners, Maggie Newhouse, Mathew Seykora, Zacharia Stransky, Brayden Truelson and Grace Wolfe.

OHS Knowledge Bowl virtually knows it all

BY ABE STOCKWELL
OHS MAGNET WRITER

The OHS Knowledge Bowl is a competition for the quick-witted and intelligent individuals. They compete against others in our school and other schools around southern Minnesota. The Knowledge Bowl is run very much like a Jeopardy game-four rounds of play with categories of different types of subjects and when an individual knows the answer just buzz in. The first round is written but the next three rounds are verbal answers. Scores are compiled over the four rounds of play and totaled at the end.

COVID-19 has changed the way all activities look like, and this year, the team did an all virtual bowl Thurs. January 28. Owatonna entered two teams out of 21 total.



PHOTO BY MARIAH SCHROHT/OHS MAGNET

Members of the Knowledge Bowl Team prepare for their competition.

One of the teams of all sophomores took second, the other team made up of all ages took eighth. Both teams were excited about how they did. Mr. Dan Saehler, a teacher at OMS, is the coach. Mr. Saehler said, "I think the best part is not only watching kids interact in a positive and fun way but learning

new things is always great too." Senior Cheryl Smith is a real team leader for the knowledge bowl. Smith said, "We have only had two meets so far, but they have both been successes. We are having a great time together as a team. The two teams are very competitive with one another but

fun is very important." Smith goes on to say that she does this for the fun and the interaction with other kids that she may not know very well. Most people may not know what the knowledge bowl is, but the team hopes the numbers grow in the years to come and it becomes more and more popular.

There's no stopping Libby Janka

She furthers her soccer career at RCTC

BY LAURYN BATEMAN
OHS MAGNET WRITER

Senior Libby Janka has played soccer her whole life and she's not stopping now. Janka was recruited by Bryan Weiss, the head coach of Rochester Community and Technical College in late October 2020. Janka will be playing soccer while attending a two year nursing program. RCTC works directly with the Mayo Clinic making this an ideal situation for her.

Janka has played on Owatonna High School's girls soccer team as a defensive player, yet is known for her versatility. Nate Gendron, varsity head coach of OHS girls soccer team said, "She was versatile and was able to step into whatever role you needed her to." Janka finds soccer to be a good outlet for building teamwork and lasting friendships. Senior and teammate Sarah Kingland said, "What makes Libby special is her ability to make strong bonds with her teammates because that creates trust and that's super important when on the field."

Initially, Janka was not looking to play soccer in college, but when approached by Coach Weiss to play she couldn't say no. Janka stated, "I was really surprised the coach reached out to me, just because I didn't think I was even that good. But, it made me really happy to see my efforts were being noticed." Although she did not recognize her talent, Weiss did. Weiss said, "Libby possesses all of the traits that we look for in future RCTC Yellowjacket soccer players. On the field, she's a skilled and intelligent player that's coachable and self-driven. Off the field, she's a great teammate and student."

Excited for the new journey that lies ahead, Janka appreciates the opportunity to include soccer as a part of the college experience. Nursing will still be her main focus, but soccer will be a getaway from the academic demands, teamwork and dedication. These are the qualities that describe Janka on the soccer field. It is those qualities that will carry her to a successful nursing career.

Owatonna Students of the Week

Elementary



Danica Hager
Third Grade
Parents: Cooper and Danielle Hager

Danica is a leader in and out of the classroom. She is respectful to all her peers and all the adults in the building. She is responsible for her learning by participating in class, asking questions, and completing her work. Danica is a kind and thoughtful friend to all. We are proud to nominate Danica as student of the week!

Middle



Gavin Nappin
Seventh Grade
Parents: Amanda Farr and Ryan Nappin

Gavin is an amazing student and person! He is kind and considerate, and works extremely hard at everything he does. He comes to class prepared and with a positive attitude, willing to learn and ready to take risks. He is a joy to work with and will do great things in this life. Thanks for being awesome, Gavin!

High School



Isabella Gonzalez-Wright
Freshman
Parents: Carlos Gozalez and Cara Halverson

Isabella is a kind person and an excellent student. She asks pertinent questions, participates and offers answers, and always tries to understand why things happen the way they do during science labs. She goes out of her way to make others feel welcome and has a positive attitude that serves her well. Keep up the great work, Isabella!

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FRESHMAN: senator hits the floor running FROM A1

Even when the Senate is in session, Dornink is forced to hang out in a conference room next to the Senate floor, watching the debate over closed-circuit TV. If he needs to vote, he dashes from the conference room onto the Senate floor, pushes a red “no” or green “yes” button and then retrieves back to the conference area.

Dornink is relying on the legislative staff surrounding him to learn as much as he can about the goings-on of the Senate.

“I knew it would be new and a lot to learn,” said Dornink, adding he is committed to doing the best job he possibly can.

His legislative assistant is Mitchell Williamson, who pours over his email correspondence and sorts out what needs the senator’s attention.



Sen. Gene Dornink works closely with his legislative assistant Mitchell Williamson at the Capitol in St. Paul.

“I want him to let me see everything,” Dornink said of his assistant. “It’s fun when someone has a problem and you can fix it for them,” he said, adding the best part of the job is solving problems and serving people.

Dornink is the first to admit he doesn’t have

all the answers or solutions to problems. But he vows that he will try to follow through with anything that comes before him. At the very least, he or Williamson plan to respond to any correspondence he receives from residents in his district.

Dornink is one of 10 new freshmen senators, which include three Republicans and seven Democrats. The Senate is controlled by 34 Republicans while there are 31 Democrats and two Independents.

The new senator is anxious to get out into his

CONTACT THE SENATOR

Best ways to reach Sen. Gene Dornink:

- Call: 651-296-5240
- Email: sen.gene.dornink@senate.mn.

district to connect with residents. In addition to doing a radio show in Austin, he plans to utilize Fridays for his day back home to meet people.

While Dornink was elected to the office last fall, he vows he won’t forget where he came from or who he represents. “It’s not my office... it’s their office,” he said, adding he doesn’t want to forget the people of the district who sent him to St. Paul to represent them.

Dornink, 58, hopes his life experience will be a great asset to serving in the Senate. He grew up on a farm, has raised a family of 12 children and is a small business owner. He operates rental properties throughout the district. He plans to phase out of the carpentry business he has operated in recent years.

“Life has prepared me for this,” Dornink said confidently.

He is coming into office when the political culture is perhaps the most divisive it has ever been. “I like to kind of stay in the middle,” Dornink said. “You can’t be radical right or radical left. You need to have common sense and be someone that will listen.”

Dornink hopes to serve at least 12 years in the Senate. But he’s keenly aware that the people of the district will ultimately make that decision.

And that’s why he is focused on the people.

“I don’t aspire to be the majority leader,” Dornink said. “I want to do the best I can for the people rather than thinking of me and my aspirations.”

Great Work Blossom Scholars!

Congratulations to these students at Blooming Prairie High School who achieved the second quarter honor roll!



A Honor Roll

Grade 7

Allison Bruggeman
Regan Donnelly
Noah Graves
Madelyn Harvey
Drew Reinke
Chloe Weber

Grade 8

Mia Johnson
Brady Kittelson
Madilynn Madsen

Grade 9

Addison Doocy
Annaka Forsberg
Tyler Forystek
Macy Lembke
Jamie Reinke
Jaylee Schleicher
Hailey Schumacher
Mason Simon
Aidan Slowinski
Ava Smith
Kolby Vigeland
Rachel Winzenburg

Grade 10

Lilyanna Bakken
Abigail Hefling
Ava Krejci
Sierra Larson
Madison Lea

Chloe Mccarthy
Samuel Pirk
Clare Rennie
Joie Ruhter
Anika Sunde

Grade 11

Lindsey Baltazar
Bobbie Bruns
Josie Hoffman
Asha Lighthizer
Piper Lund
Lauren Schammel
Alivia Schneider
Bradley Simon
Carson Wacek
Melanie Winzenburg

Grade 12

Adrianna Bermea
Abby Braaten
Maggie Bruns
Maren Forystek
Charlie Heimerman
Dylan Johnson
Shyane Jorgenson
Allison Krohnberg
Emily Kubicek
Luke Larkoski
Alexander Miller
Megan Oswald
Joseph Pirk
Jessica Ressler
Rachael Riley

A- Honor Roll

Grade 7

Tyler Anderson
Allison Blume
Layla Coleman
Natalee Devries
Samantha Hefling
Jonathan Heimgartner
Carsten Ingvalson
Brady Johnson
Colby Johnson
Lance Lembke
Cannon Wacek

Grade 8

Catelyn Bartlett
Cooper Cooke
Isabel Dickel
Braden Farr
Abby Jordison
Alex Lea
Jacob Pauly
Ella Smith
Bo Zwiener

Grade 9

Claire Foster
Anna Haberman

Shanna Halverson
Luke Heimgartner
Derek Kubicek
Grant Magnuson
Khara Peters
Benjamin Riley
Molly Robins
Lily Schammel
Justin Stork
Sophie Thomas

Grade 10

Olivia Anderson
Hosea Baker
Morgan Camery
Jesse Cardenas
Haven Carlson
Brittany Johnson
Jenna Johnson
Samuel Michaud
Tyler Miller
Anna Pauly
Anna Reese
Alexander Riley
Lucas Schammel
Susan Smith
Alexis Steckelberg
Madeline Stoen
Madison Thurnau

Grade 11

Abigail Aldrich
Carson Brennecke
Colin Jordison

David Kartes
Drew Kittelson
Parker Kubicek
Emily Miller
Xavier Rennie
Brennan Tapp
Melanie Wigham

Grade 12

Cole Graves
Anna Kittelson
Rose Michaud
Christopher Naatz
Jacob Naatz
Erin O'Brien
Kiya Thompson

B+ Honor Roll

Grade 7

Bradley Boyd
Addison Haugland
Sadie Jensen
Ambriella Miller
Kaydance Verhey-Schumacher

Grade 8

Scott Johnson
Jeremiah Jones
Addison Lyman
Sophia Schiller
Grady Steckelberg

Grade 9

Jaxon Harberts
Layla Lembke
Logan Marzolf
Elizabeth Miner
Maxmar Ogren
Shawntee Snyder

Grade 10

Cade Christianson
Micah Donnelly
Heidi Judy
Ethan Marzolf
Dakota Mueller

Grade 11

Emily Anderson
Tyler Archer
Ethan Ehlers
Tyler Iverson
Samuel Skillestad

Grade 12

Boone Carlson
Thomas Donnelly
Mitchell Fiebiger

B Honor Roll

Grade 7

Landon Allison
Aubryana Alwes
Aden Doocy
Noah Fawver
Miley Fulton

Grade 8

Colton Braaten
Jack Bruns
Callie Iverson
Kohan Miller
Maveda Warner

Grade 9

Holly Davis
Elizabeth Dohrmann
Karson Strand

Grade 10

Levi Denherder
Katie Quandt
Cyprus Schleicher
Leah Thorson
Jacob Weinberger

Grade 11

Alana Braaten
Garret Farr
Payton Fristedt
Isabella Heiber

Grade 12

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BLOTTER: FROM A4

Feb. 7 Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 4:48 a.m. They took a subject into custody.

Feb. 8 Theft: Identity theft incidents occurred in the 1800 block of Cedar Valley Dr. NW at 2:13 p.m. and the 3000 block of Northridge Lane NE at 4:20 p.m.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1100 block of 16th St. SW at 3:03 p.m.

Feb. 9 Restraining Order: Police arrested a subject for a restraining order violation at Hoffman Dr. NW and North St. W. at 9:52 a.m.

Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 6:26 p.m.

Animal: At 7:28 p.m., an animal bite occurred in the 500 block of Allan Ave. SW.

Feb. 10 Disturbance: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Main St. E. at 8:41 a.m.

Feb. 11 Shoplifting: At 11:09 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of 22nd St. SE at 11:18 a.m.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 1100 block of Oak Ave. S. at 4:39 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Feb. 5 Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of Main St. S. in Medford at 10:55 a.m.

Feb. 6 Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 200 block of 3rd St. SE in Medford at 9:18 a.m.

Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 12:34 p.m.

Arrest: Deputies assisted another agency with arresting a subject at Highway 218 and 89th Ave. SE in Blooming Prairie at 9:54 p.m.

Feb. 9 Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 5:29 a.m.

Burglary: Deputies responded to a burglary in the 2900 block of 72nd Ave. NW in Deerfield Township at 11:57 a.m.

Feb. 10 Fraud: Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 4400 block of 82nd Ave. SW in Meriden Township at 1:34 p.m.

Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 9:53 p.m.

Feb. 11 Theft: At 8:46 a.m., identity theft was reported in the 500 block of Oakland Path in Medford.

Fraud: Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 7700 block of County Road 45 N. in Medford Township at 2:42 p.m.

ARRESTS Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

Jeremy Patrick Cochlin, 43, arrested at 12:57 a.m. Feb. 12, DWI-test refusal, held for court.

OWATONNA POLICE

Abraam Rodriguez Jr., 20, arrested at 5:29 a.m. Feb. 7, DANCO violation, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Maura Rose Cory, 30, arrested at 3:05 p.m. Feb. 5, probation violation warrant arrest, body only.

Cody Orvin Rowe, 18, arrested at 10:10 p.m. Feb. 6, restraining order violation, held for court.

Jessica Joy Blunt, 37, arrested at 5:30 p.m. Feb.

8, probation violation warrant arrest, held for court.

Win Ko, 42, arrested at 5:45 a.m. Feb. 9, warrant arrest, \$1,000 bail.

Gregory Gene Anderson, 38, arrested at 4:03 p.m. Feb. 9, DWI, held for court.

COURT NEWS Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Jan. 17 – 24:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Hussein H. Ahmed, 36, Rochester, parking violation, \$32; Roy W. Andrews, 48, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; John M. Anfinson, 46, Brooklyn Park, parking violation, \$32; Sandra Armenta, 34, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Mary M. Britt, 31, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Vanessa M. Guerra, 19, Owatonna, registration violation, speeding and no insurance, \$360; Hannah J. Henrichs, 20, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Moses B. Hettinger, 23, Mantorville, failure to obey traffic control device and possession of marijuana, \$280; Tricia W. Johnson, 45, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Garrette T. Montanye, 27, Hayfield, expired tabs, \$110; Lindsay M. Oakland, 42, Claremont, parking violation, \$32; Steven T. Polley, 47, Hayfield, speeding, \$220; Brady W. Radke, 22, Oronoco, theft, \$480, 30 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, obtain GED, chemical dependency evaluation, electronic home monitoring and 3 years of supervised probation; Marco A. Zavala Garcia, 43, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Samantha J. Brocker, 26, Claremont, parking violation, \$32; Niko A.

Engesser, 21, North Mankato, parking violation, \$32; Ike V. Estby, 28, Stewartville, seat belt, \$105; Priscilla M. Faro, 27, Mantorville, hands free violation, \$130; Allen L. Greenslade III, 18, Kasson, revoked license, \$280; Aaron T. Hjortaa, 20, Kenyon, speeding, \$140; Kevin L. Nawrocki, 63, Dodge Center, seat belt, \$105; Melissa C. Pikel, 32, White Cloud, MI, seat belt, \$105; Brady W. Radke, 22, Oronoco, introduce contraband into jail and DWI, 30 days in county jail, electronic home monitor, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, cognitive skill training, obtain GED, do not enter liquor establishments and 2 years of supervised probation; Louis V. Sanford, 57, Lake City, hands free violation, \$130; Nathan J. Tottingham, 35, Savage, possession of marijuana, \$130; Brent J. Wilks, 33, Fremont, MI, seat belt, \$105.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Cristian A. Abreu, 24, Rochester, no license and speeding, \$220; David A. Caynor, 17, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Robert M. Culver, 49, Rochester, seat belt, \$105; Kevin L. Ehrlich, 53, Austin, speeding, \$120; Thor W. Hanson, 27, Albert Lea, driving a CMV while texting, \$280; Mustaf H. Qarshaye, 35, Rochester, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Chase M. Splittstoesser, 18, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Kevin D. Stevens, 23, Winona, speeding, \$140; Karnekwa L. Thurman, 22, Rochester, possession of paraphernalia, \$130.

WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Barbara J. Lentz, 57, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; Brian H. Pilcher, 52, Owatonna, parking violation, \$32. The following misdemeanors and petty

misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Jan. 24 – 31:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Edward J. Anderson, 61, Kasson, restraining order violation, \$205, 4 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Patricia I. Bennett, 52, Rochester, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$175 and 90 days of unsupervised probation; Brian L. Brose, 67, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Brittany M. Brown, 29, Mantorville, revoked license and failure to obtain new license after information change, \$300; William B. Cross, 22, Marshall, reckless driving, \$380; Michael E. Debus, 56, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Adam J. Dvorak, 17, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Randall P. Henderson, 22, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Chad E. Jennings, 45, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Cody J. Jones, 26, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Jay C. Krampitz, 52, Rochester, revoked license and possession of paraphernalia, \$330; Kiana R. Louks, 20, Owatonna, possession of paraphernalia, \$130; Catherine H. Moenning, 56, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Timothy A. Moenning, 21, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Kevin L. Peterson, 54, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Makayla A. Phillips-Tucke, 22, Rochester, disorderly conduct, \$180; Jamie J. Rabe, 42, Mantorville, dangerous dog attack and domestic assault, \$255, 15 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, domestic abuse evaluation, do not enter liquor establishments and 2 years of supervised probation; Mark D. Ray, 65, Claremont, cancelled license and no insurance, \$480; Jorge A. Rios Jr., 26, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; Erika

J. Rohl, 25, Waltham, parking violation, \$32; Eric J. Schladweiler, 30, Harmony, parking violation, \$32; John F. Thoe, 53, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Matthew J. Tjernagel, 29, New Ulm, speeding, \$220; Michael J. Vihnicka, 66, Dodge Center, possession of paraphernalia, \$130; Courtney A. Vondersitt, 20, Dodge Center, registration violation, \$110; Kristin A. Winkels, 28, Rochester, permit offense, \$180.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Thomas A. Berndt, 31, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Andrea L. Clark-Johnson, 42, Rochester, parking violation, \$32; Donald R. Cooper, 45, Viroqua, WI, parking violation, \$32; Melissa M. Moe, 36, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Dolan S. OMalley, 47, Kasson, revoked license, \$280; Zachary C. Orth, 33, West Concord, disorderly conduct, \$380 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Thomas R. Schwenke, 44, Kasson, DWI, \$75, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 90 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Leonard L. Vicker, 59, Dodge Center, registration violation and no insurance, \$610; Jordan C. Ward, 22, Rochester, suspended license, \$280.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Cecelia K. Barfu, 57, Blaine, speeding, \$130; Scott M. Hofius, 51, Blooming Prairie, revoked license, no insurance and seat belt, \$505; Darnay R. Hunter, 20, Faribault, speeding, \$140; Riley S. Krebs, 25, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Gerardo Leonmercado, 35, Bakersfield, CA, no license and possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$280; Anas A. Mohamed, 24, Rochester, speeding, \$140.

SEE BLOTTER, A14

Despite COVID, Tiger smarts rules

Congratulations to these students at Medford High School for achieving honor roll status for second quarter.



High Honor Roll

Grade 7

Cadence Aldrich
Casen Blome
Mylie Born
Taryn Dolney
Quintin Goblirsch
Ashlin Havumaki
Orion Heintz
Ava Huizel
Madalyn Huizel
Kendyl Larson
Mari Nelson
Gabiella Ortega
Lauren Ristau
Sarah Summy
Libby Sutherland
Aleah Vogt
Olivia Ward
Reid Wildgrube
Zoe Zacharias

Grade 8

Meghan Amberg
Amanda Bock
Hailey Chambers
Delaney Driscoll
Makenna Gare
Lydia Heiderscheidt
Hailey Hemann
Anna Herr
Cain Johannes
Logan Maas Hansen
Emma McAdams

Adrianna Schlund
Josef Sutcliffe
Clara Thurnau
Addison Vandereide
Josue Zuniga

Grade 9

Riley Babcock
Ava Clark
Abigail Cloutier
Ava Cottrell
Avery Dressen
Dakoda DuChene
Jonathan Finke
Sadie Kern
Annette Kniefel
Isabel Miller
Addison O'Connor
Peyton Snow
Tessa Underdahl
Mackenzie Velishek
Sarah Wall

Grade 10

Andrea Bock
Samantha Buecksler
Casey Chambers
Rian Cloutier
Kylie Dusek
Abigail Fitzgerald
Dylan Heiderscheidt
Tate Hermes
Josephine Homeier
Connor Jones
Emily Kappes

Grace Keller
Adalia List
Jenesis McGuire
Jack Meyer
Payton Ristau
Martina Smith
Paige Stadler
Tyler Steffen
Cohen Stursa
Reagan Sutherland
Annabelle Troester
Isis Walters

Grade 11

Jacob Andrews
Jake Barten
Carter Blome
Caydon Budde
Logan Buecksler
Reed Cumberland
Isabel DeLeon
Cheyenne Fedder
Henry Grayson
Nicole Harfmann
Kimberly Jarvi
Mackenzie Kellen
Megan Klein
Clara Kniefel
Samantha Miller
Jessica Neuharth
Julia Niles
Jack Paulson
Elizabeth Peterson
Scott Scholljegerdes

Nicole Schrot
Hannah Schull
Brielle Smith
Anna Sobrak
Jayme Stransky
Amelia Thompson
Erika Thurnau
Hayley Wall
Ava Westbrook

Grade 12

Jenna Berg
Emily Chadwick
Kinsey Cronin
Roberta Domstrand
Cole Dusek
Isaac Enzenauer
Lizbeth Gutierrez
Josiah Hedensten
Gavin Hermes
Madison Jaster
Ernesto Lazaro
Sierra Lustig
Luz Peralta
Brooke Purrier
Lily Roehrick
Isabella Steffen
Tyler Stursa
Alex Vandereide
Haley VonRuden
Hanna VonRuden
Miya Weber
Layla Wenker

Regular Honor Roll

Grade 7

Grace Aldrich
Aiden Anderson
Abigail Belch
Landon Capello
Andrew Erickson
Landon Hachfeld
Ellery LaCroix
Jade Laue
Cara Lawson
Parker Snow
Kiera Steinbacher
Bennett Stinocher
Alex Thurnau
Breanne Troester

Grade 8

Jessie Aase
Aiden Ahrens
Kadence Caron
Kaden Harfmann
Makailyn Hedberg
Jillian Kellen
Kylee Krause
Madyson McCarty
Regino Ortega
Addison Poe
Harvey Prins
Erika Schrot
Lauren Smith
Taylor Smith

Grade 9

Mia Amberg
Kelsie Casper
Jacquelyn Cole
Tyler Ernste
Thomas Furness
Lily George
Beau Lawson
Emely Lazaro
Luis Lopez
Hunter Perdue
Carolina Perez
Alaina Rivers
Lauren Stinocher
Jade Wegner

Grade 10

Joshua Bluhm
Landon Driscoll
MaKenna Enzenauer
Morgan Jones
Lydia Krenske
Beau LaCroix
Carter Luebbe
Riley Norland
Cohen O'Connor
Jaidyn Rubio
Justin Voegele
Anahi Zuniga

Grade 11

Jordan Capello
Makenna Christenson
Paige Davis
Ryllei Federly
Bryce Grayson
Noah Honsey
Johnathan Houston
Nathan Johnson
Lynn Larson
Hunter Laue
George McCarthy
Justin Ristau
Malachi Sutcliffe
Rylan Warner
Jeancarlo Zuniga

Grade 12

Braden Barbeau
Brayden Beede
Garrett Fitzgerald
Alissa Freelove
Kaelan Hermanstorfer
Catrina Herr
Malia Kircher
Mason Nagel
Peyton Seiler
Chloe Van Ryn
Gunner White

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POLY PAK PLASTICS

Medford, Minnesota

COLLEGE NEWS

Area students named to Dean's Lists

UNIVERSITY OF SIOUX FALLS

Three area students have been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester at the University of Sioux Falls. They are Ali Roushar and Danielle Burtis of Owatonna and Kiara James-Thomas of Medford.

WARTBURG COLLEGE

Audrey Revier of Owatonna was named to the Wartburg College Fall Term Dean's List.

The college recognized 517 students for fall term.

The qualify for the list students must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above in at least four course credits during the term. Three of the four course credits have to be graded with a traditional letter grade.

MSU MOORHEAD

Four Owatonna graduate have been named to the Minnesota State University Moorhead Dean's List in recognition of academic achievement fall semester 2020.

Students must maintain a 3.25 or higher grade point average and carry 12 graded credits to qualify for the honor.

Earning a spot on the Dean's List were Tori Folkstad, business administration; Liam Miller, Criminal Justice; Sydney Nelson, BFA in Arts, English; and Tammy Spencer, Paralegal.

UW-RIVER FALLS

Danielle Jax, of Waltham has been named to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls fall semester Dean's List.

Jax is majoring in Animal Science.

To be named to the Dean's List, a full-time undergraduate must earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 on a scale of 4.0, or midway between an "A" and "B" average. Area students are listed below by hometown, name, and major.

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY

Megan Smith, a Senior Business Administration major from Owatonna, was among some 900 Bob Jones University students in Greenville, S.C. named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List.

The Dean's List recognizes students who earn a 3.00-3.74 grade point average during the semester.

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Lauren Louks and Leah Schiefert of Blooming Prairie were named to Presidents List for the fall semester at Rochester Community and Technical College

To qualify for the President's List, students must have completed 12 credits or more for the same semester with a 4.0 GPA.

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY

Hamline University student Jalisa Mathews of Owatonna was named to the College of Liberal Arts Dean's List for the Fall 2020 semester. To qualify,

students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher and maintain a full course load.

AUGUSTANA UNIVERSITY

Five area students were named to the fall semester 2021-2021 Dean's List at Augustana University in Sioux Falls.

They are Michelle Benson of Owatonna, Sheldon Jensen of Owatonna, Harrison Kuhn of Owatonna, Sydney Langeslag of Medford and Grace Valen Gatrost of Owatonna.

To be recognized, full-time students carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours must maintain a grade-point average at 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale).

BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

Jake Hyland of Blooming Prairie) is one of 2000 students named to Bradley University's Fall 2020 Dean's List. Hyland is majoring in Interactive Media Game Design.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, a student must achieve a minimum 3.5 grade point average for the semester on a 4.0 scale.

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

Brandon Katzung Hokanson of Owatonna has been placed on the Gettysburg College Dean's Honor list for outstanding academic achievement in the Spring 2020 semester.

Students with a quality point average of 3.60 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) for a semester's work are placed

on the College's Dean's Honor List.

MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY

Greta Jacobson of Ellendale is among the outstanding undergraduates at Millikin University named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester.

Students who attempt 12 graded credits during a fall or spring semester and earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher earn Dean's List honors. Students earning a perfect 4.00 grade point average on 12 graded credits attempted earn High Dean's List honors.

COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

Two Owatonna students were recently named to the College of St. Scholastica Fall 2020 Dean's List.

They are Anaka Degner, a junior majoring in Psychology and Robin Starr, a senior majoring in Social Work.

Dean's List members have achieved a 3.75 grade point average or above on a 4.0 scale.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Payton Simon of Blooming Prairie has been named to the Fall Semester Dean's List at Gustavus Adolphus College.

The list comprises students who have earned a 3.7 grade point average (based on a scale in which 4.0 = A) or higher for the semester ending in December 2020.

BOOK NOOK

Becky will be missed



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

One of the first people I met when I began working at the Blooming Prairie Branch Library was the director of the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce, Becky Noble.

Her office is next door to the library and daily visits were necessary to deliver the Chamber's newspaper to her. Those daily visits became daily conversations about the news in town, grandchildren, politics, and more.

Becky has been an incredible supporter of our library. On her KRFO news weekday mornings she is a cheerleader for the library events and activities. Many people have learned of library programs through Becky's radio announcements, as well as through her Finally Friday newsletter which is sent weekly

to Chamber members. For many months she has been the videographer for our Face book Live story times. Becky is the vice president of the Friends of the Library.

I have learned so much about Blooming Prairie and its history through Becky. She organized the committee which planned events for the 150th anniversary of Blooming's founding. The events were popular and fun to participate in. (Our Speakeasy nights were amazing!) For at least 18 years Becky as head of the Chamber has been intimately involved in the planning and running of the very successful 4th of July festivities.

But now Becky is moving on to other responsibilities. I will miss seeing her daily. She will still be involved in the community and in our library. Thank you, Becky, for all your help and for your friendship. Blooming Prairie is a much better place thanks to you!

Welcome to Emily Glaser, the new director of the Chamber of Commerce. We look forward to working with you for years to come!

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OBITUARIES

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Lois Gordon, 65, London



Lois Gordon died Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021 at home with her family.

Lois Elaine Lofthus was born Aug. 14, 1955, in Austin, to Allan and Elaine (Trihus) Lofthus. She graduated from Blooming Prairie High School and received a degree and license in cosmetology from the Austin Vo-Tech.

On Aug. 6, 1977, she married Dennis Barton Gordon at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. They lived on an acreage south of London. Mrs. Gordon was a beautician for 43 years and worked at Sterling Beauty, The Cedars of Austin and also worked for the Mayo Clinic Health System for over 25 years.

She was very creative and enjoyed crocheting, sewing, crafting, was an active

4-H Team Leader, and a proud lutefish eating Norwegian.

Survivors include her daughter, Sara (John) of Hayfield, and her son, Kent (Gail) of London, UK; sisters, Carol (Greg) Fursa of Rochester, Julie (Tom) Morgan of Las Vegas, Colleen Prentiss of Coon Rapids, Mary (Tim) Wakek of Blooming Prairie, Nancy (Dean) Plunkett of Faribault; brothers, Gary (Sue) Lofthus of Maylene, Ala., Eric (Lori) Lofthus of Dodge Center; nieces and nephews, Joe, Jason (Natalie), Ben (Heather), Matthew (Jenna), Patrick (Heather), Melanie (Alex), Marissa (Jason), Brandon (Kristin), Dana (Justin), Alyssa, Sam, Hannah, Nikki and Aaron; and 17 great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Dennis; parents, Allan and Elaine Lofthus; and brother-in-law, Jeff.

A funeral service for Mrs. Gordon was held on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021 at Worlein Funeral Home Chapel in Austin. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the funeral home was limited to 57

people for the service. Public visitation preceded the funeral and the interment followed at State Line Cemetery in Northwood, Iowa. Masks, social distancing, and all COVID-19 protocol were enforced.

In lieu of flowers, the family's preference is donations to the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group. Worlein Funeral Home of Austin is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Norma Avis Oyløe, 87, Owatonna



Norma Avis Oyløe died on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

Mass of Christian burial was at Monday, Feb. 15, 2021 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Owatonna.

She was born on Oct. 9, 1933 in Cresco, Iowa to Leland and Irma (Patterson) Gossman. She graduated salutatorian from Canton (Minnesota)

ta) High School with the Class of 1951.

Norma was united in marriage to Melvin A. Oyløe on June 2, 1951 at St. Agnus Catholic Church in Cresco. Norma and Mel adopted three beautiful babies named Jann, Kevin, & Christine

Norma & Mel originally farmed south of Canton and moved out of state for a year. They returned to Canton for seven years where they built and ran the Mel-O-Creme drive thru. In 1967, they moved to Owatonna.

She was a homemaker raising her three children until becoming a bookkeeper/secretary for Father Clayton Haberman in Adams, Janesville and New Richland parishes. Norma loved tending her flowers, finding deals at thrift stores & rummage sales and decorating her house.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband Melvin; one brother, Donald Gossman; two sisters, Laurice Fulsaaas and Lois Henry.

Norma is survived by son, Kevin (Wende) Oyløe; daughters, Jann Oyløe and Christine (Laura); grandchildren, Andrea Oyløe and Marcus Oyløe and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers memorials are preferred to your local hospice. Brick Meger Funeral Home in Owatonna handled the funeral arrangement. www.megercares.com.

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Glen Mike Brett

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- Corey Butera

FEB. 11
- Weston Fiebigler
- Steve Drexler
- Kristin Krell
- Kim Trotman
- Madison Avery Andrews

FEB. 12
- Emily Trihus
- Justin Esplan
- Alan Schaefer
- Gary Polinder
- Adam Esplan

FEB. 13
- Bobbie Bruns
- Judy Remker
- Laura Mans
- Jim Trotman, Jr.
- Will Hinzman
- Layne Krell

FEB. 14
- Doug Krell
- Haley Ryks
- Jim Severtson
- Jon Peterson
- Rita Goodnature
- Creed Chladek
- Owen Braaten
- Harley Haley

FEB. 15
- Elijah Peterson
- Emily Iversen
- Steve Glynn
- Raylee Miner

FEB. 16
- Mary Jo Wallace
- Eloise Yvonne Jenzen
- Mark Swenson
- Maveda Peterson
- Nolan Toquam
- Jerry Ingvalson

ANNIVERSARIES

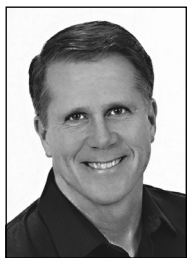
FEB. 15
Galen & Dorothy Peterson

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STEELE COUNTY Times

Always local, all the time.

True unity starts with Christ



Pastor Scott Peterson

NEW BEGINNINGS
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There is so much disunity in our nation and this is an indicator of the reality of spiritual good vs spiritual evil. For no person could treat others the way we see them being treated if there was not a true evil identity in this

earth, namely Satan and his cohorts.

One thing I do know is that legitimate unity in this nation can and will only come through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That means turning from our sins and trusting in God for the Salvation of our souls and knowing that by His grace we are saved and not by our own works. As a believer in Christ we should also want His will done on earth as it is in heaven. The unity I speak of will never be accomplished until God and his righteous ways are put back in Government, in our society, in our families and in our

churches the way that God designed it to be.

