

COVID-19 SHIELDS
Owatonna teacher fires up a dozen 3D printers for shields.

LIQUOR TO GO
BP Liquor Store adds drive-up service.

SUMMER FESTIVAL CANCELLED
Medford nixes Straight River Days for June.

FUNERALS FOR FAMILIES
Coronavirus has altered funeral plans for many families.

Caron: Stay at home is working

Low cases in Steele continue

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Nearly two-thirds of the area's coronavirus cases have fully recovered while Steele and Dodge counties have seen hardly any new cases over the past week, Public Health Director Amy Caron said Monday.

Of the nine confirmed cases in Steele County, six are out of isolation with the assumption that they will recover, Caron said. In Dodge County, 13 of the 18 confirmed cases are out of isolation. There still have been no deaths connected to the outbreak in either county.

"It's a good thing," Caron said of the coronavirus cases in Steele and Dodge counties. "We're still fairly low numbers, especially in Steele," she said. She warned, however, that as the numbers increase, there could be an increase in deaths locally.

To this point, Caron said Steele and Dodge counties have in effect dodged the bullet with COVID-19. "I did expect it to climb higher and faster than it has," Caron said.

But she is quick to point to the reason why it hasn't climbed any higher: "It proves our stay-at-home order is working," said Caron. "We would be sitting a whole different spot if that wasn't put in place. The majority of people are doing the right thing by staying at home when they need to."

The current shelter in place order remains in effect until May 4. While it's still about 10 days away, Caron expects it to continue beyond May 4. "I would not be surprised if (the governor) continues with the stay-at-home order with some exceptions," Caron said. She added the key

SEE LOW CASES, A8



Doug Goff of Highway 218 Liquors gets product for one of his drive-up customers. The coronavirus pandemic has caused 218 Liquors to alter its business by adding a drive-up lane for easy access for customers. Goff and his son Casey built the drive-up window, which was opened about two weeks ago. 218 Liquors reports sales have gone up by about 50% during the crisis. See page A3 for more details about 218 Liquor's new creative approach to bringing in business.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

COVID-19 Precautions

Dispatchers get vital info to protect first responders

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The coronavirus pandemic has altered protocols in 911 response in Steele County.

Jill Bondhus, director of the Rice-Steele 911 Center in Owatonna, says the center's emergency dispatchers are requesting new information from callers seeking medical attention in light of the COVID-19 outbreak that has swept across the country, leaving thousands dead and hospitalizing many more. In Steele County, there have been nine confirmed cases, but no deaths.

Bondhus said dispatchers are asking if anyone involved with emergencies requiring EMS has any of the following symptoms: fever, difficulty breathing/shortness of breath and persistent cough. She noted that with medical calls, people are being asked to wheel or walk sick people to the lobby, door or even meet ambulances outside when weather permits so that first responders don't have to go inside.

Dispatchers pass on positive responses to any of the symptoms to first responders handling the emergencies. Bondhus said in some cases where an entire rescue squad may have gone into a medical situation in the past is now being handled by one person having contact.

"This is for responder safety to minimize the exposure," Bondhus said.

She admits it takes more time to get responses to the extra series of questions from dispatchers. "The extra time

Out of tragedy comes goodwill

Sportstitch owner launches COVID-19 small business campaign

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The response to one tragedy has turned into a goodwill response effort to another tragedy that has crippled the entire country.

Sportstitch owner Linda Klemmensen, who lost her Blooming Prairie business in a fire in late January, has now turned her focus to doing something to help area businesses fighting for survival in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Klemmensen has launched a T-shirt fundraising campaign called "Shop Local, Shop Loyal" as a way to support local businesses shuttered by the COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting stay-



This is the logo design created by Linda and Jamie Klemmensen for the t-shirt fundraiser they have launched to help small businesses in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

at-home orders that have basically shut down commerce.

"Ever since they had the fire benefit (for the Bakery and Sportstitch), I wondered how I could thank everyone," said Klemmensen. "This presented itself when I saw other communities doing it. It's a way to bring the community together."

Sportstitch will be making T-shirts in three colors: green, gray and pink. The \$20 cost of each shirt will go back to the community: \$2 to the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce and \$10 will be donated to the business of choice of all businesses who are members of the cham-

SEE OUT OF TRAGEDY, A7

SEE COVID-19, A8



Dori Hagen, a registered nurse from the Blooming Prairie area, is fighting the COVID-19 outbreak in New York City. She left Sunday and will not return until late July.

Area nurse fights COVID-19 in New York

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Most people stay clear of trouble, but for a Blooming Prairie area nurse, she's running right into it, by choice.

Dori Hagen, a registered nurse with Mayo Clinic for decades, left Sunday morning for New York City, the epicenter of the outbreak began last month. Joining her on the mission will be her sister, DeeAnn Sutter of Mesa,

Ariz. They joined a travel nurse agency and will be lending their nursing services for the next 13 weeks to care for COVID-19 patients.

"To be a part of this is a life changing event for both of us," Hagen said just a few days before taking off. She admits that a last minute change from working in Brooklyn, N.Y. to New York City caused "a little anxiety."

Hagen worked at Mayo Clinic in Rochester since 1988 with the last four

years specializing in Mayo's executive health program. In order to become a nurse fighting COVID-19 in New York she was forced to terminate her employment with Mayo. Mayo declined to give her a leave of absence, but extended an invitation for her to reapply for a job when she returns.

"This is something I have wanted to do my entire life," Hagen says. "I wanted to help with Hurricane Katrina, but I had young kids at the time

and couldn't," she said.

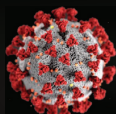
The nurse duo was hired by a travel nurse agency, which in turn finds assignments for them to work at. Hagen and Sutter will be working the night shift of 11 p.m. until 7 a.m. They estimate they will be working around 50 hours per week. "There are always openings in nursing," Hagen related.

Hagen said they will be working directly with COVID-19 patients in the medical surgical unit.

They are not ICU nurses so they will not at least initially have to handle the most serious patients.

Hagen will be outfitted with full protection gear, including N95 masks, face shields, gowns and gloves. Asked if it scares her to head right into the center of the deadly disease, Hagen replied: "Not really." She pointed out as a nurse, "you are in contact with infectious things all the time."