God has laid out principles in His word that can help us all live in a Godly way which helps produce peace, justice and law and order in our lives. He gave his people the Ten Commandments, which can be looked at as principles for living that can help bring harmony to the families in America and our government. As long as God and His righteous ways are rejected in this nation, we will not have the revival, unity and power we were meant to have to help guide this world and be the beacon of light for all the nations to see.

The people of Israel stopped worshipping the true God and set up a golden calf idol to worship in the wilderness. God came with the Ten Commandments to let them know there's a better way - really only one way - to a better life. It all starts with the first commandment, which is to put God first place in our lives.

The solution to the unity of this nation is not going to be any one president, even though there are leaders who exemplify God's Ways better than others. If we do not commit our lives to Jesus Christ we will never have the unity we desire. The first step

is to repent of our own ways (what we think is right in our own eyes) and to do what God says is right and follow that path by putting him first in all that we say and do.

The first commandment or principle is to always put God first. What would God say about this policy or that one? Are we honoring God in our decisions? Would God be pleased with our demeanor, actions and words?

Jesus said that the entire law is based on two new testament commandments. We are to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind and to

Love your neighbor as yourself."

Maybe you can't change everything in this nation by yourself but you can make a difference. When we all do our part - it will begin to weed out the evil and create a sense of unity that this nation so desperately needs.

Jesus said, 'I am the way, the Truth and the Life.' As long as we exalt Him as Lord, love Him and love our neighbor we will be one step closer to the unity God wants for us. You can make a difference. Put away the hate and begin to love others the way Christ loved us. Start today.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheranchurch.org
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
106 Third St. SE., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday

FIRST LUTHERAN - AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Men's Bible Study:
8 a.m. Saturday
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
(Kids church- 9 a.m. and Confirmation- 10:15 a.m.)
Jesus and Me: 3:30-5 p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday
Call to Prayer:
7 p.m. Tuesday
Bible Study:
9:30 a.m. Wednesday
Wednesday School:
6:15-7 p.m. followed by Youth Group- 7-9 p.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN - ELCA
434 First St. SW.,
Blooming Prairie
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Valerius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN - LCMC
8953 SW 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller
507-451-3854
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School, Adult Ed:
10:15 a.m. Sun.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN - LCMS
2500 7th Ave. NE.,
Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Indoor Worship: Sundays 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Online Worship: Sundays 9 a.m. or anytime on website

MOLAND LUTHERAN - ELCA
7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
507-789-6661
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN - ELCA
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-465-8366
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN - LCMS
1054 Truman Ave.,
Owatonna

Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN - ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeborn
Road, Austin
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.roglutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN - LCMS
4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont
Pastor Alan Broadwell
507-528-2404
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN - LCMS
28959 630th Ave., Sargeant
Pastor Collin Duling
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN-ELCA
1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klawiter and
Jacie Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m.
Thursday & Saturday:
8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Summer Services:
8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Sunday

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight DoBell
507-567-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - LCMS
202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
507-451-2165
Sunday Worship Indoor: 10 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
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(channel 900) (Tuesday-4:30
p.m.; Wednesday-6 p.m.;
Sunday-11 a.m.) and at
owatonnaalive.com.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauschild
507-477-2248

www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m. &
10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMS
108 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMS
57043 300th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
ZION LUTHERAN - ELCA
7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
Sunday Worship Indoor:
8:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
1909 St. Paul Road,
Owatonna
Senior Pastor:
John Weisenburger
Associate Pastor: Lisa Carlson
507-451-4853
oursaviorsowatonna.com
Worship: 8:15 a.m.-
Traditional, 9:30 a.m.-
Sunday School/Adult
Education
10:45 a.m.- Contemporary

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Father James Starasinich
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 SW First St.,
New Richland
Father Brian Mulligan
507-234-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave
Owatonna
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:15 a.m.
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other
month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
150 NE Second St., Hayfield
Father John Wilmot
507-477-2256
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday
Reconciliation: 3:45 pm
Saturday

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave.,
Owatonna
Father Swaminatha
Pothiredy
Parochial Vicar

507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Masses: Saturday 5 p.m.
Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m.,
and Noon (Spanish)
Daily Mass 7:15 a.m.
Tuesday through Friday
Reconciliation 4 p.m.
Saturday
Adoration - Thursdays 8
a.m.-7 p.m.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St.,
Blooming Prairie
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasinich
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation:
3-3:30 p.m. Sat.
Daily Mass:
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
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Thursday)
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or weekends

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT
540 SE 18th St., Owatonna
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor
507-451-1032
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday Connections:
10:15 a.m.

PENTECOSTAL

FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL
230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Eliazar Talamantes
507-363-2240
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

METHODIST

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST
43089 180th St., Medford
(Seven miles west of
Medford on CR 23)
Pastors JJ & Stefanie
Morgan
507-835-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST
200 Sixth St. NW., Ellendale
Pastor Randy Cirksena
507-684-2731
www.ellendaleumc.org
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST
815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org

Traditional Worship
(Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

CEDAR CREEK
30 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Aaron de Neui
507-477-2255
www.cedarcreekchurch.org
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

DESTINY CHRISTIAN
2515 Harvest Lane NW,
Owatonna
Pastors Rich and Amy Pettet
507-456-4775
www.destinycoc.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st and 3rd
Wednesday

ELEVATION NORTH
2002 Austin Road,
Owatonna
Pastor Doug Jones
507-363-3099
www.elevationnorth.
blogspot.com
Worship (English):
10 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.
Worship (Spanish):
2 p.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday
Spanish Evangelism &
Prayer: 7 p.m. Friday
NEW BEGINNINGS
332 14th St. NE., Owatonna
Pastors Scott & Joan
Peterson
507-413-0209
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

MENNONITE

PRAIRIE MENNONITE
13638 750th St.,
Blooming Prairie
Bishop Dennis Martin
507-583-7532
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting: 7:30 p.m.
Wed.

MORMON

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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and United Church of Christ
800 Havana Road,
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www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
(Fellowship, Church School,
and Adult Discussions
follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept
- May (see website
for schedule)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
109 E. Main St., Hayfield

Pastor Kirk Johnston
507-477-2631
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
P.O. Box 66, Claremont
507-528-2320
Pastor Douglas Walters
10 a.m. Worship

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
2373 Seventh Ave. NE,
Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Stud: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
211 Main St. S., Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4596
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

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Interim Pastor Wendell
Anderson
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday
Kids Church: 9 a.m.

BAPTIST

FIRST BAPTIST
104 First Ave. NE,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
507-583-2673
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
& 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Bible Study: 11:30 a.m. Sun.

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123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.
com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BETHEL BAPTIST
1611 Hemlock Ave.
Owatonna
Pastor Michael Simmerman
507-451-8548
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VICTORY LIFE
105 2nd St NE Geneva
Pastor Diane Butler
507-402-0960
Worship on Sundays
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Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Church: 9:45 a.m.

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BLOTTER: FROM A11

WEST CONCORD
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Clayton L. Irvin, 19, Owatonna, parking violation, \$32; Christopher M. King, 20, Lonsdale, parking violation, \$32; James P. Leonard, 61, Austin, open bottle, \$180; Jodie L. Sexton, 51, West Concord, parking violation, \$32. The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Jan. 31 – Feb. 7:

DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Beatrice A. Akinbolu, 51, Rochester, speeding, \$280; Joshua S. Almendinger, 39, Faribault, revoked license, 90 days in county jail; Neal D. Anderson, 49, Dexter, parking violation, \$32; Albert J. Arzola Jr., 43, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; Barbara J. Austinson, 59, Kasson, speeding, \$120; Damion R. Bennerotte, 19, Claremont, parking violation, \$32; Charles E. Brown, 63, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Cesar A. Castro-Herrera, 44, Claremont, invalid license, \$180; Conrad R. Clementon, 22, Pine Island, suspended license, \$280; Lander D. Coleman, 39, Blue Island, IL, speeding, \$220; Jacob R. Dean, 38, Claremont, parking violation, \$32; Jeremiah Haugstad, 33, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Darwin W. Karau, 55, Kasson, theft, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised probation; Zachary A. Kastner, 20, Byron, DWI, \$505, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 1 year of supervised probation; Nicole L. Kunert, 31, South Milwaukee, WI, suspended license and speeding, \$340; Jesse E. Larrison, 33, West Concord, suspended license, speeding and expired registration,

\$610; Amy J. Lewison, 33, Rochester, possession of marijuana, \$130; Jabril A. Mohamed, 32, Faribault, speeding, \$140; April S. Nation, 33, Eleva, WI, speeding, \$220; Jesse J. Newell, 22, Dodge Center, speeding, \$220; Chad M. Osgood, 41, Hayfield, revoked license, \$280; Dale R. Peterson, 53, Hutchinson, parking violation, \$32; Jeffrey A. Ruzek, 61, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Cal J. Svestka, 18, Pine Island, speeding, \$220; Brayden E. Taxdahl, 21, Red Wing, speeding, \$280; Justin P. Trachta, 34, Rochester, theft, \$380; Marsha M. Treichel, 40, Chatfield, parking violation, \$32.

KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Shavonne V. Alexander, 26, St. Paul, revoked license, speeding and windshield violation, \$370; Adrien M. Alger, 19, Hastings, invalid license and possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$380; Keith A. Beene, 42, Rochester, cancelled license, 90 days in county jail; James C. Brewster, 47, Elgin, seat belt, \$105; Brian L. Foote, 38, Oronoco, seat belt, \$105; Scott M. Gunther, 41, Arlington, parking violation, \$32; Max R. Lehman, 20, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Michael G. Nadeau, 59, Rochester, parking violation, \$32; Opoka J. Nathanael, 23, Austin, invalid license, \$180; Amanda A. Starks, 35, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$130; Larry D. Subbert, 67, Watlham, seat belt, \$105; Leonard L. Vicker, 59, Dodge Center, registration violation and no insurance, \$610; Jordan C. Ward, 22, Rochester, revoked license, \$280.

MN DEPT. OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Adam P. Hahn, 34, Austin, take pheasant with unlawful firearm and take wild animal with firearm from motor vehicle, \$280;

James R. Loeschen, 31, Hayfield, take pheasant with unlawful firearm and take wild animal with firearm from motor vehicle, \$280.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Zachary Q. Anderson, 29, Dodge Center, revoked license, \$280; Zachary K. Athey, 23, Claremont, suspended license, \$280; Debbie S. Brown, 49, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$140; Liliana L. Busch, 18, Dodge Center, speeding, \$280; Brandin L. Cohen, 29, Shaker Heights, OH, speeding, \$220; Michael J. Floyd, 53, Mankato, speeding, \$130; Paula Y. Graham, 56, Kasson, no license, \$180; Mohamed A. Hassan, 23, Columbus, OH, speeding, \$220; Traquantay D. Jones, 27, Owatonna, speeding and no license, \$230; Matthew C. Klahr, 29, Kenyon, speeding, \$220; Ronald McGill, 32, Rochester, speeding, \$220; Jeremiah J. Meyer, 36, Dodge Center, speeding, \$120; Whitney R. Minton, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$220; Oscar A. Morales, 45, Austin, revoked license, \$280; Stacy L. Newman, 49, West Concord, speeding, \$120; Jean C. Rosa Matos, 30, Dodge Center, speeding, \$140; Mallory J. Seppanen, 27, Houghton, MI, speeding and suspended license, \$320; Jamal D. Shaw, 27, Greensboro, NC, speeding, \$140; Melanie L. Stock, 27, Hartland, speeding, \$130; Scott R. Thorpe, 41, Hayfield, revoked license and no insurance, \$480; Tanner D. Thrun, 18, Dodge Center, speeding, \$280.

WEST CONCORD
POLICE DEPARTMENT

William L. Lamb, 49, Owatonna, domestic assault, 18 days in county jail, domestic abuse evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation.

Performance Dates:
Feb 12, 13 & 19, 20 | 7:30pm
Feb 14 & 21 | 2:00pm

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Additional Material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price • Original Music by David Abbinanti
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Online & Tri M Box office for members opens on January 23. Online general public ticket sales start January 30. In-house box office opens February 8- 21 (Mon-Weds 5-6:30 Thurs- Sat 5:30-7:30 Sun 12:30-2)
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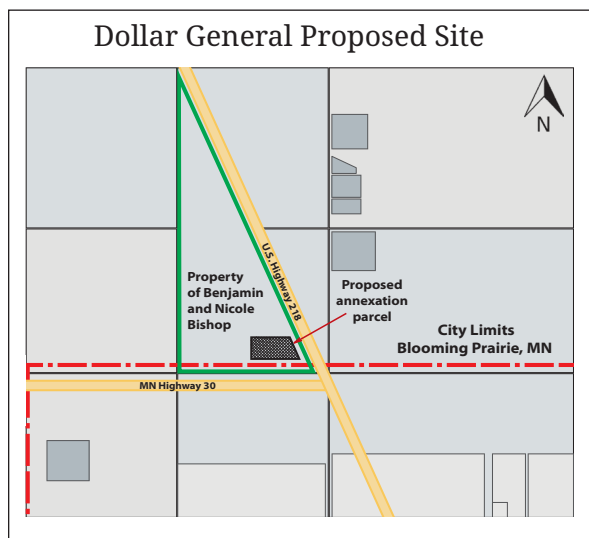
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BP City Council annexes of land for Dollar General

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SCT STAFF WRITER

The Blooming Prairie City Council unanimously approved an annexation agreement with Blooming Prairie Township, bringing 1.35 acres into the city limits. The property will be used as the site

of a future Dollar General store.

Before the annexation was discussed by the council, a public hearing was held to give the community a chance to share their thoughts on the possible annexation.

Former Mayor Harold Peterson spoke

in opposition to the annexation.

"They aren't interested in Blooming Prairie. You're not going to find anybody from there that's going to belong to the Chamber of Commerce and be active. It isn't going to happen. Every buck spent out there leaves, it goes to

Tennessee [where Dollar General is headquartered]," he said.

Peterson also said that Dollar General coming to town could lead to the closure of Vandal's Family Market because Dollar General will be able to sell the high-mar-

SEE BP CITY COUNCIL, B3

Steele 4-H has the greatest volunteers



Steele Talkin'

TRACY IGNASZEWSKI

Ok, I must let you in on a little secret, shhh... "Steele County 4-H has some of the greatest volunteers around!" Yep, you heard me! Let me shout that "Steele County 4-H has some of the greatest volunteers around!"

In January, 4-H held its annual awards banquet – this looked a little different than past years it was broadcast over the air for all to hear. In case you missed this broadcast, I would like to share some of the highlights.

Did you know we have super heroes here in Steele County? This year we awarded that title to eight of our volunteers. We had "Super Team S" consisting of Scott Kozelka, Sandy Jirele, Scott Seykora, the "Wonder Dogs" consisting of DeAnna Ripka, Michele Styndl, Rick and Alisa Miller and last, but not least, the "Incredible Ear Notch Pro" Lexie Steckleberg. These are both adult and youth volunteers that have stepped up and have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

I do have to mention our Outstanding

SEE STEELE 4-H, B3



4-H Extension Educator Missy Koch and some of her students pose for a photo during the One Step Garden Project in 2019. The project was one of many highlights for Koch during her 4-H career.

Longtime 4-H educator will continue to volunteer

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Missy Koch has been a 4-H educator with the University of Minnesota Extension for 16 years, 8 in Steele County, the place where she was born and raised.

"I grew up in Steele County and was in 4-H," Koch, a graduate of the University of Minnesota said. "I knew that I wanted to work with 4-H, it was something I wanted to do when I went into college."

Koch first started her Extension career in Clearwater County before moving back home. In her time at 4-H, Koch shared her passion for agriculture with her students. "4-H is another way to take your learning to another level," she said of

the program.

"Whether it's trying something like career learning, building self-confidence, or learning to work together as a team 4-H is great for students," Koch said. "It's also about outreach and getting that experience hands-on."

According to Koch, 4-H is constantly evolving and growing as an organization. "Since my time as a 4-Her to now it's always evolving, there's the traditional roots but it's always changing, especially this year with virtual learning," she said.

Koch counts the fair as one of the highlights for herself and her students each year, which is why it was crucial for the kids to still be able to show after last year's fair had to be canceled

due to COVID. "We were able to get the kids together to talk about their projects," she said. "That's probably the biggest reason a lot of kids are in the 4-H program and it's what many of us look forward to."

Other highlights for Koch and her students include the youth leadership program, camps, and team efforts such as their gardening project. "Every month has an event to look forward to," she said. "Those are just some of the highlights."

"4-H has been wonderful, they're a huge part of my family and I think that's what 4-H here in Steele County is: a family," Koch said of her time working with 4-H.

SEE LONGTIME 4-H EDUCATOR, B9

County OKs contract for communications cloud

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

The Steele County Board of Commissioners approved a one-year contract with Granicus for a government communications cloud-based service to enhance the county's communications efforts during the pandemic.

The contract will cost the county \$6,000 for 12 months of service plus an initial fee of \$2,900. The county can decide whether to continue the contract with Granicus after those 12 months.

"This is a distribution system and software solutions which allows us to generate emails, text messages, posting to social media and also our website to improve communications with the public," said Dave Purscell, the county's information technology director. "Better engagement is really what we're looking for."

Purscell said the county had looked at getting a system like this several years ago but the timing was not right. "Right at the moment, there are a lot of communications coming out of our public health and we are doing a lot of communicating specific to vaccinations and regarding the COVID pandemic," he said.

Although the cloud service is crucial for public health communications, Purscell said it will also benefit other departments. "We will be able to utilize it in the highway department," he said. "We were looking for a way for people to subscribe to updates on particular road projects."

"There definitely is a use to be found with other departments and there's no additional cost for other departments," Purscell said. In addition to the State of Minnesota, six other counties are using Grani-

SEE COUNTY OKS, B2

Raising growler cap won't impact local breweries

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Minnesota law currently prohibits breweries producing more than 20,000 barrels of beer a year from selling to-go jugs known as growlers.

During a press conference last week, Sen. John Jasinski (R-Faribault) said he supports removing the "growler cap" threshold.

Minnesota is currently the only state where all craft brewers are not able to sell beer to go.

If the legislation supported by Jasinski becomes law, it's



Eric Oppegard fills three growlers with beer at Mineral Springs Brewery in Owatonna on Saturday.

unlikely to impact local microbreweries.

"We aren't in competition with any of the

big guys," said Mark Sebring, one of the founders and owners of Mineral Springs Brew-

ery in Owatonna.

Lawmakers initially set the growler cap limit in 2013.

Owatonna schools eye \$2M in budget cuts

BY MITCHELL BREUER
STAFF WRITER

The Owatonna School District is facing an estimated \$2 million in budget cuts for the 2021-2022 school year.

"We are asking our buildings to make difficult decisions heading into next year," said Superintendent Jeffery Elstad during the Feb. 8 school board meeting. "Next year's delivery will not look the same as it is, because we are making \$2 million worth of cuts. That means people and programs have to go."

While no specific decisions on the cuts have been made, Amanda Heilman, Owatonna's director of finance and operations said that with any type of budget reduction the district will look at enrollment as it drives a majority of its revenue.

Class sizes will be adjusted to align with enrollment projections, she said. From there, the administrative team will look to see where it can cut to meet the \$2 million target.

SEE SCHOOLS EYE, B3



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Coldest Minn. temp on record is 60 below



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

You might think our recent frigid temperatures were unbearable. Just take a look at Minnesota weather statistics going back to the late 1880s early 1900s.

We just survived below zero temperatures for about a week straight.

In our Blooming Prairie area, temperatures plummeted to nearly 30 below zero. Brrrrrrrrrr!

Let's look back at some Minnesota weather statistics. But before we look at the stats, I must say that I recall some really cold, cold temperatures while growing up on a small dairy farm, two miles west of Corning in Newry Township.

The statistics come from Wikipedia.

I also remember snow drifts as high as the roof on our small farm house.

Minnesota weather statistics show the coldest temperature on record was 60 degrees below zero on Feb. 2, 1996 at Tower. That's way up north.

The largest single-day temperature change was 71 degrees, recorded on April 3, 1982 in Lamberton.

Hottest temp on record was 114 degrees

Fahrenheit. It is shared by Beardsley on July 29, 1917 and in Moorhead on July 6, 1936.

Coldest wind chill was 100 degrees below zero Jan. 9-10, 1982 (old formula) at Northern. Under the new formula, the coldest wind chill was 77 degrees below zero on Jan. 29, 2019 at Thief River Falls.

For those who like winter, the cold is indeed here, and we also have significant snow on the ground to make it almost ideal conditions for snowmobiling, skiing, snow boarding and snowshoeing.



Courtesy Shutterstock

The earliest snowfall recorded was a trace on Aug. 31, 1949 in Duluth. Earliest measurable snowfall was .3 inch on Sept. 14, 1964 in International Falls. The latest recorded snow was 1.5 inches on June 4, 1935 at Mizpah.

Most snow in a 24-hour period was 36 inches on Jan. 7, 1964 in Lake County. Most snow in one storm was 47 inches on Jan. 6-8, 1994 in Lake County. During one month, Collegeville had 66 inches in March 1965, the most ever.

The most snow during one season was 170 inches recorded 1949-50 at Grand Portage State Park.

The most fatalities,

up to 200, during a winter storm was reported statewide Jan. 12-13, 1888.

Here's high and low temperatures by the month for Minnesota:

January – High 69 in Montevideo, Jan. 24, 1981 and low -57 in Embarrass, Jan. 20, 1996.

February – High 76 in Pleasant Mound, Feb. 26, 1896 and low -60 in Tower, Feb. 2, 1996.

March – High 88, March 23, 1910 in Montevideo and low -50, March 2, 1897, Pine City.

April – High 101, April 22, 1980 in Hawley and low -22 in Kahlstad, April 6, 1979 in Kahlstad.

May – High 112, May 31, 1934 in Maple Plain and low 4 in Pine River on May 1, 1909 in Pine River and 4 in Pine River, May 2, 1909.

June – High 110, June 29, 1931 in Canby and low 15 on June 1 1964 in Bigfork.

July – High 114, July 29, 1917 in Beardsley and low 24 July 7, 1997 in Tower.

August – High 110, Aug. 10, 1947 in Beardsley and in Montevideo on Aug. 1, 1988; low 21 on Aug. 28, 1896 in Tower and low 21 on Aug. 2, 2002 in Kelliher.

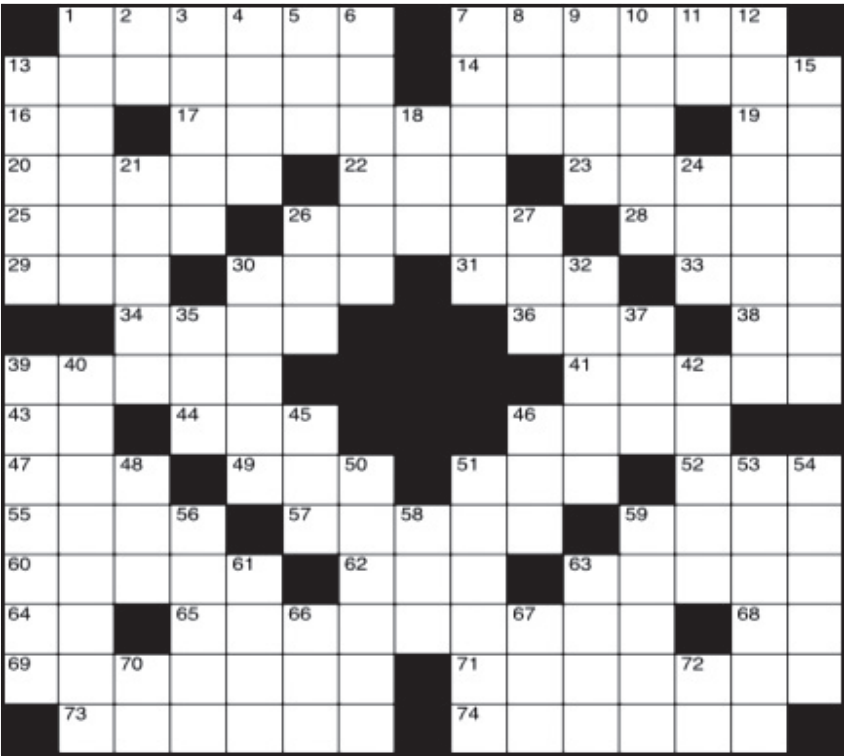
September – High 111, Sept. 11, 1931 in Beardsley and low 10 on Sept. 30, 1930 in Big Falls and low 10 on Sept. 22, 1974.

October – High 98, Oct. 5, 1963 in Beardsley and low minus 16 on Oct. 26, 1936 in Roseau.

November – High 84, Nov. 1 1950 in Winona and low minus 45 on Nov. 30, 1896 in Pine City.

December – High 74, Dec. 9, 1939 in Wheaton and low minus 57 on Dec. 31, 1898 in Pine City.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

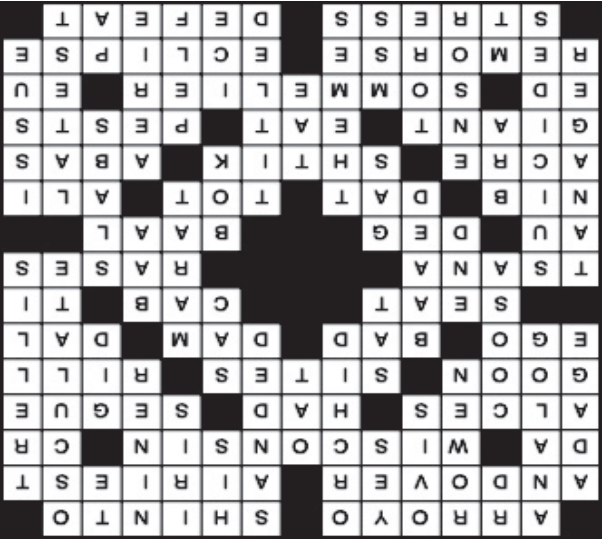


CLUESACROSS

- S.W. gully
- Japanese polytheism
- N.H. Academy and town
- Most aired
- Prosecuting officer
- Badger State
- Atomic 424
- Moose genus
- Possessed
- Make a smooth transition
- Thug (slang)
- Locations or places
- Rivulet
- The self
- Not good
- Obstruct
- Decalitre
- Space for sitting
- Taxi
- 7th tone
- Ethiopian lake
- Tears down
- Gold
- Angle (abbr.)
- Semitic fertility god
- Beak
- Digital audiotape
- Small child
- 4th caliph of Islam
- 4840 square yards

- Devious trick (Yiddish)
 - Overgarments
 - Large creature
 - Ingest
 - Nuisances
 - denotes past
 - Wine waiter
 - Portuguese
 - Compunction
 - Overshadow
 - Emphasize
 - An unsuccessful ending
- ### CLUES DOWN
- Something comparable
 - Rural delivery
 - Laugh-Innco-host Dan
 - Sheep genus
 - Affirmative
 - Vanilla's flower family
 - In a way, made smoother
 - Belong to he
 - Greek rainbow goddess
 - S.F. football team player
 - Atomic 452
 - Kiss
 - Proverb
 - Lattice support
 - Cereal grass
 - Rome, GA river
 - Disease of cattle

- Seated
- A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- Blatted
- Murdered in his bathtub
- Finish
- Sheep sound
- Scarlett songbird
- Kills oneself
- Broad, flat pieces of stone
- Auto fuel
- Derek ____, X Harvard Pres.
- Woman's undergarment
- Topics of discourse
- Belonging to the peerage
- Most recent
- Point of debate
- Ostend artist James Sydney
- Phonograph inventor's initials
- Eagle's nest
- Ripped a fabric
- Lucr
- Manuscripts (abbr.)
- Frozen water
- 41st state
- Keystone state



2/10/21

COUNTY OKs: contract FROM B1

cus' service including Ramsey, Olmstead, and Hennepin counties.

"I think this is one other way that we can become as transparent as possible with the general public," Commissioner Greg Krueger said. "They can tag into what they want to know and it may even save some staff time."

"The idea is really just to centralize all our communication," Commissioner Jim Abbe said of the service. With the service up to 5,000 residents can receive updates and information, should the county have need for a larger pool of subscribers when it's time to renew the contract they can bump

that limit up to 10,000.

Now that COVID communications are crucial the county will be rolling out a newly revamped communication system by utilizing Granicus' GovD Communications Cloud. "The beautiful thing is that we'll be pushing the information to four platforms with one entry," Purscell said.

FOR SALE



Jennifer Walsh

507-438-6676
jenwalsh@kw.com
jenwalsh.kw.com



Dear Motor Medics, I am restoring a 1971 Mustang. I am building the body and chassis around the engine I choose, and I am in the planning stage of the engine now. I want to have a 450-horsepower car but do not want to go with a modern fuel injected engine. I want to keep an original big block type V8 carbureted engine in it. To get to where I want to be with horsepower, I need to go with a high compression ration which will require more than premium fuel, but I don't want to buy race gas at every fill up at over \$10 a gallon. Can I use e30 ethanol in it?

Jeremiah in Branson Missouri
Dear Jeremiah, Many people are going with modern fuel injection in their cars which automatically adjust to different fuels and can be adapted to run high blends of ethanol without damage. This gets much harder in a carbureted car, but it can be done. Fuel injected cars use oxygen sensors to read the exact air fuel ration in the exhaust and when you run a higher blend of ethanol which naturally ruins leaner the computer ads fuel to compensate. With a carburetor you must decide on fuel type and jet it accordingly. Consult with your engine builder and decide on how much octane the engine will need and choose your ethanol blend for octane to match. At a very low-cost ethanol is a choice for many horsepower addicts these days.

Dear Motor Medics, I have a 2020 Cadillac with what is called Super Cruise on it. I did not understand the feature when I bought the car and after a year, I have started to like it. It really scared me a first, steering itself and changing lanes and braking all on its own. I am old school, and I was not sure if I was ready for a car that drives itself part of the time. As it grew on me, I started to think that just maybe I could one day own a car that drives itself all the time and be chauffeured around. But this whole thing has got me upset. I have put 70k miles on the car and it is out of warranty. I broke the windshield, and the dealer wants a huge amount of money to "align the windshield" because the cruise no longer works after a glass shop installed new glass and I have multiple warning lights. What are they talking about?

Don in Livonia Michigan
Dear Don, They are correct. All the luxury features being installed in our cars are nice to have but they require special adjustments to be sure they are safe. The Super Cruise is one of the ADAS Automated Driver Assist Systems now on many cars. The system relies on many inputs and one is a windshield camera which must be aligned when glass is replaced as a matter of safety for you and others.

Take care, the Motor Medics



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Elstad updates public on school progress

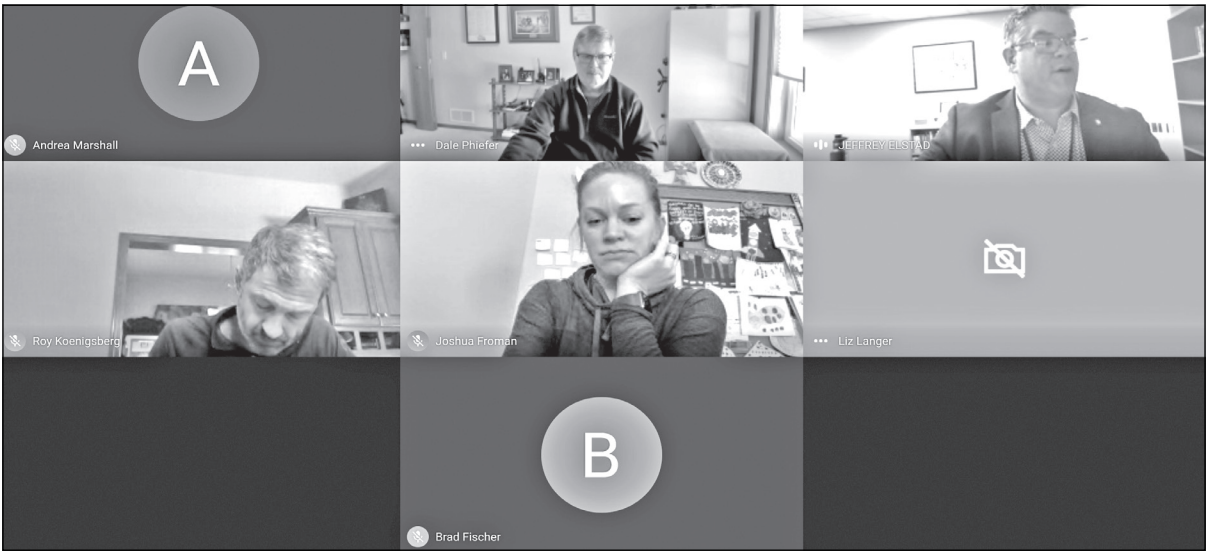
BY MITCHELL BREUER
STAFF WRITER

More than 300 teachers and staff members in the Owatonna School District have been vaccinated or are in the process of receiving their vaccinations.

That was just one bit of information Superintendent Jeffrey Elstad shared with a group of community members who joined him for “coffee and conversations” over Google Meet on Friday, Feb. 12.

The big topic of conversation was the district’s ongoing efforts with the COVID-19 pandemic.

While most of the district’s elementary students are back in the classroom, Elstad said 12-13% of the district’s



Superintendent Jeffrey Elstad talks with members of the community over Google Meet.

STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

elementary students are still distance learning. He also said the district hasn’t seen any student-to-student transmission of the virus.

The school is still working on bringing secondary students, with particular emphasis on bringing back sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students on a full-time basis. Elstad said that this group of students has struggled the most with the distance-learning format.

“They want other adults, aside from families, in their life,” Elstad said.

The school also

hopes to bring older students back to classrooms as well, but there are problems with doing it, especially with the number of classes that involve students from different grades.

Elstad said he is hopeful that there may not be distance learning in the fall.

“No one wants them back more than me,” Elstad said.

In addition to bringing students back to the classrooms, Elstad said the school is working on plans to have prom and graduation ceremonies this year. Details of what that might look like haven’t been finalized.

Elstad will host another conversation with the community on March 12.