SEE AREA NURSE FIGHTS, A10



COVID-19 UPDATE

World..... 2,443,205	U.S. 778,027	MN..... 2,470	Steele..... 9	Dodge 18
Deaths 167,369	Deaths 41,376	Deaths 143	Deaths 0	Deaths 0
Recovered..... 639,239	Recovered..... 71,280	Recovered..... 1,202	Recovered..... N/A	Recovered..... N/A

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AREA DEATHS

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OUR VIEW

Acts of goodwill unite communities in tough times

The acts of generosity are pouring in as communities learn how to grapple with the unprecedented pandemic that has literally shut down or significantly changed nearly every aspect of life.

Within the past few weeks, Michael Beckman of Federated Insurance in Owatonna has launched a large-scale effort to produce face shields for front line workers to fight the deadly coronavirus. The shields will go to Owatonna hospital, Owatonna city workers and first responders. For now, Beckman is concentrating on keeping them in Steele County.

He has numerous companies and individuals involved in the project. Residents can get involved in the project by donating funds to the Owatonna Area Business Development Center. Beckman says his group will keep making shields as long as the need is out there.

Beckman put it in perspective in commenting about his initiative. "It's a total team effort, and the amount of sacrifice and dedication from our team is a great statement of what our community is all about."

Last week, Blooming Prairie business owners Linda Klemmensen of SportsTitch and Jamie Klemmensen of Klemmensen Creative revealed their t-shirt fundraising campaign to support local business hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis.

For Linda Klemmensen, the effort is payback to a community that rallied around her just a few months ago when her business was destroyed by fire on Blooming Prairie's Main Street. Since the folks held a benefit for her and the Bakery, she wondered how she could ever thank the community she has always called home. The Shop Local, Shop Loyal campaign in which local businesses will reap the profits seemed to fit the bill for Klemmensen. She wants to let people decide which business should get the profits.

Both of these efforts, though they are unique in their own ways, are the kind of thing that unite communities even in tough times. It's extraordinary to have people like Beckman in Owatonna and Klemmensen in Blooming Prairie looking out for their communities by finding ways to support them when times get rough. They are showing how small acts of kindness can be a big difference in the communities they represent.

We hope that you will help out either one of these worthy causes or better yet both of them and any others that come along in the coming weeks. We will get through this crisis with the help of one another. All of this just goes to show what a great place we call home.

The coronavirus epidemic has created lots of fear and anxiety as we try to find our way through this uncharted territory. It's neat to see that folks are doing some extraordinary things in times that are anything but ordinary.



GUEST COLUMN

More bills help COVID-19 response

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

RETURN TO NORMAL?

The Minnesota House passed a bill April 14 that continues to address Minnesota's response to COVID-19.

This legislation will help protect struggling farmers, expand access to telemedicine, and ensure that Minnesotans are covered as they normally would be if they receive care at an alternate treatment site.

It also includes changes to allow Minnesotans to apply for a marriage license remotely, ensures public officials can participate in remote meetings or hearings (similar to current law for military members), and eases certain deadlines in response to COVID-19. It also will ensure Commercial Drivers Licenses and out-of-state licenses will continue to be valid while in-person appointments are restricted. It also implements provisions of the federal CARES Act including coverage of COVID-19 testing as part of our ongoing response to the pandemic.

We all share a common goal of protecting the health and safety of Minnesotans during this COVID-19 crisis. As you know, the stay-at-home order has been re-issued by Governor Walz. The latest reissuing information provided this week by experts at the Minnesota Department of Health and the University of Minnesota indicates that if we protect the vulnerable and continue to observe social distancing, we could begin the process of bringing our economy back without increasing the number needing hospitalization. If we could avoid three more weeks of economic devastation without an increase in ICU demand or deaths, we should pursue that. We should let the data guide our work and have that conversation. Also on Tuesday House Republicans brought forward a resolution that would have moved that process forward. Our approach aimed to keep in place

important measures to protect veterans, small businesses, law enforcement, and tax filing extensions as our response to COVID-19 continues. Simply ending the Governor's Emergency Declaration would have caused significant disruption and eliminated all executive orders. Which is why our resolution needed to do this in a way that's smart and recognizes that this crisis has not come to an end. It would have ended the State of Emergency, but maintained quite a few of the executive orders protecting the welfare and financial stability of our economy.

Unfortunately, House Democrats did not agree and voted against the proposal. We will continue to look for ways to begin the process of getting Minnesota back to work and a normal daily life.

John Petersburg is the state representative for District 24A, which includes Steele and Waseca counties. He lives in Waseca.

What's to love about the local paper?

One of our regular readers from Owatonna pointed out to me an article that ran in the March-April edition of RFD-TV Magazine about the local paper. It's appropriately titled, "My Local Paper."

It provides a good illustration of what local newspapers like the Steele County Times provide their readers week after week. It set out to answer one important question: What is it about my local paper that I love?

I'd like to share with you portions of the article:

"It's called the News-Sun (substitute Steele County Times) and lists the communities it serves under the masthead; the largest, population 3,500, the smallest, 200, if that substitute Owatonna, Blooming Prairie, Medford and Ellendale. It comes out every Wednesday and high school students sell it in front of the post office. Or, you can buy it at Safeway, one of only two grocery stores and often the busiest place in town."

"We subscribed the year before we moved to the community. We read about our future neighbors, the real estate ads, city politics, parades, school activities and the antics of local characters."

"My local paper takes it seriously. The bulk of the news stories from 'Crash on the Highway' to 'Top Grads Recognized' are done by the editor and one busy reporter. They are skilled writers and very circumspect about not favoring the news with news analysis—just the facts, ma'am, just the facts."



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

"Small town papers often thrive because CNN or the N.Y. Times are not going to scoop them for coverage of the 'VFW, Fish Fry,' 'Bridge Construction Delay,' or local boys and girls playing baseball, receiving scholarships, graduating, getting married or going off to war."

"I think of local papers as the last refuge of unfettered America. A running documentary of the wars and triumphs of real people unfettered by the spin, the bias and the opaque polish of today's homogenized journalism. It is the difference between homemade bread and Pop Tarts."

"It gives our little community a sense of place in the world. We are important to somebody. We make a difference. The paper recognizes that."

"They are the glue, the mirror, the billboard, the flashlight, the semaphor, the boom box and microphone of small towns. It is how we hold hands. They care. They show us care. They wear our hearts on their sleeve."

"Is it accurate to say that I really 'love' my local paper?"

Well, it's not quite the proper word, but... I can't think of a better one."

In providing me with a copy of the story, Bea Pichner wrote, "How true these words are! We feel this so much about your newspaper."

Thank you, Bea, for recognizing the value of your community newspaper. I encourage others to share these same sentiments with their friends and neighbors.

It's certainly gratifying to have readers like Pichner go through the trouble of sharing their thoughts about something that I take great pride in providing on a weekly basis. Sharing hometown community news is what we're all about. And I think it's especially important for everyone to understand this right now during one of the worst situations we have ever found ourselves battling.

I don't think there has ever been a greater time where our newspaper is needed to help people navigate through this unprecedented crisis that has crippled our communities and the rest of the country.

We are here to guide you through this outbreak and together we will survive this.

What's to love about the local paper? I offer that there is much to love.

But perhaps, most importantly, hope is something a local newspaper can go in hot pursuit of providing its readers.

GUEST COLUMN

Protecting consumers from abusive price gouging

BY AMY KLOBUCHAR

Rows of empty shelves in our grocery stores. Single rolls of toilet paper for \$10. Staples like eggs, meat, and rice going for double the normal price. These are just some of the troubling things that Minnesotans have reported seeing since the coronavirus pandemic began sweeping across our country.

This crisis has led to nationwide shortages of everyday items like hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and even soap as millions of Americans try to keep themselves and their families safe. It is only natural for people to plan and stock up on essential items during an emergency. But these shortages can be made worse by hoarding and price gouging on the part of some businesses seeking to take advantage of consumers during a pandemic.

People are under extraordinary stress right now, particularly our health care workers on the frontlines battling this virus. Unfortunately, there are always some who see a crisis as a business opportunity and that is what we are seeing when unscrupulous vendors hoard essential supplies and charge exorbitant prices for once-affordable products.

This is simply unacceptable. These practices force consumers to pay inflated prices for everyday goods and prevent some low-income families from getting these products at all. They are also burdening our doctors and nurses, who are facing critical shortages of medical supplies and equipment, like

masks, respirators, medical gowns, face shields, and disinfectants as they try to treat patients and save lives.

While some retailers and online businesses are taking important steps to tackle price gouging, this is a problem the private sector can't solve alone. That's why I'm leading work in the Senate to urge the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to use its full authority to prevent abusive price gouging. The FTC has the power to prevent "unfair or deceptive acts or practices," and this is a time when the FTC should be pushing the limits of its full consumer protection authority to help protect the American people.

Together with Republican Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, I also called on the Justice Department to vigorously enforce a recent Executive Order issued to help prevent price gouging, and I requested information about the Department's efforts to address this problem. The President and Attorney General pledged to tackle this problem and I am working to hold the Justice Department accountable and ensure they are taking action to curb these practices.

Governor Walz and Attorney General Ellison are taking important actions here in the state as well. Following Governor's Walz's Executive Order to crack down on price gouging during this pandemic, Attorney General Ellison announced he has joined with state and federal prosecutors to launch a task force to better streamline investigations and prosecutions against retailers

accused of exploiting the pandemic for profit.

But this is not a problem that will disappear when this pandemic is behind us. We've seen price gouging during past crises, and we will see it again. But currently, neither federal law nor state law explicitly outlaw these practices.

That is why I introduced federal legislation to prevent price gouging during this emergency and the emergencies we will inevitably confront in the future. Specifically, my bill would prohibit selling or offering to sell essential goods and services at an unconscionably excessive price during — or in anticipation of — a natural disaster, pandemic, or state of emergency. Price that exceed pre-crisis prices by more than 20% would meet this definition, unless they were caused by cost increases to the seller. And this would apply to all goods and services that are used to protect the health and welfare of the public.

No one should profit off the stress and vulnerability of their fellow citizens.

Fighting back against these practices is going to require all of us working together. Minnesotans are resilient and we've dealt with our fair share of challenges. With so much uncertainty in peoples' lives right now, Minnesotans deserve to know that when disaster strikes, they will be able to get the essential supplies they need at fair prices.

Amy Klobuchar serves as U.S. senator for Minnesota.

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Sheriff warns about penalties for violating stay-at-home order

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Violating the governor's stay-at-home order could come at a price.

That's the message Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose is sending out as he warns businesses that there are penalties for snubbing the governor's directive of trying to keep Minnesotans safe.

Rose took to social media

last week in an effort to educate citizens and business owners about the unprecedented order that has been effect for about a month and continues until at least May 4. He said his office has no intentions of finding violators, but rather wants people to take the consequences should his deputies be forced to take action.

The sheriff says while his deputies have been busy with normal public

safety matters and may not notice if some are working in violation of the order, he would be more concerned about competitors filing a complaint. If such a thing were to happen, Rose said, "that frankly takes away a lot of our discretion."

Rose said some people have already been cited around Minnesota for not abiding by the order. Violating the order carries a \$1,000 fine. He said no ci-

tations have been issued in Dodge County to this point. Violations of the order may be directed to 1-800-657-5504 or email at SAHviolations@state.mn.us. Business owners, managers and supervisors risk facing misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor charges with up to \$1,000 to \$3,000 fines, plus the risk of up to \$25,000 in civil penalties from the state government, according to Rose. He

added businesses also risk losing any state licensing required for the business.

If you are a business owner and you would like to contact the state and plead your case as to why you believe your business should be allowed to be exempt during this time period, you can email them at CriticalSectors@state.mn.us," Rose said.

The sheriff's office has had some inquiries about

the order and about the exempt business listing. The current list is available at mn.gov/...critical-worker-definitions-ACC_tcm1045-42.

"While we all may not agree with the order, we need to work together during this Stay at Home period to keep the numbers down and keep people healthy and safe so we can all go back to work," Sheriff Rose said.

First grade teacher helps flatten COVID-19 curve

EDITOR'S NOTE: Most schools throughout the nation have gone to distance learning. The Blooming Prairie School District is no exception. First grade teacher Natalie Sorensen not only is still teaching her first graders at school through distance learning, she is helping her own children learn from a distance. She provides a perspective from that of a teacher and from that of a parent.

BY NATALIE SORESENEN
BP FIRST GRADE TEACHER

As much as I miss seeing my students in my first-grade classroom in Blooming Prairie, I feel very fortunate that I am able to distance teach during the COVID-19 epidemic.

It's a scary time in our world. I am thankful to be able to stay home with our own children and hopefully continue to "flatten the curve" here in Minnesota.

Along with the three other first grade teachers, we have been very busy at school and at home, planning, and creating organized plans using our Everyday Math and Reading Streets Curriculum.

Through videos recorded at school, I am teaching reading skills. Mrs. Heather Schiller is reading weekly stories & BIG Books. Miss Emily Henslin and Ms. Karlee Ruen are team teaching math concepts.