BP schools commemorate Black History Month

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Whether they were engaging in distance learning, hybrid learning or in-person learning while wearing masks, students have experienced a lot of change this school year, but something that has stayed the same is the observance of Black History Month at Blooming Prairie Elementary School and Blooming Prairie High School.

Blooming Prairie Elementary Principal Jacob Schwarz said his staff look to celebrate all cultures and backgrounds at the elementary school.

One way they do that is by having a display case highlighting various cultures in the entryway of the building.

“Educating our students on the history of cultures helps to give our students perspective. When the display is at the entry of our school it allows many students to see the emphasis and importance our school has on all individuals, backgrounds, and cultures. This month our spotlight is on Black History Month and the contributions of many toward equal rights for all,” he said.

While educating students about the contributions of African Americans may be Black History Month’s purpose, Blooming Prairie High School Social Studies teacher Ryan Slack said it’s probably more helpful for adults than the students.

“It’s a reminder for teachers and those who

generate curriculum to look at black history and put it in front of the students whenever they can,” he said.

At the elementary school, Schwarz said teachers are putting black history in front of students in a variety of ways.

The first-grade students are reading a book about Martin Luther King Jr. and creating an art project. He said that the first-graders can make connections between the people and the art.

Meanwhile, he said the third-grade students are creating small posters that come together to make a large mural of eight African American leaders: Thurgood Marshall, Ruby Bridges, George Washington Carver, Jackie Robinson, Harriett Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Barack Obama.

Because February is also “I Love to Read



Jacob Schwarz



Ryan Slack

Month” the third graders will also read and learn about these eight African American leaders and many more.

Fifth-grade students are also reading about historically significant African Americans.

“The upper grades also find that these articles open up great discussions,” he said.

Meanwhile, at Blooming Prairie High School, Slack said that even though February is Black History Month, he doesn’t believe February is the time to march through all

ical to only teach from a white male perspective,” he said. “Students need to see themselves, and all groups of their peers, in history if they’re going to have any stake in the United States’ past and future.”

Slack said educating Blooming Prairie students about black history is even more important because people from a rural town such as Blooming Prairie are less likely to have a friend from a different racial group.

“It’s important to expose people to things that they maybe would not have automatically been exposed to otherwise,” he said.

At the elementary school, Schwarz said the staff’s goal is for all students to understand equity and equal rights for all.

He also wants Blooming Prairie students to develop respect and empathy for all backgrounds.



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Recipe Corner

Creamy Wild Rice Soup

4 C water
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 C uncooked wild rice
3 T chopped green onions
1/4 C shredded carrot
3 T chopped pecans
6 T butter, cubed
1/3 C all-purpose flour
2 cans (14-1/2 oz each) chicken broth
1/2 C cubed fully cooked ham
1/4 tsp pepper
1 C half and half cream

Green onions, cut into thin strips, optional

In large saucepan, bring water and salt to a boil. Add rice. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 50 to 55 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat. Let stand for 10 minutes; drain and set aside.

In large Dutch oven or soup kettle, sauté onions, carrots and pecans in butter for 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in flour until blended. Gradually add broth. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat, add the ham, pepper and wild rice. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes or until carrots are tender. Reduce. Add cream and heat through (do not boil). Sprinkle with green onion strips if desired.

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STEELE 4-H: has the greatest volunteers FROM B1

Adult Volunteers – Jill Kath, Guy Walburn and Kevin Weckman and our Friends of 4-H – KRFO and Jim Grass. This is another group of individuals that sure have contributed to our Steele County 4-H successes.

Oh yes, I can’t forget to tell you about our youth. This year receiving the I Dare You award was Arica Kath, Lilly Zollner and Lexie Ignaszewski. The Gold Key Awards were Sam Freidin and Lexie Ignaszewski and the Kottke Dairy Award went to Courtney Kath. So we do have some pretty amazing young young people in our program too.

So why am I sharing this with you? Like I said earlier “Steele County 4-H has some

of the greatest volunteers around!” With busy lives it can be hard to find time to volunteer. Yet so many Steele County Families find time in their busy schedule to volunteer. One may ask, why? Why would one put aside their time to shop, time for their hobbies, time for their families to volunteer?

Volunteers personally benefit from their 4-H involvement. Volunteers come into the 4-H program hoping to support youth and make a difference. In the process, they gain skills in teaching, leadership and communication. These skills transfer to other environments in which volunteers work and live.

4-H Youth Devel-

opment benefits from volunteers. Volunteers give their time, talents and energy to the 4-H program. On average, volunteers give nine hours per month, an annual contribution worth \$2,600. In addition to time, 90% of volunteers contributed supplies and 79% of volunteers contributed financially. Volunteers serve as primary ambassadors for 4-H. They tell others about the importance of youth development, recruit new youth and volunteers and expand community partnerships.

Communities are stronger because of 4-H Youth Development volunteers. Volunteers have a positive impact where they live

and work. They make communities stronger, connect communities to each other, improve community health and increase overall civic involvement. The value of 4-H volunteers extends far beyond the scope of youth development into every part of their community.

So thank you to all those volunteers! The Steele County 4-H program would not be possible without you. Through your service, you enrich the 4-H program and youth, making our communities stronger.

Tracy Ignaszewski is the 4-H program coordinator for Steele County. Steele Talkin’ is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

OWATONNA SCHOOLS EYE: \$2M in budget cuts FROM B1

Heilman did confirm that with these cuts, the Owatonna Public Schools could see higher class sizes with fewer staff.

The depth of those remain unknown, saying the budget process is just beginning. She said she hopes to have more specific figures within

the next month.

Both Elstad and Heilman said during the Monday meeting that these measures are not sustainable.

A review of the 2020-2021 revised budget also showed revenues of \$64,824,263 exceeded expenditures of \$64,794,797 for a \$29,466 net gain.

BP CITY COUNCIL: annexes of land FROM B1

gin products at prices lower than Vandal’s will be able to sell them.

“Slowly but surely, their [Vandal’s] cash flow will diminish to where they can’t restock their shelves and they’ll give up and they’ll go away. Then who’s going to deliver groceries in Blooming Prairie? You’re going to have to get in your car to get groceries because Vandal’s is going to be gone. It’ll take four

or five years,” he said.

Peterson also said he believes a similar fate could be in line for B to Z Hardware.

“Don’t do anything to encourage these people to come here. It diminishes our town. It makes us like all the other small towns that are dying west of here,” he said. “That’s tricky and I know it’s tricky, but one of the things you can do is not do this [approve

the annexation].”

Later, when it was time for the council to discuss the annexation, City Administrator Andrew Langholz said Dollar Tree knows they’re not welcome in a lot of small towns, but Blooming Prairie is limited in what it can do to prevent or discourage Dollar General from coming to town.

“The best thing going for us is that if we do annex them in, at least

we can collect taxes from them,” said Mayor Curt Esplan.

Councilman Brad Clark said that if Blooming Prairie decided against annexing the property, Dollar General could still build its store at that site. In that case, Blooming Prairie Township would get Dollar General’s taxes instead of the City of Blooming Prairie.

The Blooming Prairie City Council will next meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 8.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

FEB. 23

10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, BP Library Facebook

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

FEB. 19

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

FEB. 24

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

FEB. 22

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

FEB. 18

Noon – COVID in the Workplace Virtual Panel

FEB. 21

2 p.m. – Clue: On Stage, Little Theatre of Owatonna

FEB. 19

7:30 p.m. – Clue: On Stage, Little Theatre of Owatonna

FEB. 23

10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, Owatonna Library Facebook

FEB. 20

11 a.m. – Winter Charm on the Farm, MN Agricultural Interpretive Center, Waseca

7:30 p.m. – Clue: On Stage, Little Theatre of Owatonna

4 p.m. – OPU Commission Meeting, Virtual

5 p.m. – Steele County Board Meeting, County Admin Building

FREELANCE WRITER WANTED

The STEELE COUNTY TIMES is seeking a freelance writer & photographer to cover Blooming Prairie & Ellendale area news. Perfect opportunity for a retiree who loves to write & attend community events.

If interested, please email Rick Bussler at rbbrick@frontier.com.

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- "Sweetheart of a Wine Sale"

- Lottery Promo

Sudoku Corner

	9	7	3		6	4	1	8
		2		5		3	9	6
3			9		4			
			5				6	4
6			7	3	8	5	2	
8	5	1		4				
9	7						4	3
	3	4			1			
1				9		7	8	2

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5	7	1	9	9	2	8	4	6
4	5	6	2	7	9	1	9	8
1	2	9	8	5	4	6	7	9
7	9	8	6	1	9	5	2	4
9	4	2	7	8	6	9	1	5
9	6	5	4	9	1	2	8	7
8	1	7	9	2	5	4	6	9

United Way launches tax service

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR



United Way of Steele County recently launched a new service to help people file their federal and state tax returns without spending any money in tax preparation fees.

SeniorPlace in Owatonna has traditionally offered free income tax assistance to low-income, elderly, disabled and non-English speaking residents. But because of COVID-19, SeniorPlace was unable to do so this year, said Annette Duncan, president of the local United Way.

"We're scheduling appointments now," said Duncan.

United Way's new tax program, launched in partnership with United Way Worldwide, provides a link to individuals who want to file their taxes on their own through MyFreeTaxes.

"Or people can come into the office and we'll provide a computer and have a volunteer available to support them," said Duncan.

For those, with more complicated returns, Duncan said, United Way of Steele County has partnered with the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). We can connect people by phone or via Zoom, said Duncan.

"We are always looking to identify needs of the community and finding a solution," said Duncan.

Next month, United Way also plans to install a legal kiosk in its office. Duncan said the kiosk will allow people to access legal documents now only available at the courthouse.

The goal is to increase accessibility and is being done in partnership with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Duncan said.

Appointments will be required and those using the service will have to take notes because the computer will not be hooked up to a printer.

Duncan said United Way of Steele County is starting the year strong after completing its 2020 fundraising campaign – the third largest in the organization's history.

The 2020 campaign finished at 97% of its goal, with 2,805 donors contributing nearly \$780,000.

While the campaign saw a decrease in the number of contributors through its workforce campaign, those who contributed gave more, said Duncan. Individual donations increased significantly, said Duncan, adding that 325 donors were new donors – most in a single campaign in many years.

A campaign celebration is being planned for the summer.



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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



ELLA DOBBERSTEIN

This week's panther of the week is ELLA DOBBERSTEIN. Ella lives outside of Ellendale with her parents Josh and Linda, and her older sister Kaitlyn and younger brother Jacob. Ella is in Mrs. Lassahn's second grade class at NRHEG.

She is an extremely hard worker and very dedicated to her school work. Ella has a very caring heart and is a wonderful friend to all! She has a positive attitude and is a great model of respect and Panther Pride!

She enjoys doing crafts, playing barbies, and stopping at Starbucks. Her favorite foods are pizza and watermelon and she loves watching her favorite TV show, Good Luck Charlie. *Keep up the great work Ella!*



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Trinity Church takes over Beds for Kids

Beds For Kids, an Owatonna based non-profit organization, is shifting to become a program ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Over the last 10 years, Beds For Kids has provided beds for more than 1,000 children and youth in Steele and Waseca counties.

Almost a year ago, The Beds For Kids board of directors approached Trinity asking about the possibility of a significant partnership, in order to create sustainability for years to come. The Beds For Kids leadership had given years of service and thousands of hours of work to this mission. As they were looking at stepping back in leadership, their hope

was to partner with Trinity in a way that would ensure the future of the organization.

Trinity believes strongly in the mission of Beds For Kids and is excited to step into this new role. "Beds for Kids fits perfectly with Trinity's mission," said Rev. Todd Buegler, the senior pastor at Trinity. "We are a congregation that is always looking for ways to care for and serve the community. We believe God is calling our congregation to continue to deepen our connections with the community through Beds For Kids."

The Beds For Kids board assisted with this transition before stepping down from their roles in January.

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KSMQ TV

The Better Choice

District backs Otto for state chaplain

An Ellendale man has been endorsed for the Minnesota state office of Chaplain.

Larry Otto received the endorsement by the Ellendale American Legion Fidelity Post 296 and the First District.

Be-

coming the state chaplain is an office Otto holds in high regard. He

Larry Otto

said this has been the one state office of which he most desires to attain.

Otto served in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1971, stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., Fort Dix, N.J. and at Kelly Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. He is a 49-year member of the Ellendale post. He is currently post commander and First District chaplain.

He has been active in the community. Among the organizations Otto has been involved with are FFA Advisory Board, Barbershop Society, Clarks Grove Co-op Creamery Board and Steele County Historical Society.

Otto currently serves on the Community Foundation of Ellendale where he has been instrumental in co-leading renovation of the Ellendale Community Building project in cooperation with the city council.

He is a member of the Ellendale United Methodist Church.



Hess earns statewide award

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Owatonna junior Ava Hess said she was completely surprised when she learned she'd been nominated for the Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award, which recognizes high school juniors who are model citizens in their communities, who are active in fine arts and/or athletic activities and who demonstrate leadership qualities. She added that she'd be a lot more shocked if she was selected as one of the award winners.

"If I were to win the award, I would be 100 times more surprised than I was when Mr. Achterkirch called me about the nomination," she said in December.

Her prognostication proved to be accurate as she was stunned when she found out in early February that she was selected as one of the 2021 ExCEL Award recipients.

"I was completely shocked, and still am," Hess said. "My physical reaction was to immediately slap my hand over my mouth. I could not believe that I was chosen. I did not expect to be nominated in the first place, and receiving the news that I had won was so surprising and unreal. I am very proud to represent the Owatonna school district and community."

One reason receiving this award surprised her is because every Minnesota State High School



Ava Hess

League member school can nominate one junior male and one junior female, but only 36 juniors from across the state are chosen to receive this honor.

In addition to being one of only a select group of people selected for this award, Hess said winning this award was special to her because she's long admired those who have been recognized as ExCEL Award nominees.

"Being one of the recipients of this award is such an unbelievable honor. I have looked up to all of the students who have been nominated in the past. It is very humbling to know that I may give a similar impression to others in the future," Hess said.

One way she's a role model to younger students is by showing them that they can be involved in the community and a lot of extracurricular activities and still be a dedicated student.

"Being involved in many different activities as well as school requires a lot of planning. If it weren't for my planner and calendar, it would be hard to keep track of

SEE **HESS EARNS, B6**

Huskie boys hockey battles to tie with Mankato West

BY MITCHELL BREUER
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna boys hockey team had one of its biggest games of the season, as they played the current leader of the Big Nine Conference, Mankato West. With both teams at one loss, there was a lot at stake with the game, but the result would be one that neither team wanted.

The teams skated to a 4-4 tie.

At the beginning of the game, it looked like it was going to be a game dominated by Owatonna, as they outscored West 3-0 in

the first period with senior Casey Johnson scoring two of the goals.

However, just as quickly as Owatonna's lead was established, it would go away, as West quickly grabbed its first goal of the game at the beginning of the second period, and then took advantage of power plays to score two more goals.

The third period proved to be evenly matched, with senior Aaron Bangs giving Owatonna the lead momentarily before West responded

SEE **HUSKIE BOYS, B6**



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

NRHEG guard Andrea Briggs battles Blooming Prairie's Anna Pauly for a loose ball. It ended up being a held ball and moments later the Panthers scored to cut their deficit to 10 points, but they wouldn't get any closer, losing 55-39.

Blossoms upset state ranked WEM

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

After a heartbreaking loss to Chatfield, the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team rebounded with a pair of wins this past week.

First, they beat New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) 55-39 on Tuesday, Feb. 9, then they upset the fourth-ranked team in Class A, Waterville-Elysian-Morris-town (WEM), 43-42 on Friday, Feb. 12.

Against NRHEG, the Blossoms opened up an early lead by starting the game on an 11-2 run.

The Panthers got back in the game with a 6-0 run, which made it a one-possession game, 11-8, with eight minutes left in the first half.

However, Blooming Prairie responded with a 7-2 run to take a 18-10 lead.

NRHEG cut that deficit in half, but the Blossoms scored the last three points of the first half to take a 24-17 lead into halftime.

In the second half, Blooming Prairie led the same margin, 32-25, with 13 and a half minutes left in the second half.

However, the Panthers wouldn't get any closer, because that's when the wheels came off for their offense.

Blooming Prairie went on a 13-4 over about the next eight minutes to take a commanding 45-29 lead with a little less than six minutes left in the game. NRHEG scored the last four points of the game, but the Blossoms still won handily 55-39.

Blossoms' Head Coach John Bruns said his team's defense was one of the main reasons they got the win.

"Blooming Prairie got the win behind a solid defense and excellent rebounding against a tough NRHEG team," he said.

He also commended a couple of the Blossoms for their great games.

"Megan Oswald had a great game with 19 points and 12 big rebounds. Bobbie Bruns was also key with her 11 points, nine assists and six steals," he said.

The Awesome Blossoms also got seven points from starters Maggie Bruns and Allison Krohnberg and reserve Emily Miller.

"This excellent balance was key to our win tonight," he said.

With the win, Blooming Prairie's record improves to 6-1 overall and 5-0 in the Gopher Conference.