We gave a distance learning folder with learning instructions in it to all first graders when the Blooming Prairie Elementary School distributed packet pick-up prior to the start of the Minnesota's Distance Learning.

At home, our first-grade students watch our videos and complete the tasks within their distance learning folder and in the math journal.

For writing, we want the kids to be journaling about their experiences at home during this distance learning period. We asked parents to please take time each week to complete the tasks and learn the concepts listed for reading, math, and writing.

Our intention was to give this out weekly so families can work on it as they can, rather than assign certain days to work on certain assignments.

We understand many families will have parents leaving for work each day or working from home. We wanted to make this as manageable as possible while beneficial for our first grade students.

I reach out to my own students via an online learning platform called SeeSaw (as do the other first grade teachers). This allows me to send personal videos and messages to each student.

I feel this is imperative so my little first graders know I am still caring and thinking about them! They can send me videos/messages back! In addition to the lessons, I also send out videos of me reading books that are tied to social/emotional learning, which is so important.

Teaching my students from a distance is definitely different. I miss my students' hugs and smiles.

It's difficult to know if they are having a bad day or not understanding an assignment. Fortunately, through SeeSaw or email, parents or students can message me and then I can respond back through videos or messages to further explain material.

Seventeen years ago, when I started teaching, this wouldn't have been possible. It's not ideal, but I am thankful for this technology to get through these uncharted waters.

My husband Anthony and I have three children and live in the country. Our children are all handling the distance learning concept fairly well.

Max is a fourth grader who loves the fact that he can get his school work done via Google Classroom and then help his dad.

For his music class, Max plays his recorder to his teacher with other students in his "Zoom" classroom online. He misses playing football with his friends at recess.

Carter is in second grade and does his work assigned in packets and on SeeSaw.



PHOTO BY ANTHONY SORESENEN

Blooming Prairie Elementary School first grade teacher Natalie Sorensen takes time to check her family's work in distance learning. Second grader Carter is at far left, pre-schooler Madeline hugs her mom and fourth grader Max is at right.

Madeline is in Preschool and watches her videos from her teacher and does her work in her packet. They both said that they miss their friends and teachers, but love playing outside and with their toys at home.

It's been interesting trying to juggle being "Mom" and "Teacher," especially with a little girl who loves to be on my lap.

Once the learning chart is sent off, I start my day checking student's work that they've uploaded, or reply to messages that were sent by parents or students.

Then, I get my own children started with their distance learning for the day. I let them choose which assignments they want to start with. I am thankful that I am used to doing this with 20 students, because it is interesting with the three kids at different levels.

Our youngest also insists on working at the table every day, even though she doesn't have as much work to do (good thing I have extra workbooks I bought for her!).

Throughout the day, I check my messages to make sure if my own first grade students are understanding a concept, and if they are not, I reach out and help him/her so they understand it. I also spend time contacting students to make those personal connections.

I've been asked: What are the advantages/benefits from this type of learning?

Some parents have told us first grade teachers how much they've appreciated the lessons and that they've enjoyed the one-on-one time with their child. That's how I feel as a parent as well.

The teachers of my own children have done all the work of making sure my kids are learning the skills they are supposed to. I make sure it's delivered to them at home and I help them when needed. I love being able to see what they are working on and it's been nice to do it with Max, Carter, and Madeline, too! Luckily, I am able to interact with the other first

grade teachers frequently. We have actually had Zoom Meetings among each other, which means all four of us can be on a computer screen talking with each other.

There are so many questions we have and we feel it's imperative to all be on the same page as a grade level. We also want to support each other and try to make one another laugh when we can!

I feel very fortunate to have my fellow first grade teachers during this uncertain time - they are an amazing team to work with, and knowing we can rely on each other has made distance teaching much more manageable! Having them and my family makes this stressful time easier to get through.

I want to give a huge thank you to our leaders for their insight of keeping our students and staff safe by keeping us all at home.

Also, thank you to the essential workers who are helping fight this COVID-19 battle. Because of you, we will hopefully all be able to be together again soon!

Mayo braces for staff changes

Mayo Clinic is speaking about the financial impact related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Friday, officials at Mayo said their staff is doing "extraordinary work" leading in the response to the coronavirus. "We are proud of and committed to our staff and our communities as they come together to fight this global health crisis," a Mayo statement said.

Mayo is facing unprecedented challenges as a result of these circumstances, including a financial impact that requires significant adjustments to its operations. Mayo said, "The decision to proactively postpone elective patient care was the right one, but it eliminated the majority of our revenue at the same time we are making critical investments to develop and expand testing, conduct research to stop the pandemic and re-align our facilities and care teams to treat COVID-19 patients."

According to the statement, Mayo is taking necessary steps to reduce expenses but additional measures are needed to ensure that it can emerge from this situation in a stable position.

"While we were able to protect full pay and benefits for our employees through April 28, temporary furloughs of some staff and salary reductions will be required after that time," Mayo says. "We will work with our teams in the coming weeks to ensure that our staff are supported, that the duration of this disruption is as limited as possible, and that we are ready to ramp up quickly and resume full operations when it is safe to do so."

218 Liquors adds drive-up window

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

In these tumultuous days because of the COVID virus, retailers have found creative ways to sell their products.

Highway 218 Liquors, owned by Miranda and Tom Camery, has become creative by adding a homemade drive-up window to the establishment on Hwy. 218. Previous owners Doug and Mary Goff came up with the idea of having a drive-up window to spike sales that may have been hampered by the coronavirus outbreak.

"Our goal is to give our customers the product they desire under safe conditions," Goff remarked. "I just never thought it would get this bad," he added.

Goff said he has had no problem getting delivery on his product but says some trucks are delivering only three days a week. "There are less trucks on the road," he said.

Along with son Casey of Medford, the Goffs constructed the drive-up window, which allows customers the opportunity to drive right up to the liquor store and place an order.

"It's working well," said Doug Goff, "but it involves a lot of running back and forth" added Goff, who says a bad hip causes him some discomfort.

Because of Gov. Tim Walz's order to shut down restaur-

ants and bars, only curbside service is available. That's why the drive-up window was added at Highway 218.

Before the addition of the drive-up window, Goff said he and other 218 workers had to wash door handles and some bottles.

"Who knows what will help bring in more business," said Goff. He believes the store's business has grown by about 50%.

"This whole thing just doesn't seem real," said Goff.