With the loss, NRHEG's record is now 3-5 overall and 2-4 in the Gopher Conference

BP stats: Oswald – 19 points and 12 rebounds, Bobbie Bruns – 11 points, 9 assists and 6 steals, Maggie Bruns – 7 points, Allison Krohnberg – 7 points, Emily Miller – 7 points and Anna Pauly – 4 points.

NRHEG stats: Sidney Schultz – 15 points, Faith Nielson – 9 points, Sophie Stork – 8 points, Hallie Schultz – 3 points, Erin Jacobson – 2 points and Andrea Briggs – 2 points.

BP upsets WEM
Three days later, the Blossoms played a much tougher opponent when they went on the road to take the fourth-ranked team in Class A, the WEM Buccaneers.

Unfortunately, Blooming Prairie did not get off to the same hot start they did against NRHEG.

"We trailed most of the first half and had a few defensive breakdowns that led to five first-half threes for WEM," Bruns said.

WEM led 30-22 at halftime.

"We made some nice adjustments at halftime and played outstanding defense and only allowed 12 second-half points. That defense allowed us to creep back in the game behind 16 second-half points from Megan Oswald. The last two came with eight seconds to go to give us our first lead of the second half," he said.

The Buccaneers' final shot was off target, and the Blossoms scored the upset 43-42.

The dramatic win improved Blooming Prairie's record to 7-1 overall and 6-0 in the Gopher Conference, while W-E-M is now 6-2 overall and 5-1 in the Gopher Conference.

BP stats: Oswald – 25 points and 14 rebounds, Bobbie Bruns – 9 points, 5 assists and 4 steals, Maggie Bruns – 5 points and 5 assists, Allison Krohnberg – 4 points and 8 rebounds and Maren Forystek – 6 assists.

The Awesome Blossoms' next game is a road contest against Bethlehem Academy at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19. Their next home game is against Medford at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 23.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Blooming Prairie sophomore forward/center Anna Pauly looks to pass the ball to one of her teammates as she's double-teamed by two NRHEG players, including junior guard Sophie Stork (15).



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Panthers' junior guard Sophie Stork gets past Awesome Blossoms' senior guard Maggie Bruns during the opening minutes of the second half.



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HESS EARNs: statewide award

FROM B5

everything. Organization is a key factor to being involved in many activities,” she said. “It is a delicate balance and I am very aware of it.”

Hess is also aware that although this is an individual honor she wouldn’t have become so involved in the community, such an active student and a strong leader without the help of her parents.

“They have always pushed me to be the best I can be, and through that I have learned how to balance all the activities I love doing. They also have taught me many lessons on how to be kind and helpful, which has contributed to me leading by example,” she said.

Even though she’ll graduate high school in a year and a half, she plans to continue to stay devoted to her hometown.

“I will always be committed to the Owatonna community, fine arts and athletics and leadership award or no award,” she said. “I will always try to do my best to help others.”

HUSKIE BOYS: hockey battles

FROM B5

again forcing overtime, where neither team gained an edge before time expired.

The game was the second tie that the Big 9 Conference has seen this season, with Winona and Red Wing tying earlier in the season.

Owatonna did not exit the week without its sixth win of the season though, as they defeated Winona 5-2 on Thursday.

Junior Tanner Stendel led the team with two goals on the night.

With the win, the team now sits at 6-1-1, and in sole possession of third place in the conference.

The Huskies will return home to host Gentry Academy Thursday at 7 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN BRUNS

Bobbie Brunns, left, and Maggie Brunns have enjoyed playing competitive basketball since they were in grade school.



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN BRUNS

Bobbie Brunns, left, her sister Maggie and the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team have developed a close bond due to playing together for the past few years. The Brunns sisters have been playing together on varsity for the past four years, but this will be their last season playing together since Maggie will graduate this spring.

Bound by basketball... and sisterhood

Brunns sisters work to grow bond with teammates

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

Sisters Maggie and Bobbie Brunns have been playing basketball together for most of their lives yet their bond with their Blooming Prairie teammates might be just as strong.

The Awesome Blossoms’ strong bond started early. Four of the five starters are seniors, so they all grew up playing together.

Even though starting guard Bobbie Brunns isn’t a senior, this is her fourth year playing on varsity, so she’s used to playing with the class above her.

She said the fact that the starters have been playing together for the past few years is the main reason they’re so close.

“With that time, we’ve grown together and click a little more each year,” she said.

Blooming Prairie Head Coach and the sister’s father John Brunns agreed,

saying the team’s cohesion is a product of playing together so often.

“It’s a long season so they spent a lot of time together and when you do that for the last four or five years, that’s pretty special,” he said. “Anytime you’re in competition you’re going to have things go up and down and that ability to rise and face a challenge together has made them a really close-knit group of friends and it’s been really fun to watch that.”

Maggie Brunns added that the team’s chemistry has helped them be more successful on the court.

“With anybody, the longer you play together, the better knowledge of each other’s strengths and what each other are going to do,” she said.

However, just because they play more with the starters, doesn’t mean they’re not just as close with the rest of their teammates.

“We’re super close with all of our teammates,” she said.

Thanks to that team chemistry,

Bobbie Brunns said, the Blossoms know how to encourage each other when things aren’t going well.

“We know how to pick each other up and know how each other will respond to things,” she said.

Maggie Brunns mentioned that that team bond also sets a good example for the junior varsity and younger girls.

“A lot of us are upperclassmen, so as a team we give the younger girls something to look up to,” she said.

In addition to setting a good example and being a close team on the court, Bobbie Brunns said they’re all friends outside of basketball too.

Maggie Brunns agreed, saying that they trust each other on and off the court.

“In basketball, you have to trust your teammates so we can go to each other about anything. I know they’re going to be there for me no matter what I need. It’s a really cool bond that we have,” she said.

Even though this bond was created through the medium of basketball, Bobbie Brunns said they’d still be friends if they didn’t play basketball together but playing together takes that trust and friendship to another level.

Maggie Brunns noted that the Awesome Blossoms’ close friendship is a testament to the bond sports can build.

“We’d still be friends, but playing basketball together takes your friendship to another level because that’s one more thing that you have in common,” she said.

While basketball has been a common interest and a constant in her and her teammates’ lives for the past few years, she understands and is grateful that the friendships she’s built through basketball will outlast their basketball careers.

“We’ve grown up together and those are my best friends,” she said. “The best part is those are the relationships I’m going to have for forever.”



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN BRUNS

Maggie Brunns (1) and her sister Bobbie (3) have gotten used to sharing the same court. They played together as kindergartners, during grade school and at the high school level for the past four years.



STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

Junior Brayden Williams inbounds the ball as Owatonna’s JV watches on and provides cheering to get the Huskies going in the right direction.

Huskies tune out Winona in battle on and off the court

BY MITCHELL BREUER
SPORTS WRITER

Owatonna’s boys basketball team picked up a big win over Winona Friday night in what was an interesting game on and off the court.

Early on, it was all Winona, as they started the game off with a 12-3 run. The feeling almost felt as if the game was being played in Winona instead of Owatonna, and the Winona JV, who

was watching from the sidelines made their presence felt, loudly cheering on their teammates.

This was clearly noticed by the Owatonna JV team, who was watching the game from the stands, as they would respond by cheering on their teammates and, at the same time trying to tune out the opposing team’s crowd noise.

SEE HUSKIES TUNE OUT, B9

Huskie girls hockey continues to dominate

BY MITCHELL BREUER
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna girls hockey team seemed like they were on a mission this week to show how dominant they can be, as they picked up to more wins this week against Mankato West and Winona.

The week started off on the road again Mankato West, where they picked up a 5-1 win.

It was a game that

featured five goals from five different players, with freshman Samantha Bogen scoring once and leading the team with two assists.

The scoring in this game was nothing compared to Thursday though, when they returned home to host Winona, in a game where they would not only shutout the Winhawks, but score 10 times.

Sophomore Ezra Oien started the team

off with the first goal of the night just under three minutes into the game. Almost two minutes later, the Huskies were on the board again with a goal from fellow sophomore Sarah Snitker.

Just as it seemed the pace slowed down, Owatonna came on the attack again as freshman Lillian Hunst, sophomore Macy Stanton, and freshman Molly Achterkirch all scored within four minutes of each other to close out the first period.

Despite the five-point lead, the Huskies did not let up, as 19 seconds into the second period, Owatonna scored another goal, this time with junior Olivia Herzog.

Just as it seemed maybe Owatonna was going to slow down for the rest of the game, the team scored two more goals within five minutes of each other. Senior Sydney Hunst and freshman Samantha Bogen scored their first goals of the night.

Hunst ended up becoming the first player for the team to score two goals on the night, as she extended the lead to nine just over 13 minutes into the third period.

The true testament for the team never slowing down came in the final moments though, as in the remaining second of the game, with Herzog closing the game with her second goal of the night.

In total, Owatonna put took 62 shots throughout the game. To put that in perspective, Winona took three shots during the game.

While the numbers Owatonna put up were impressive, it was not out of the ordinary, as the team has put up five or more points in seven of their eight games. It is also worth noting that in the only game of the season that they did not accomplish the feat, they lost.

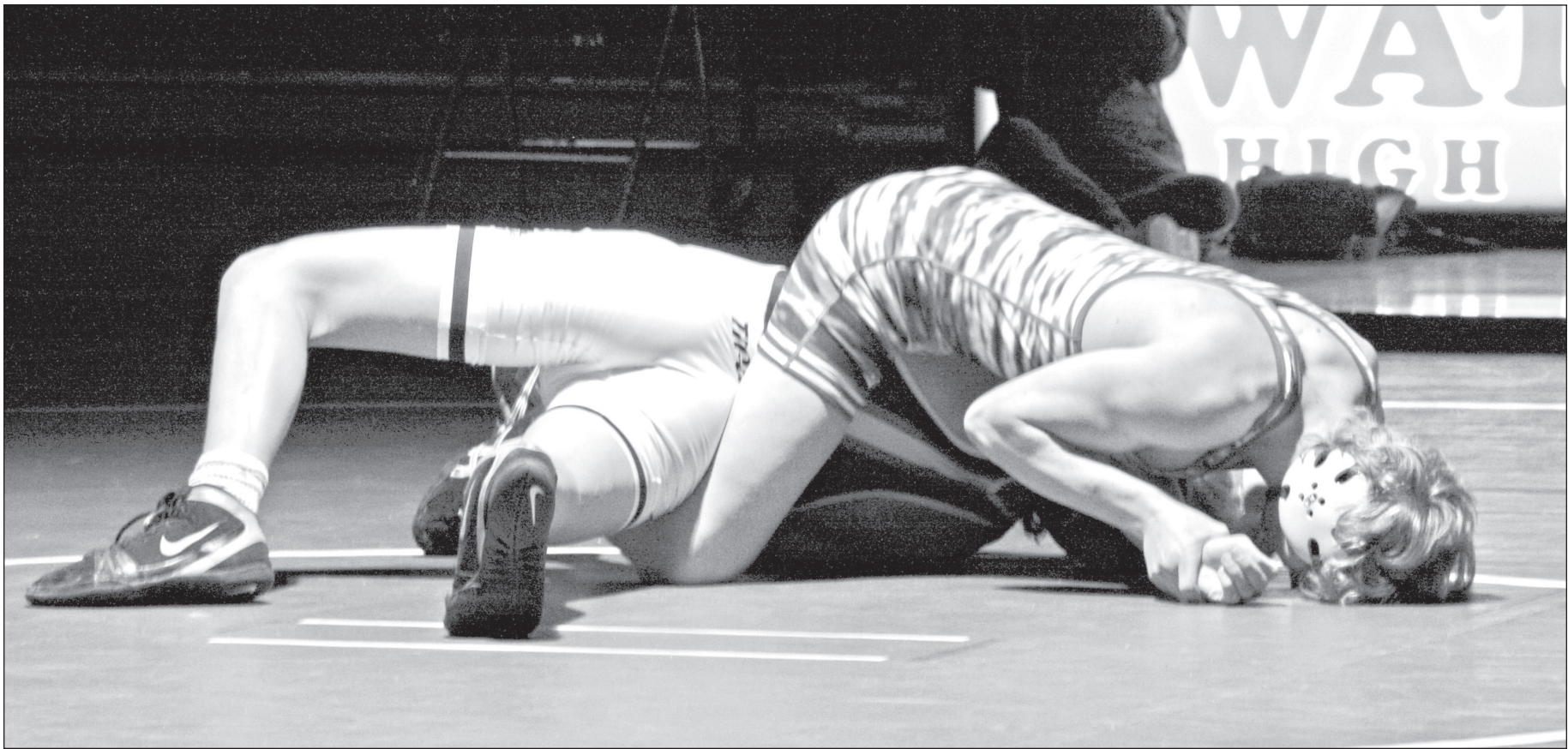
With the wins, Owatonna’s record stands at 7-1 and in second place in the Big 9 Conference standings.

Next week, Owatonna will travel to Rochester Mayo for a Saturday matchup. Puck drop will be at 2 p.m.



STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

Owatonna sophomore Ezra Oien skates down the rink during Thursday’s game against Winona in which the Huskies racked up a shutout 10-0.



Huskies wrestler Owen Thorn looks for a pin during Thursday’s match against Farmington. The Huskies had an impressive week as they came away with three victories. STAFF PHOTO BY: MITCHELL BREUER

Owatonna wrestlers dominate with 3 wins

BY MITCHELL BREUER
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna wrestling team had three matches this week, and came away with three wins; defeating Mankato East and Austin on Tuesday, Feb. 9, and then defeating Farmington on Thursday. The week started off

with a 54-24 win over Mankato East. During that contest, the team saw pinfall victories from Cael Robb, Owen Thorn, Jacob Reinardy, Landen Johnson, Kaden Nelson, and Andrew Nirk. The quickest of those wins coming from the junior Johnson, who won his match in exactly 20 seconds.

Owatonna then competed in what was a very lopsided, 76-3 win over Austin. The match saw eight forfeits from Austin. The Huskies won all but one match during the contest. Thursday night proved to be the closest night for Owatonna, as the Huskies came down to wire against Farm-

ington, winning 36-26. Farmington had the most wins in the contest, taking seven of the 13 matches with 220 being a double forfeit, however, the ability to pin is what allowed Owatonna to sneak away with the win. Five of Owatonna’s six wins on the night came from pinfall victories, in-

cluding the one from Abe Stockwell, who wrestled at 285, sealed the match with his pinfall victory to end the night. The match that turned out to be a dual, was supposed to be a triangular with Rochester Mayo. However, due to health concerns, Mayo did not make the trip to Owatonna. The two had

previously wrestled this season, with Owatonna coming out on 36-34. With the wins, the team moves to 12-4 on the season, and 7-2 in conference competition. The team will be back at home on Thursday, as they take on Zumbrota-Mazeppa and Albert Lea. The first is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.



Blooming Prairie junior center Drew Kittelson uses his long arms to tap the ball to himself and away from two W-E-M players who were trying to get it. Kittelson led the Awesome Blossoms with 14 points, but the Buccaneers won 44-38. STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Blossom boys fall to Bucs

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

Following a tough 62-44 loss to NRHEG last Tuesday, the Blooming Prairie boys basketball team was looking to right the ship when it hosted Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) on Friday, Feb. 12, but the Buccaneers staved off the Blossoms’ late rally and won 44-38.

At the start of the game, the two teams seemed evenly matched as the lead went back-and-forth for the first seven and a half minutes.

At the point, Blooming Prairie led 10-8, but W-E-M went on a small 5-0 run to take a 13-10 lead.

The Blossoms responded with a 7-1 run to take a 17-14 lead with five minutes left in the first half.

Unfortunately for Blooming Prairie, the Buccaneers got the last laugh in the first half by going on a 8-2 run to take a 22-19 lead into halftime.

The margin was the same with about six minutes left in the game, but this time W-E-M led 32-29.

In the final minute,

Blooming Prairie once again made it a one-possession game, 41-38, but the Buccaneers scored the final three points to win the game 44-38. Blossoms’ Head Coach Nate Piller said turnovers and lack of teamwork were the main reasons why his team lost.

“We’re turning the ball over too much and not playing as a team on offense or defense,” he said. He also said the Blossoms need to do a better job of taking the practice concepts and implementing them in games. With this loss,

Blooming Prairie’s record is now 2-5 overall and 2-5 in the Gopher Conference. BP stats: Drew Kittelson – 14 points, Chris Naatz – 8 points, Alex Miller – 6 points, Mitchell Fiebiger – 4 points, Colin Jordison – 4 points and Boone Carlson – 2 points.



Awesome Blossoms’ senior guard Alex Miller shoots a three-pointer during the opening minutes of the first half. STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING



NRHEG senior guard Ashton Johnson gets around Hayfield guard Kobe Foster during the second half of Panthers’ 69-48 loss. STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Vikings pillage the Panthers

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) boys basketball team was looking to extend its winning streak to three games, but they ran into one of the best teams in the Gopher Conference, Hayfield, and the Vikings showed why they’ve only lost to two teams by beating the Panthers 69-48 on Friday, Feb. 12.

Few fans would have thought the Vikings would win by 21 points based on how the first half went.

NRHEG played strong defense, limiting Hayfield to just 22 first-half points. On the offensive end, the Panthers, led by Porter Peterson who score nine first-half points, did just enough to take a narrow lead, 24-22, into halftime.