Goff also sells craft beers and says he will be closing out some of his craft beers. Hours at 218 Liquor are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Convenience for the customer is offered by window service at the Highway 218 liquor store. Here, Rhonda Akkerman receives an order from Doug Goff.

COVID-19 alters funeral plans for families

The end times are shared by the Peterson family

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

With much of the country shut down because of COVID-19, families have had to handle loss and grief in many different ways. Restrictions have mandated no services in the church and have limited numbers of people able to attend graveside services if the family chose that avenue. Groups of 10 or less were recommended.

Many families have either chosen burial services and followed social distancing, or they have decided to have memorial services at a later time.

The coronavirus actually brought the family of Daryl Peterson, rural Blooming Prairie, closer together. Peterson passed away at age 62 on March 29. He suffered kidney failure.

Peterson's wife Rae Ann said their three children handled all of the arrangements for Peterson's burial service. "That allowed me to grieve the loss," she said.

The Peterson family made arrangements with the help of Worlein Funeral Home. Mark McGuire was their planning contact. "We had lots of guiding hands in planning Daryl's service at the Red Oak Grove Cemetery," remarked Rae Ann.

The Peterson family had no reviewal for Daryl and had a service at the cemetery, following social distancing guidelines. "Our kids were savvy with their phones, and they live streamed the burial service at the cemetery," Rae Ann related.

"The day was shining bright the day of the service at the cemetery," Rae Ann said. Because of technology, the Peterson family could share the service with others. Nephew Phil Murry sang the Lord's Prayer, a request of Daryl. Pastor Heidi Heimgartner of First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie officiated at the graveside service.

Peterson was born to Marion and Gladys (Seavey) Peterson on Feb. 5, 1958. He was baptized and confirmed at Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church. He farmed on the family farm six miles south of Blooming Prairie.

Daryl graduated from Blooming Prairie High School in 1976. He was involved in a car accident, leaving him a quadriplegic. He still graduated with his class from IPIHS. He began farming and never left being confined to the wheelchair stop him.

Peterson and Rae Ann



Daryl Peterson is shown on his family farm with his three children, Clint, Sally and Amy. Daryl died on March 29, 2020 during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic, which has altered funeral plans for many families. A burial service was held at Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church.

Miner were married on June 29, 1991.

The Petersons had three children: Sally (Brian Hughes) of Austin, Amy Peterson (Noah Aakre) of Austin and Clint Peterson of Austin.

Rae Ann said Daryl had been on dialysis for two years in Rochester. He was hospitalized just prior to his death. "His paralysis and dialysis took a toll on his body," Rae Ann shared. Daryl had a "wonderful

doctor," said Rae Ann and he advised the family to care for Daryl in his final days.

Daughter Sally is a University of Minnesota student and was on break. Twins Amy and Clint are going to an online college.

Daryl was placed on hospice and with all three children at home, Rae Ann said they, together, became a support group for Daryl.

The Petersons' children stayed at home during his final days and did their studies at home. They were thus able to spend quality time with their father and care for him.

Peterson's daughters and son moved furniture around to enable Daryl to look outside. Amy's boyfriend, Noah, brought Peterson's tractor to the front of the house every morning and would start them up every day for Daryl.

The kids also brought Daryl's toy tractor collection to his bedside so he could enjoy it.

"The kids told Daryl they loved him and this strengthened him," said Rae Ann. The family also did face time with Daryl.

The family began planning for a funeral service and decided to do a service outdoors. "Daryl loved the

outdoors and things fell into place," Rae Ann said. The family selected a white pine casket through a project where white pine trees were replanted.

The Peterson children were able to be adaptive and creative with technology in planning Daryl's outdoor burial service, said their mother.

Much of the planning for the burial reflected Daryl, Rae Ann said.

Rae Ann recommends families be adaptive in planning a loved one's funeral services. "Be aware of the loved one's wishes," she said.

Six pall bearers were chosen for the service and the family stayed within the 10 and under social distancing guidelines. The family may have another memorial service at a later time. "This is very comforting," said Rae Ann.

Rae Ann said Daryl's loss made a big impact on many people. She also said she was grateful to have such a supportive family. "We were able to have Daryl at home, and we could be a family," Rae Ann said.

In this time of worry and concern because of the coronavirus, families are learning to be strong with the guidance of funeral home professionals.

Mobile banking lively during outbreak



US Bank of Blooming Prairie donated 10 dozen cookies to the residents of the Prairie Manor Care Center. The cookies were made by Karen Peterson of Confections by Karen; Pam Farr and Becky Josephson, both of US Bank.

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

It's more diversification in banking these days, report Blooming Prairie bankers James Fiebigler of F & M State Bank and Becky Josephson of US Bank.

The drive-up windows at both banks are very busy these days during the coronavirus outbreak. Bank lobbies are closed.

Drive-up hours at F & M are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays and from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Drive-up hours at US Bank are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Fiebigler, president of F & M, and Josephson, manag-

er of the US Bank branch, both say mobile banking has increased significantly during these days when the lobbies of both banks are closed.

Drive-up banking, online banking and mobile phone banking are commonplace these days.

Fiebigler said this is the first time the bank lobby has been closed during his 37 years of banking at Farmers & Merchants State Bank. He said both drive-up windows are operational with two drive-up tellers on duty at all times.

"Our mission is to make sure our customers' checks are cleared, their debit cards are working and their balances are readily available.

"Digital banking has definitely exploded during these trying times," says Josephson. "Our phones are ringing all the time," she added.

Early last week, stimulus checks were received by customers of F & M State Bank and of US Bank.

Both local banks received many inquiries about the Paycheck Protection Loans for small businesses. As of mid-day last Thursday, all the money in this account had been distributed.

"We want to continue offering the usual banking services, and we want banking to be as seamless as possible," Fiebigler said. The bank, he said, has an offsite person who is self quarantined and checks daily on mobile banking and cashing of checks.

"There's a lot of worry out there as to when the economy will come back," remarked Josephson. "We would like to see more activity in the community, and we can't predict when the economy will come back," she added.

"We want to see everyone safe and healthy," Josephson said.

The local US Bank branch has been donating lunch to businesses and last Friday, donated 10 dozen cookies to the Prairie Manor Care Center. The cookies were made by Karen Peterson of Confections by Karen.



Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Blooming Prairie has been extremely busy during the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak and has put two tellers on duty at the drive-up tellers. Kathy Kartes and Gayle Miller are two of the drive-up tellers.

Mayo sets guidelines for donations

Mayo Clinic Health System continues to receive generous offers of help and support from the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community members, businesses and restaurants continue to come forward with offers of donations.

The following guidelines are intended to help provide direction for specified donations and locations where donations are accepted in Southeast Minnesota.

Cloth masks
Mayo Clinic is now requesting and accepting cloth masks donations. Donors should follow CDC guidance on cloth face coverings for design and material (all cotton).

In Southeast Minnesota, donors can drop off homemade sewn cloth masks Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the main entrance. Donation bins are located outside of the building; donors should not enter the facility. Donors are asked to share their information

through an online form found on the mayoclinichealthsystem.org/covid19 web page.

The following facilities are designated collection locations:

Albert Lea – 404 W. Fountain St.

Austin – 1000 First Drive NW

Owatonna – donations at Allina Hospital/Emergency Department entrance, 2250 NW 28th St.

Faribault – donations at District One Hospital, 200 State Ave.

Those wishing to donate new personal protective equipment supplies should complete a donation form on the COVID-19 page of the Mayo Clinic Health System website. If the list of accepted items changes, the information will be updated on mayoclinichealthsystem.org.

Protective gear and supplies
The following supplies, in unopened original containers are being accepted:

- N95 masks
- Nitrile gloves
- Face shields
- Surgical gowns and masks

Items currently not accepted:

· Homemade cotton gowns

· Open boxes of supplies

· Miscellaneous non-medical grade supplies

Food
Food donations must come individually packaged; foods packaged so that multiple people can access one container, such as pizza or a bucket of chicken, will not be accepted. For those who want to donate food items, provide at least an 8-hour notice. Inquiries regarding how to donate cloth face masks, food or other thank you items to staff can be sent to SEMNCN@mayo.edu.

As always, the ongoing safety of patients and staff remains the primary focus of Mayo, which sincerely thanks the community for its generosity and care shown toward the organization during this challenging time.

Limited access to Courthouse until May 4

Following Governor Tim Walz's extension of his Stay at Home Order, Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea issued a new statewide order on April 9, which supersedes all prior orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The order is in effect until May 4.

The revised order maintains certain provisions from the prior orders, including restrictions for in-courtroom hearings, requiring hearings by remote technology for all other case types and hearings; and allowing for certain fine and fee due dates to be delayed by 60 days.

"The Minnesota Judicial Branch will continue to rely on public health experts to determine when conditions in our courthouses may begin to return to normal. The expanded availability of remote hearing technology in all locations in the state will allow more cases to continue despite the necessary restrictions on physical access to courthouses," said Chief

Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "I commend our district and appellate courts and the many justice partners who have worked tirelessly to adjust to the new technologies and processes during the COVID-19 pandemic."

District Court Hearings & Processing
The order authorizes and encourages the use of remote technology when possible to conduct hearings in any pending cases. Some of the technology options courts are using today include ITV, WebEx, Zoom, Virtual Courtrooms, and phone bridges.

Courthouses will remain open on a limited basis for in-person contact, hearings may continue to be held in courtrooms for specified hearings and case types, and courts will continue to accept filings in all case types. Self-help services will be conducted via phone or email. District courts may be contacted by phone (bottom of page) or email. Other than specifically provided for by the order, case deadlines established by Court Rules

remain in effect unless extended by an order of the Supreme Court or the presiding judge.

Fines & Fees
The State Court Administrator is authorized to extend due dates for most payable citations by 60 days, and to suspend the penalties for failure to appear and late payments. Certain exceptions apply. Cases that are not included in the 60-day due date extension may still be eligible for extensions. Any questions on fines and fees should be directed to the district court or the Minnesota Court Payment Center.

Jurors
Jurors must continue to follow the instructions on their paper summons, but the Minnesota Judicial Branch will not be calling any additional jurors to courthouses until May 4, at the earliest. No new jury trials will begin prior to May 4. Grand juries that have been empaneled as of March 23, and are actively hearing a case will continue to hear the case.

Social Security Offers Lump Sum Payouts to Retirees



THE SAVVY SENIOR
Brought to you by: *Prairie Manor*
Care Center

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus
220 3rd St. NW,
Bloomington, MN 55403
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
In light of the stock market crashing, I've heard that Social Security offers a lump-sum payment to new retirees who need some extra cash. I have not yet filed for my retirement benefits and would like to investigate this option. What can you tell me?

Seeking Cash

Dear Seeking,
There is indeed a little-known Social Security claiming strategy that's been around for many years that can provide retirees a lump-sum benefit, but you need to be past your full retirement age to be eligible, and there are financial drawbacks you need to be aware of too.
First, let's review the basics. Remember that while workers can begin drawing their Social Security retirement benefits anytime between ages 62 and 70, full retirement age is 66 for those born between 1943 and 1954, but it rises in two-month increments to 67 for those born in 1960 and later. You can find your full retirement age at SSA.gov/pubs/ageincrease.htm.
At full retirement age, you are entitled to 100 percent of your benefits. But if you claim earlier, your benefits will be reduced by 5 to 6.66 percent every year you start before your full retirement age. While if you delay taking your benefits beyond your full retirement age, you'll get 8 percent more each year until age 70.

LUMP SUM OPTION

If you are past full retirement age, and have not yet filed for your benefits, the Social Security Administration offers a retroactive lump-sum payment that's worth six months of benefits.

Here's how it works. Let's say for example that you were planning to delay taking your Social Security benefits past your full retirement age of 66, but you changed your mind at 66 and six months. You could then claim a lump-sum payment equal to those six months of benefits. So, for instance, if your full retirement age benefit was \$2,500 per month, you would be entitled to a \$15,000 lump-sum payment.

If you decided at age 66 and three months that you wanted to file retroactively, you'd get only three months' worth of benefits in your lump sum, because SSA rules prohibit you from claiming benefits that pre-date your full retirement age.

DRAWBACKS

The downside to this strategy is that once you accept a lump-sum payment, you'll lose the delayed retirement credits you've accrued, and your future monthly retirement benefit will be reduced to reflect the amount you already received. It will also affect your future survivor benefit to your spouse or other eligible family members after you die.

You also need to consider Uncle Sam. Depending on your income, Social Security benefits may be taxable, and a lump-sum payment could boost the amount of benefits that are taxed.

The federal government taxes up to 50 percent of Social Security benefits at ordinary income tax rates if your combined income - defined as adjusted gross income plus nontaxable interest income plus half of your Social Security benefits - exceeds \$25,000, and up to 85 percent of benefits are taxable if combined income exceeds \$34,000. For married couples, the comparable income thresholds for taxing benefits are \$32,000 and \$44,000.