However, something Hayfield Head Coach Chris Pack said during halftime must have worked because the Vikings went on a 25-2 run in just the first five minutes of the second half. Trailing 47-26, NRHEG sank a three-pointer to stop the bleeding, but the Vikings responded with a three-pointer of the own to re-claim their 21-point lead. For the rest of the game the Viking’s lead hovered around 20 points. Eventually, Hayfield won 69-48. The loss drops the Panthers’ overall record to 3-6 and their Gopher Conference record to 3-4. NRHEG’s next game is a road contest against Maple River at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19. Their next home game is against Bethlehem Academy at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 23.



Westfield's Tyler Archer grimaces as he drives Triton's Brekken Schlichting to the mat. Archer won his 195-pound by major decision 10-2.

PHOTO COURTESY MARY NELSON

Razorbacks de-fang Cobras, earn 2nd win

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

After struggling for weeks to get its first win, the Westfield wrestling team didn't have to wait long to earn a second win as the Razorbacks won their very next match, which was against the Triton Cobras, 57-24.

Unfortunately, their next match didn't go as well and the Razorbacks lost 43-34 to the Lewiston-Altura/Rushford-Peterson (LARP) Screamin' Eagles.

Against Triton, Westfield took a quick 12-0 lead thanks to winning their first two matches by forfeit.

In the 120-pound match, eighth-grader Bo Zweiner won by technical fall 18-1 to increase the Razorbacks' lead to 17-0.

After another win by forfeit, Cade Christianson and Keegan Bronson won the next matches by fall to boost Westfield's lead to 35-0.

At 145-pounds, Sam Skillestad won his match when his Triton opponent ran out of injury time. Then, at 152 pounds, Westfield's Cale Becker won by fall. Those two wins gave the Razorbacks a commanding 47-0 lead.

Triton got on the board by winning the next three matches, two by forfeit and one by fall, to trim their deficit to 47-18.

However, the Razorback's Tyler Archer won by major decision 10-2 to increase Westfield's lead to 51-18.

At 220 pounds, Triton won by fall, but the Ra-

zorbacks' heavyweight Brody Johnson won forfeit so the final score was 57-24.

Against LARP, Westfield once again got off to a strong start. This time, Hunter Simonson, Bo Zweiner and Lane Lembke all won by fall to give the Razorbacks an early 18-6 lead.

The Screamin' Eagles won the next match by fall, but Keegan Bronson responded by winning his match by fall to make the score 24-12.

LARP rallied by winning the next five matches, three by fall, one by major decision and one by decision, to take a 37-24 lead.

With three matches left, it was still possible for the Razorbacks to come back and win the match and Tyler

Archer did his part by winning his 195-pound match by fall. Dylan Ehmke then got Westfield even closer by winning his match by major decision.

Trailing by just three points, 37-34, it all came down to the heavyweight match. Unfortunately, the Screamin' Eagles won that match by fall and won the match 43-34.

The win and loss makes the Razorbacks' overall record 2-12 and their section record 0-6.

Westfield's next match is a road contest against Waterville-Elysian-Pemberton at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18. Their next home match is held at Blooming Prairie High School at 7 p.m. on Monday, March. 1.

Panthers pull off a pair of wins, but also lose a pair

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

After a hard-fought 42-38 win over United South Central, the NRHEG wrestling lost to Maple River 37-31 and Kenyon-Wanamingo 72-3 on Monday, Feb. 8, but bounced back by beating Sibley East 44-31 and Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Area 46-35 on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

Against Sibley East, the Wolverines won the first two matches to race out to a 10-0 lead, but NRHEG's Annabelle Petsinger and Aidan Schlaak won the following two matches by fall to give the Panthers a 12-10 lead.

Sibley East bounced back by winning the next three matches, one by forfeit, one by fall and one by decision, to take a 25-12 lead.

However, then it was NRHEG's turn to win multiple matches in a row. Clay Stenzel got it started with a win by decision 8-6 at 152 pounds. Then, Thor Routh and George Roesler won back-to-back matches by fall. Lastly, Ralph Roesler won by technical fall at 182 pounds. In total, the four straight wins gave the Panthers 20 straight points, which gave them a 32-25 lead.

The Wolverines won the next match by

fall to make the match really close, 32-31, but NRHEG's Ben Hagen won by forfeit and the Panthers' heavyweight Makota Misgen won by fall to give the NRHEG a 44-31 dual win.

Against Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Area, Annabelle Petsinger won by fall at 120 pounds and Daltyn Harshman won by forfeit by 132 pounds.

Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Area won the next two matches to take a 29-12 lead.

But like the match against Sibley East the Panthers went on a run thanks to Stenzel, Routh, George Roesler and Ralph Roesler.

Routh won by major decision, while the other three all scored six points due to forfeit or win by fall. Thanks to those 22 points, NRHEG took a 34-29 lead.

Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Area stopped the bleeding by winning the next match by fall, but Hagen and Misgen both won by fall to give the Panthers a 46-35 dual win.

The two losses last Monday and two wins on Tuesday make NRHEG's overall record 4-8, while their section record is now 3-5.

The Panthers' next match is a home dual against Medford at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18.

SCOREBOOK

Big Nine Standings Boys Hockey

Mankato East	7-1-1
Mankato West	7-1
Owatonna	6-1-1
Northfield	6-2

Rochester Mayo 6-3

Owatonna Boys Hockey Results
Feb. 9 – vs. Mankato West – 4-4
Feb. 11 – vs. Winona – 5-2
Feb. 18 – 7 p.m. – vs. Gentry Academy
Feb. 20 – 4 p.m. – vs. Minnetonka
Feb. 25 – 7:30 p.m. vs. Mankato East
Feb. 27 – 7 p.m. vs. Rochester Century

Big Nine Standings Girls Hockey

Northfield	7-0
Owatonna	7-1
Albert Lea	6-2
Mankato East	5-2
Austin	4-3

Owatonna Girls Hockey

Feb. 9 – vs. Mankato West – 5-1
Feb. 11 – vs. Winona – 10-0
Feb. 16 – 7 p.m. – vs. Albert Lea
Feb. 20 – 2 p.m. – vs. Rochester Mayo
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Rochester Century
Feb. 25 – 7 p.m. vs. Mankato East

Big Nine Standings Boys Basketball

Mankato East	7-0
Owatonna	6-1
Mankato West	5-1
Austin	5-2
Rochester Century	4-2

Owatonna Boys Basketball

Feb. 1 – vs. Faribault 69-43
Feb. 5 – vs. Red Wing 61-55
Feb. 8 – vs. Austin 49-52
Feb. 12 – vs. Winona 70-49
Feb. 16 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Albert Lea
Feb. 18 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Mankato East

Big Nine Standings Girls Basketball

Rochester Mayo	8-0
Mankato West	8-1
Mankato East	7-2
Austin	5-2
Northfield	5-4
Owatonna	3-6

Owatonna Girls Basketball

Feb. 8 – vs. Austin – 45-59
Feb. 12 – vs. Winona – 63-31
Feb. 16 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Albert Lea
Feb. 19 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Mankato East
Feb. 23 – 7:30 p.m. vs. Northfield
Feb. 26 – 7:30 p.m. vs. Mankato West

Gopher Standings Boys Basketball

Maple River	8-1
Hayfield	7-3
United South Central	3-4
WEM	3-4
NRHEG	3-6
Medford	2-6
Blooming Prairie	2-5

Blooming Prairie Boys Basketball

Feb. 9 – vs. NRHEG – 44-62
Feb. 12 – vs. WEM – 38-44
Feb. 18 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo
Feb. 19 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. BA
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Medford
Feb. 26 – 7:15 p.m. vs. United South Central

NRHEG Boys Basketball

Feb. 9 – vs. Blooming Prairie – 62-44
Feb.12 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Hayfield 48-69
Feb. 15 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. St. James
Feb.19 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Maple River
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. BA
Feb. 26 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Medford

Medford Boys Basketball

Feb. 9 – vs. Hayfield – 44-83
Feb. 11 – vs. Mankato Loyola – 52-75
Feb. 16 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Maple River
Feb. 19 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Cannon Falls
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Blooming Prairie
Feb. 26 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. NRHG

Gopher Standings Girls Basketball

Blooming Prairie	7-1
Hayfield	7-2
WEM	6-2
Medford	4-2
Maple River	4-5
NRHEG	3-6

Blooming Prairie Girls Basketball

Feb. 9 – vs. NRHEG – 55-39
Feb. 12 – vs. WEM – 43-43
Feb. 16 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo
Feb. 19 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. BA
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Medford
Feb. 26 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. United South Central

NRHEG Girls Basketball

Feb. 9 – vs. Blooming Prairie – 39-55
Feb. 12 – vs. Hayfield – 50-60
Feb. 16 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Blue Earth
Feb. 18 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Maple River
Feb. 23 – 7:15 p.m. vs. BA
Feb. 26 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Medford

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ELECTRICIAN APPRENTICESHIPS AVAILABLE

The South Central Minnesota Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee for the Electrical Industry is currently accepting applications for their apprenticeship program. The recruitment, selections, employment and training of apprentices during their apprenticeship shall be without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin or sex. The applicant must meet the minimum age requirement. The JATC does not, and will not, discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability, because of the disability of such individual.

I.B.E.W. Local 343 and Minneapolis Chapter of N.E.C.A. sponsor the SC MN JATC program. It consists of 180 hours, minimum per year, of related classroom instruction for 5 years; in Rochester and Mankato; plus 8,000 hours of on-the-job training.

HUSKIES TUNE OUT:
Winona in battle on and off the court FROM B6

As this was happening off court, Owatonna's team on the court began to respond as well, going a nine-point run of their own.

Owatonna continued to carry the momentum throughout first half and headed into half with a four-point lead.

The opposing crowd noise began to play less of a factor as the game carried on during the second, as Owatonna began to take control of the game, starting with a seven-point run to start the half.

Owatonna's JV and bench weren't quite ready to be

done with the chants though, as once Owatonna settled into a 15 plus lead, the calls to bring in senior Emmanuel Ojulu into the game.

Ojulu was eventually brought into the game, and provided the loudest crowd reaction of the night as he drained a shot in the closing minutes as Owatonna sealed a 70-49 win over Winona.

Leading the way in the scoring column was junior Evan Dushek and seniors Brayden Williams and Payton Beyer, who all had 18 points on the night. Beyer in particular put together

quite the highlight reel of performances, with two breakaway dunks.

A game like this feels like one that was needed for the team after they saw their five-game winning streak end against Austin earlier in the week, losing in a close matchup 49-52.

The team now stands at 7-2, in a three-way tie for second-place in the Big 9 Conference with Mankato East and Rochester Century. The Huskies travel to Mankato on Friday for what could be a critical contest against East. Tip-off will take place at 7:30 p.m.

LONGTIME 4-H EDUCATOR:
will continue to volunteer FROM B1

"Steele County has done that for a lot of youth, including myself."

A parent of two young kids who are involved in the program, Koch's last day as an Extension Educator was on February 3. She left for a new opportunity with Edward Jones but as a 4-H parent she's already getting involved as a volunteer.

"It will be a different spin being a part of 4-H programs as a volunteer," Koch said. "I want to thank the 4-H group and Steele County. I am grateful and I have appreciated all that they've done for

me. I'm looking forward to working with the community in a new realm."

While she may have stepped into a new role, Koch will still be able to see all of the kids and families that she has gotten to know over these past eight years as she continues her involvement with 4-H as a parent.

Caption: 4-H Extension Educator Missy Koch and some of her students pose for a photo during the One Step Garden Project in 2019. The project was one of many highlights for Koch during her 4-H career.

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2020
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
6:00 A.M.

A special school board meeting was held in conjunction with the regular school board work session at 6:00 a.m. on Friday, November 13, 2020 in the High School Media Center.

I. CALL TO ORDER-CHAIRPERSON

II. ROLL CALL-CLERK
Jenny Thurnau, Jon Sunde, Steve Ille, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister, Dean Meshke

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools; Member of the BPTA

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

IV. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED
Resolution Canvassing Returns of Votes of School District General Election
Motion by Steve Ille and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the canvassing returns of votes cast at the November 3, 2020 election. Candidate Jonathan Sunde, Candidate Melissa Stoen, and Candidate Jennifer Thurnau having received the highest number of votes, are elected to four year terms beginning the first Monday in January 2021. Motion carried. (Roll Call Vote: 7 Aye/0 Nay).

V. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY
General review and discussion of November 16, 2020 agenda items.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT

OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS
VII. ADJOURNMENT
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 a.m. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA
December 17, 2020
A regular school board work session was held at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 17, 2020 in the High School Media Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jon Sunde, Steve Ille, Rodney Krell, Pam Hameister, Dean Meshke, Jenny Thurnau

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kelly Braaten

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools; Member of the BPTA

DISCUSSION ITEMS: General review and discussion was held on agenda items for the December 21, 2020 regular school board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE

Steele County Commissioner's Synopsis for 1/26/2021
Complete minutes can be viewed on the Steele County Website: Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
1. Glynn/Gnemi to approve the agenda. Ayes all.

2. Glynn/Gnemi to approve the following Consent Agenda items. Ayes all.
A. Approve the minutes of January 5, 2021.
B. Approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 Work Session.
C. Approve the Listing of Bills.
D. Approve the Personnel Report.
E. Approve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan.
F. Approve the **Resolution** designating various deficient bridges as high priority and require replacement, rehabilitation or removal, requesting authorization to replace, rehabilitate or remove said bridges, as for financial assistance with eligible approach grading and engineering costs, as provided by law.
G. Approve Lease Renewal of Farmland Adjacent to the Public Works Facility to Mr. David Janke in the amount of \$303 per acre, for a total of \$5,605.50.
H. Approve Final Payment **Resolution** for Contract No. 201828; 074-618-028 to Midwest Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$6,371.32.
I. Approve adopting the 2021 Civil Process Fee Schedule.
J. Approve the 2021 Advanced Correctional Healthcare Service Contract Amendment with an increase of 3.5%.
K. Approve the 2021 Summit Food Service Contract Agreement.
L. Approve back-filling of an Appraiser position.
M. Approve back-filling of the 4-H/Youth Development Extension Educator position.
N. Approve Aquatic Inva-

sive Species Prevention Inspection of Water-related Equipment Delegation Agreement.
3. Gnemi/Glynn to approve the Renewal of IUP 2014-02 (Medford Sand & Gravel LLC – Hill Pit) located in Section 16-106-20 of Medford township with 17 conditions per the Planning Commission. Ayes all.
4. Abbe/Gnemi to rescind the motion from the 1-5-2021 meeting awarding the publication bid for the 2020 Financial Statement. Ayes all.
5. Krueger/Glynn to rescind the previous motion to rescind the motion awarding the publication bid for the 2020 Financial Statement. Ayes all.
6. Krueger/Glynn to rescind the previous motion from the 1-5-2021 meeting awarding the publication bid for printing of the Financial Statement for 2020; Commissioner proceedings for 2021, Delinquent Tax List for 2020 and all other legal publications as required. Ayes all.
7. Krueger/Gnemi to rescind the motion from the 1-5-2021 meeting awarding the 2nd publication bid for the 2020 Financial Statement to another paper located in the County. Ayes all.
8. Glynn/Gnemi to award the publication for printing of the Commissioner Proceedings for 2021, Delinquent Tax List for 2020 and all other legal publications as required to the Steele County Times. Ayes all.
9. Abbe/Krueger to award the bid for publication of the 2020 Financial Statement to the Owatonna People's Press. Ayes all.

10. Krueger/Gnemi to award the bid for the 2nd publication of the 2020 Financial Statement to another paper located in the County to the Steele County Times. Ayes all.
11. Krueger/Gnemi to approve payment to JJD Companies in the amount of \$115,436.19 for the 3rd payment for demo work at the Landfill, Cells C & D. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Brady abstaining.
12. Abbe/Krueger to rescind the motion to award the contract for SAP 074-598-014 to JJD Companies. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Brady abstaining.
13. Abbe/Krueger awarding the contract for SAP 074-598-014 to low bidder JJD Companies in the amount of \$396,956.70 and authorized the Vice Chair to sign the contract. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Brady abstaining.

LISTING OF BILLS
1/26/2021
Aurora Township 21,007.00
Black Forest Ltd 2,108.04
Bolton & Menk Inc 44,560.50
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension 2,185.00
Central Farm Services 15,399.86
Counties Providing Technology 4,191.00
CPS Technology Solutions 4,495.00
CRK Properties LLC 6,562.71
Erickson Engineering Co LLC 3,065.00
Fidlar Technologies Inc 2,858.64

Hillyard – Hutchinson 2,994.73
Honeywell Inc 32,986.30
JJD Companies LLC 115,436.19
JMD Manufacturing Inc 2,452.63
Kronos Incorporated 3,407.88
L & L Street Rods & Sport Trucks 22,601.52
Loken Excavating & Drainage 2,801.47
MCCC MI 33 7,271.66
Minnesota Counties Computer Coop 7,084.62
Minnesota Valley Testing Labs 8,097.15
Mn Dept of Natural Resources 2,350.00
Moore Md/Kellyanna J 3,536.33
Owatonna Groundmasters Inc 5,942.15
Owatonna Motor Company 4,656.15
Owatonna Police Dept 2,374.00
SRF Consulting Group Inc 11,590.95
Steele County Treasurer 193,326.25
Summit Food Services LLC 7,447.28
Thomson Reuters – West 2,208.94
Waste Management Of Wi – Mn 53,036.11
WSB & Associates Inc 6,900.00
128 Payments less than 2000 46,938.15
Final Total: \$654,073.76

14. Gnemi/Abbe to go into closed session at 5:40 p.m. under the attorney-client privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(b), to discuss the following pending litigation: Coffey, et al. v Sheriff Lon Thiele, Court File Number 20-cv-2237. Ayes all.
15. Abbe/Gnemi to come out of closed session at 6:42 p.m. Ayes all.
16. Abbe/Gnemi to adjourn to the call of the chair at 6:42 p.m. Ayes all.

STEELE COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That on Monday, March 1st, 2021 starting at 7:00 pm., the Steele County Planning Commission will meet via conference call as allowed under MN Stat. 13D.021 to consider the following permits.

- Milestone Materials has requested to renew Conditional Use Permit #347 allowing the mining of sand and gravel on property located in the S ½ of the SW ¼ and the SW ¼ of the SE ¼, Section 36, Meriden Township. The property is owned by Mathy Construction.
- Milestone Materials has requested to renew Conditional Use Permit #194 allowing the mining of sand and gravel and the quarrying of rock on several parcels located in the S ½ of the SW¼ of Section 1, the SE ¼ of the SE ¼, Section 2, the NE ¼ of the NE ¼, Section 11, and the NW ¼ of the NW ¼, Section 12 of Lemond Township. The property address is 5145 51st St. SW. and is owned by Mathy Construction.
- Crane Creek Asphalt has requested a permit to operate a Hot Mix Asphalt Plant on property located in the W ½ of the SW ¼ of the SW ¼, Section 1 Lemond Township. The property address is 5145 51st. SW. and is owned by Mathy Construction.

Due to the Governor's Emergency Executive Order, the meeting will be closed to the public for in-person attendance, but the public is encouraged to submit comments by mail or email and/or a link by which they can monitor the meeting by contacting the Steele County Planning and Zoning Office.

Interested All persons interested are invited to attend said hearing and be heard on this matter.

Dale Oolman
Steele County Zoning Director
630 Florence Ave. P.O. Box 890
Owatonna, MN 55060
(507) 444-7482

STEELE COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That on Monday, March 1st, 2021 starting at 7:00 pm., the Steele County Planning Commission will meet via conference call as allowed under MN Stat. 13D.021 to consider the following:

Don Redman has requested to rezone 5.74 acres of property located at in the NW ¼, NW ¼, Section 4, Medford Township from Agricultural to Industrial.

Due to the Governor's Emergency Executive Order, the meeting will be closed to the public for in-person attendance, but the public is encouraged to submit comments by mail or email and interested parties may receive packet material and a link by which they can monitor the meeting by contacting the Steele County Planning and Zoning Office.

Dale Oolman
Steele County Zoning Director
630 Florence Ave. P.O. Box 890
Owatonna, MN 55060
dale.oolman@co.steele.mn.us (507) 444-7475

City of Blooming Prairie
Notice of Public Hearing

The Blooming Prairie City Council will conduct a Public Hearing regarding the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit on **Monday, March 8, 2021** at 7:00 p.m. at the City Center located at 138 Hwy Avenue South, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917. The purpose of this hearing will be to consider granting a Conditional Use Permit to allow a home business to operate out of 163 7th St NW, the business will produce baked goods. The property is currently zoned Residential.

Andrew Langholz | City Administrator

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NOTICE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF STEELE

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 74-PR-21-87

NOTICE OF INFORMAL PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of **Lorraine Esther Dostal a/k/a Lorraine E. Dostal a/k/a Lorraine Dostal,**

Decedent

Notice is given that an application for informal probate of the Decedent's will dated January 23, 2015 and codicil() to the will, dated N/A, and separate writing() under Minnesota Statutes section 524.2-513 ("Will"), has been filed with the Registrar. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Karen Cutting whose address is 801 Frontier Rd SE, Byron, MN 55920 as personal representative of the Estate of the Decedent. Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative or may object to the appointment of the personal representative. Unless objections are filed with the Court (pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-607) and the Court otherwise orders, the personal representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Any objections to the probate of the Will or appointment of the Personal Representative must be filed with this Court and will be heard by the Court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing, Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

A charitable beneficiary may request notice of the probate proceedings be given to the Attorney General pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 501B.41, subdivision 5.

Dated:
January 29, 2021

/s/ Deanna Verdick
Deputy Probate Registrar

Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator

Frank D. Peterson
Peterson Law Office
634 2nd Street
PO Box B
Kenyon, MN 55946
(507) 789-6141
Attorney License Number 8587X
Email: fdpetersonlaw@gmail.com

2/10T2

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: April 12, 2002

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$75,000.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Kevin P. Johnson and Kimberly K. Harpel, husband and wife

MORTGAGEE: Sterling State Bank, Corporation
DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on April 17, 2002 as Document Number A298416; as modified of record by document recorded on May 11, 2016 as Document Number A000407508 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Ohio Savings Bank by assignment recorded on April 17, 2002 as Document Number A298417 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota; thereafter assigned to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. by assignment recorded on February 13, 2006 as Document Number A000339087 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 13, Block 3 in Dart's Second Addition to the City of Owatonna including any land lying west of the west line of said Lot 13 and east of the east line of the above mentioned land conveyed to the City of Owatonna for a street. Together with the North 24.75 feet of Rice Lake Street that accrued thereto by reason of vacation thereof as contained in Book 125 of Deeds, Pages 483-484, Steele County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 603 E BROADWAY, OWATONNA, MN 55060-2507

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

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$72,652.44

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Sterling State Bank, Corporation

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-129-0313
TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: None

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 06, 2021 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060.

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 6, 2021.

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 03, 2021

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.
Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/
N. Kibongni Fondungalah, Esq.
Samuel R. Coleman, Esq.
Attorneys for Mortgagee
25 Dale Street North
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 209-9760
(19-1083-FC03)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

2/10T6

NOTICE
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA
December 21, 2020

A regular school board meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #756, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, was held in the High School Media Center on December 21, 2020 at 5:15 p.m. (Open Forum at 5:00 p.m.).

OPEN FORUM – NO COMMENTS

I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON
II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK
Jon Sunde, Steve Ille, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten
Pam Hameister, Dean Meshke, Jenny Thurnau
ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools, Elementary School Principal, High School Principal, Associate Principal, Member of the BPTA, Member of the Press

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Reports given by Mr. Schwarz, Mr. Worke, and Ms. Mach.

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

A. Minutes, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Donations

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the school board minutes, bills, treasurer's report, and donations as presented. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)
B. Employment

Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the employment of Cheryl Krejci as an Administrative Assistant as of September 28, 2020. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the employment of John Samuel as a long-term substitute teacher replacing Jen DeKok who is on maternity/family leave. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve Heather Johnson as a fourth grade long-term substitute teacher replacing

Haley Hasleiet who will be out on family/maternity leave. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)
Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Dean Meshke to approve Emily Voss as JV girls basketball coach. Position is contingent upon the actual season taking place. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)
C. Volunteers
None at this time.

D. Learning Model Update

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to confirm returning to in-person learning for PreK through 6th grade and hybrid learning for grades 7 through 12 beginning January 11, 2021. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

E. World's Best Workforce Summary and Achievement and Integration Progress Report

No action was taken on this. December 15, 2020 was the reported submission date to the MN Department of Education. The annual public meeting is to be held on January 19, 2021 at 4:45 p.m. in the High School Media Center.

F. Graduation Credits

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the reduction of one graduation credit (reducing from 25 to 24) for one year and then re-evaluate for the 2021-2022 school year. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

6:00 p.m. – Budget/Levy Review and Discussion Prior to Final Levy Certification

G. Final 2020 Payable 2021 Levy Limitation

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve certification of the final 2020 payable 2021 levy. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

A. Rotation of School Board Members

Discussion regarding rotation and committee assignments to remain the same as the past year.

B. Committee Reports

A committee report was given by the Building and Grounds/Facilities, Finance, and ZED committees.

C. Enrollment Data

Enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year as of December 15, 2020 is approximately 426 at the elementary school (grades K-6) and 373 at the high school (grades 7-12) (362 attending BPHS and the equivalency of 11 full-time attending PSEO). The PSEO number consists of approximately 10 full-time and 2 part time students.

D. Dates to Note

The Board noted dates of importance.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

1. Thanked Todd Nelson for his dedication and work here at BP Schools.
2. Recognized Irv Peterson, former Superintendent, who recently passed away.
3. Thanked Steve Ille for all his work on the ZED Committee and School Board.

4. Recognized Stacy Magus for all her hard work in the Special Education Program.

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 p.m. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Work Session will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 6:00 a.m. in the High School Media Center.
Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Meeting will be Tuesday, January 19 2021, at 5:15 p.m. in the High School Media Center (Open Forum begins at 5:00 p.m.).

A complete copy of the official minutes may be found in their entirety in the official minute book located in the superintendent's office at the high school; however, they will not be available until approved by the School Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA
November 16, 2020

A regular school board meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #756, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, was held in the High School Media Center on November 16, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. (Open Forum at 7:00 p.m.).

OPEN FORUM – NO COMMENTS

I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK
Jenny Thurnau, Jon Sunde, Steve Ille, Rodney Krell,

Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister, Dean Meshke

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools, Elementary School Principal, High School Principal, Associate Principal, Member of the BPTA, Member of the Press

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the agenda with additional information provided. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Reports given by Mr. Schwarz, Mr. Worke, and Ms. Mach.

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

A. Minutes, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Resignation, Donations

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve the school board minutes, bills, treasurer's report, resignation, and donations as presented. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

B. Employment

Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the employment of Cory Hendrickson as jr. high girls' basketball coach. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the employment of Heather Johnson as fourth grade long-term substitute for approximately November 2, 2020 through January 8, 2021. Motion carried. (7 Aye/ 0 Nay)

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the employment of Heather Johnson as fourth grade long-term substitute for approximately November 2, 2020 through January 8, 2021. Motion carried. (7 Aye/ 0 Nay)

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the employment of Jacob McHenry as a part-time custodian with a start date of November 9, 2020. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

C. Volunteers

None at this time

D. Family/Maternity Leave

Motion by Jenny Thurnau, and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve maternity/family leave for an elementary teacher from approximately March 3, 2021 through May 14, 2021. Motion carried. (7 Aye/ 0 Nay)

E. 2021-22 School Calendar

Motion by Pam Hameister, and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve the 2021-22 school calendar as presented. Motion carried. (7 Aye /0

Nay)
F. Annual Election Resolution

Motion made by Jenny Thurnau, and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the annual election resolution as required by law. Motion carried. (7 Aye /0 Nay)

G. Potential Changes to Current Calendar

Motion made by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve "planned distance learning" the week of November 30th through December 4th (Pre-K through 12th grade) with November 23 and 24th being teacher planning days rather than student teaching days (no classes for students). Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion made by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve effective December 2nd there will be "early outs" at 12:30 p.m. each Wednesday afternoon in order to execute the executive order allowing an additional 30 minutes of prep time per day to plan for distance learning when providing distance learning to some student and teaching some students in person (December 2nd through end of 2nd Quarter). Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

H. MSHSL Form A

Motion made by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve MSHSL Form A. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

A. Committee Reports

A committee report was given for the following committees: Education Foundation and ZED.

B. Enrollment Data

Enrollment for the 2020-21 school year as of November 12, 2020 is 428 at the elementary school (grades K-6) and 380 at the high school (grades 7-12) (369 attending BPHS and the equivalency of 11 attending PSEO). The PSEO number consists of approximately 10 full-time and 2 part-time students.

C. Dates to Note

The Board noted dates of importance.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

1. Proud of work being done in the school. Great staff who care about kids.

2. The musical was great. Our kids and staff knocked it out of the park.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. Motion carried. (7 Aye/0 Nay)

Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Work Session will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 6:00 a.m. in the High School Media Center.

Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Meeting will be Monday, December 21 2020, at 5:15 p.m. in the High School Media Center (Open Forum begins at 5:00 p.m.) with the Budget/Levy Discussion at 6:00 p.m.

A complete copy of the official minutes may be found in their entirety in the official minute book located in the superintendent's office at the high school; however, they will not be available until approved by the School Board.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE TO
HAVANA TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

Our ANNUAL MEETING and TOWNSHIP ELECTIONS will take place on **Tuesday, March 9, 2021**. The annual meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. and voting for open positions will be from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the township hall located at 4398 Havana Road, Owatonna.

David Joachim | Township Chairman
Laurie Wolhart | Township Clerk

2/17T2

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2/10T3

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DODGE COUNTY
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E.O.E. 2/4T3

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER



With a computer and calculator within arm's reach, Roger Borchardt of Owatonna prepares yet another tax return as he marks his 50th year in the tax business. He began preparing taxes on a part-time basis in 1971 before going full time in 1989.

Borchardt hits half-century mark with tax business

Getting around his office in the basement of his home has become increasingly difficult for Roger Borchardt, but that hasn't kept him from doing what he loves to do.

He's a numbers man. And he puts his passion for numbers to good use.

For a half century, Borchardt has been known as the tax man for as many as 650 clients at his peak. Even today, after 50 years in the business, he still prepares tax returns for 500 people.

He prepares individual tax returns for the vast majority of his customers, though

he has some business partnership accounts.

Borchardt used to work from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, but he has scaled back to 10-hour days in recent years. He is also open on Saturdays.

A few years ago, while he was heading up the narrow staircase from the basement, he fell to the bottom from the top step. And to make matters worse, it was right in the middle of tax season: Feb. 28. It was a leap year, and he was hoping to use the extra day to his advantage. "I didn't catch up," he said.

Borchardt's hip and both shoulders have been replaced. He also deals with arthritis in his hands. He takes a

couple of Tylenol every morning to get through the day without much pain.

Both Borchardt and his wife, Doris, who is also dealing with medical challenges of her own, are pretty much homebound. They leave for the occasional medical appointments, but otherwise, they stay home. "It's nice to have a home office," he said.

There's nothing fancy about Borchardt's basement office. Metal file cabinets line his office. The other necessities of the job are within arms reach — computer, calculator, copier, a phone and yes, a few pens he uses to do some figuring and sign to make everything official.

Borchardt began preparing tax returns part time in 1971 while working as a controller for Gandy Company in Owatonna, where he stayed for 27 years. He served about 200 clients in the early years. On Feb. 1, 1989, he went full time with the tax business.

He keeps every tax return of existing clients. Noting he still has some original customers, Borchardt said, "If they are with me, I still have their returns."

Borchardt remembers the days when tax returns were done manually, and he used many bottles of White Out. "When I went to the computer (in 1993), I put three White Out companies out of business."

In 1996, Borchardt changed software companies and began offering E-filing for his customers. He charged

\$30 for E-filing and had 150 clients take advantage of it in the first year.

Filing electronic returns rather than paper returns has made Borchardt's life a lot easier, he says.

Borchardt is proud of the relationships he has developed with clients over the years. He realizes he has likely "stepped on a few toes" with some customers, but thinks most everybody has been pleased with the service he has provided.

His clients have faced "very few audits" by the IRS over the years, which Borchardt isn't sure which way to take. "I don't know, maybe I'm not doing good enough."

The hardest part of being a tax preparer, Borchardt said, is keeping up with all the tax changes.

Borchardt takes a two-day tax refresher course every year to keep himself fresh with the ever-changing

tax laws. This year because of COVID-19, the course was offered online.

Borchardt developed an interest in numbers during high school when he took bookkeeping courses. He said he wasn't musical or athletic in school.

He later graduated from Mankato Commercial College after completing a two-year course in accounting.

"I'm a math major, not an English major," he said, noting that his spelling isn't that good. "It's just a gift from God. God gave me the ability to remember numbers."

While larger accounting firms and tax businesses are available for people to use, Borchardt enjoys the "personal relationships you develop" with his clients. "If you go into somewhere like H&R Block, there may be six different preparers," he said. "I want to build trust with my clients."

And, "I'm a nice guy," he said with a chuckle. But he jokingly said not to ask too many people about that.

Asked how old he is, Borchardt responded in a way that you might expect from someone who has dealt with numbers his entire life: "39 times 2 plus 5."

At 83, Borchardt isn't sure how long he will continue with the tax business. "They are trying to get me to retire," he said, referring to his children.

Ideally, Borchardt would like someone to take over his business. But he knows it will be tough to find a suitable person to do so.

Borchardt had a friend who retired from the tax business at 85. And, he said, the only reason was because he became blind.

"I'm 83 and I have macular degeneration," Borchardt said. "I'm not sure how long I can go."



Borchardt suffers from macular degeneration, which causes loss in the center of the field of vision. Because of the condition, he doesn't know how long he will be able to continue preparing taxes.



"It's just a gift from God. God gave me the ability to remember numbers."

Roger Borchardt
The Tax Man