To help you calculate this, see IRS Publication 915 "Social Security and Equivalent Railroad Retirement Benefits" at IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p915.pdf, or call 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you a copy.

In addition, if the lump-sum payment of retroactive Social Security benefits boosts your yearly income beyond the \$85,000 level, it will increase your future Medicare premiums too. See Medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/11579-medicare-costs.pdf for details.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit

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Looking back at past epidemics

Smallpox was Minnesota's first in 1871

BY NANCY VAILLANCOURT

While we are reeling from the news and the effects of COVID-19 on our society, it may be time to look back at how Steele County experienced epidemics in the past. The material that I have gathered on this subject is based on research for the Owatonna Public Library with additional information added as available.

This is the first in a series of three articles, beginning with smallpox. Smallpox is an infectious disease that was present for centuries and had a death rate of 30% with higher rates for infants. Those who survived were left with scars, and some with permanent blindness.

Minnesota experienced several major outbreaks of smallpox throughout the years. In 1871-72, more than 270 Minnesotans died from smallpox, mostly in lumber camps. Ten years later smallpox claimed the lives of 96 people. The State of Minnesota passed a law in 1883 that required parents to have their children receive a smallpox vaccine. However, in 1903, the state Supreme Court ruled that such a requirement was illegal.

Between the years 1899 to 1923, smallpox developed in hot spots, but claimed no more than 55 lives per year. In the early 1900s, smallpox spread across the state of Minnesota, affecting Steele County. In one month over 1,100 cases of smallpox were reported in the state. The Secretary of the State Board of Health noted that the epidemic was spread

due to the "utter lack of care in the smaller localities....Patients have been given no treatment, and in many instances there has been no quarantine at all."

A student at Pillsbury Academy was exposed to smallpox while at home for Christmas vacation. After displaying the symptoms when he returned to Owatonna, the student was placed in quarantine in a separate building at the school. The disease spread to another student, causing the Academy to be closed and quarantined for two weeks in February 1900.

Smallpox cases seemed to diminish during the spring and summer months, returning in the winter. All residents were advised to be vaccinated and to "use disinfectants and fumigate their houses occasionally."

More smallpox cases were reported in outlying townships in the spring of 1901. Schools were closed and quarantines established. The Owatonna City Hospital opened during the time of this outbreak. Admission to the hospital was only given to those who certified that they did not suffer from smallpox, diphtheria, measles, scarlet fever, or pulmonary tuberculosis.

In March of 1901, the local Board of Health appointed L.H. Herschleb as a special health officer with police powers. He was assigned to "maintain an extensive quarantine of all smallpox patients and to secure a prompt report of new or suspected cases and to see that the quarantines fully observe the rules of the Board of

Health." The names of smallpox patients were published in the newspapers. Quarantine signs were placed on the doors of patients' homes.

The State Board of Health ordered that physicians failing to promptly report suspected contagious diseases should be prosecuted. Dr. Smersh, president of the Owatonna Board of Health, entered a complaint against Dr. W.C. Eustis, who was brought before a judge and fined \$5 for failing to report a patient's contagious disease.

This outbreak prompted the Owatonna Board of Health to recommend that the loaning of books from the Owatonna Public Library be discontinued. No books could be checked out from March 25 to April 22, 1901. After the building was disinfected the reading room reopened. Thirteen books exposed to smallpox were burned. Before books could again be checked out, each party was required to sign a statement that declared, "I hereby certify that there is no infectious disease in my home or where I work or live."

For many years there was discussion of a hospital for contagious patients. When it was suggested that Owatonna establish a smallpox quarantine hospital near the water pumping station, Dr. T.L. Hatch objected, stating that the city water could become infected with the disease. He suggested that the pest house be located at least a mile or even two miles from the downtown.

In January 1902, a man with smallpox who had come to Owatonna by train

was found roaming the city. Dr. Smersh reported that he had been obliged to house a patient in the first vacant building he could find, a downtown building on North Cedar Street. Local businesspeople protested, suggesting that the man should be placed in a quarantine hospital on the outskirts of the city. Dr. Smersh opposed the purchase of a detention or isolation hospital. The city council proposed moving the granary of the city hospital to the rear of the lot to establish a ward for smallpox cases. This was met with disapproval from doctors, the hospital board, the nuns of the Sacred Heart Academy, and the neighbors of the hospital. No "pest house" for smallpox was established.

The largest smallpox epidemic in Minnesota occurred from 1924 to 1925. The epidemic at that time was centered in the Twin Cities. Of the 500 who died from smallpox, 400 were from Minneapolis and St. Paul. Vaccinations then increased and were eventually again made mandatory for school children. The last recorded smallpox death in Minnesota occurred in 1941. The last smallpox case worldwide was diagnosed in October 1977. The World Health Organization certified the global eradication of the disease in 1980.

Coming up next week: Nancy takes a look at the 1818 Spanish flu epidemic.

Nancy Vaillancourt is the director at the *Blooming Prairie Public Library*. She is also an avid history buff.

History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago April 27, 2010

RIK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

By all accounts it was a pretty good week for BPHS sports. The baseball team won a pair of games to get above the 500 mark, and the conference win over Hayfield, which will help determine seeding for the sub-sectionals later in May. After winning the Rushfield-Petersen Invitational last week, they chalked up another victory against section foe Southland and increased their record to 6-2. The track teams seemed to find more success as the boys placed second in the Triton meet and the girls placed third, showing improvement each week. Our boys and girls golf teams both had wins at the FBA match.

For more than three decades Gary Ringhofer has been with the Steele County Sheriff's Office in some type of position but that is coming to a close. In March, Sheriff Ringhofer announced his retirement. Ringhofer is a lifelong resident of Steele County, graduating from Owatonna High School, then served in the Army in Vietnam after which he returned and was hired as special deputy in 1979. In 1982, he was promoted to investigator for 16 years. He was appointed chief deputy in 1999 and upon the retirement of Bill Hildebrandt was appointed sheriff. He loved the communities of Steele County and having had the opportunity to serve them has been something he will cherish the rest of his life.

The National Honor Society inducts 13 new members. Students who are admitted into the National Honor Society must exhibit service, scholarship, character and leadership. Juniors and seniors require a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on 4.0 scale. The following students inducted were: Timothy Boecker, Jeffrey Doerhoefer, Whitney Farr, Justin Ingvaldsen, Aaron Krejci, Jennifer Paulson, Kaylin Wolf, Ashley Campbell, Kelcie Driesen, Zachary Herdina, Erin Johnson, Jordan Noble and Amanda Wanous.

20 Years Ago April 25, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

The girls' golf team set a new school record this week for the lowest 18-hole score. The 369 they shot against Owatonna was two

strokes better the team record 371 set in 1998. Lisa Meskhe, Karl Olson, Janelle Jacovino and Nicole Trosten were the golfers who set this new record. Even more astounding was Meskhe's 18-hole individual score of 70 which was two under par on the local course. That broke her own record of 73 she set in 1987. Congratulations to them all.

It is time again for the St. Columbanus Spring Fair scheduled for April 30. There will be something for everyone to do. Dinner will be served in the church basement, the very popular bake sale, kids, face painting and the carnival and the raffle for the beautiful quilt made by members of the CCW. This quilt took almost a year to complete. Seventeen quilters completed the hand-appliqued and hand-quilted "Folk Flower" quilt with lattice and borders.

College news: Bethany Luther College announced that Sara Anderson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arden Anderson of Blooming Prairie has been awarded an academic scholarship.

The following Blooming Prairie students have achieved the goal of earning a year to complete. Community and Technical College: Lindsay Cordt, Angela Jones and Neil Swanson.

Shannon Martin, elementary education, has been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by Iowa State University by being named to this semester's Dean's List.

50 Years Ago April 22, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Two Blooming Prairie music groups received "star" ratings in the District II music contest. The Blooming Prairie High School Band, director Clifford Jones, and the Mixed Choir, director Denis Johnson, were honored with "star" ratings for their outstanding performances. Other high schools receiving "star" ratings were Alden, Glenville, Hayfield, Rose Creek and Adams. All the group receiving this rating will move on to the state competition on May 2.

Dr. Timothy Nealy was elected president of the Blooming Prairie Jaycees on Monday night. Other officers elected were: Marvin Ingvaldsen, Howard Bode, Otto Jensen, Dean Christianson, Ken Cook, Bob Ille, Paul Stollard and Jack Butler. The new board will assume its offices

on June 1. The BP Jaycees now have 64 members, the largest chapter in a Minnesota village of under 4,000 population. They have also received the coveted Blue Chip Award for excellence in programming, attendance, activity and membership.

John Becker, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Becker, a junior at BPHS has been selected to represent the Otto T. Lund Post 52 American Legion at Boy's State this summer. Scholars to Boy's state must be a junior in high school and an active member of the Boy's organization of the American Legion Post, the high school and leading citizens of the community.

The American Legion Auxiliary of Otto T. Lund Post 52 announced that Lynn Hunter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Lund and a junior at BPHS, will represent them at Girl's State. Lynn is an honor student, active in many school activities, band, choir, GAA, dance and speech. She is busy with community activities and involved in her church organizations, choir and Catholic Youth Group.

75 Years Ago April 26 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Braaten of Blooming Prairie have received word from the War Department that their son, Pvt. Nordahl L. Braaten, in the medical corp of the Army somewhere in Germany, is reported missing in action. Pvt. Braaten has been in the service 11 months and has been attached to the medics. They received this message on April 26.

The annual spring party and business meeting of the Book Club was held on Tuesday evening. Mrs. Merville Bray was hostess. The members gathered at the Cozy Inn for dinner and then departed to the home of Mrs. Bray. New officers elected were: President, Mrs. John Shaw; vice-president, Mrs. Albert Ingvaldsen; secretary, Mrs. Walter Pirki; and Mrs. E.O. Habberstad, custodian. The Book Club has entered into its 37th year and ranks as one of the oldest clubs in the county.

The American Legion and Auxiliary will honor the Gold Star Mothers and Fathers next Wednesday evening, May 2nd at a joint meeting in the community building with a dinner and program. The hostesses are Mrs. John Mott, Mrs. Glenn Thorsen, Mrs. Mae Peterson, Mrs. Harrison Oswald, Mrs. Earl Oswald, Mrs. Vince Starman and Mrs. Hans Hensel.

SEEING THE GOOD

The Times continues its "Seeing the Good" feature in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are profiling stories of hope and encouragement of friends, neighbors and others doing extraordinary acts of kindness during a bleak period in our nation's history. If you have any ideas of stories we can feature, please reach out to us at bptimes@frontiernet.net or call our office at 507-583-4431. Your ideas will help make this an interesting segment for our readers.

Teacher provides 3D printing for COVID-19 shields

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

When Shaun Robbins joined on as a teacher last fall at Owatonna Middle School, he didn't know he would find himself in the middle of helping out with a pandemic crisis.

Robbins has not only been forced to navigate into the waters of distance learning for students, but he's also helping with an important community endeavor. With a dozen 3D printers at his disposal, he is cranking out face shields

as fast as he can to help with the COVID-19 shield project started by Michael Beckman at Federated Insurance in Owatonna.

He started helping out four weeks ago with printing the 3D mask. Since then, Robbins has made 36 shields every day. It takes nearly five hours to print one shield. He said he sets everything up with the printers in his classroom, leaves and comes back 47 hours later to do it all over again. This cycle goes on at least three times daily.

"I'm willing to keep going every day until we fulfill our orders."

Shaun Robbins
COVID-19 Shield Printer

He has tried to shorten up the printing time, but he has found the quality suffers. "I never saw myself producing something on this large of scale," Robbins said. "It helps give me purpose."

Robbins has even recruited his sixth grade son, Braylon, to help out with the project. "It has become a family project," Robbins says. When he showed up last fall, the middle school had "one very old, barely operable" 3D printer. Robbins has since added 12 new 3D printers at the school. "I didn't know there would be a reason for it, now here it is," he said.

Robbins said it doesn't appear to be any let up on the demand for the shields. "I'm willing to keep going every day until we fulfill our orders," he said.

He calls the extra work "very satisfying" in light of what is happening with the pandemic. Robbins said he likes how the community is pulling together to help supply front line workers with the tools they need to fight the deadly virus. "It feels really good to be able to turn around and give back," he said.

There are currently 23 active 3D printers in Owatonna printing the shields, according to Beckman. He is looking for additional 3D printers to join in the effort. "The more we have available for printing, the faster we can get the materials in the hands of the community," Beckman said.

Anyone with 3D printers available to help is asked to contact Beckman at Michael_beckman@charter.net.

COVID-19 SHIELD PROJECT

Donations:
Owatonna Area Business Development Center
1065 24th Ave. SW
Owatonna, MN 55060
Memo: Shields/Masks

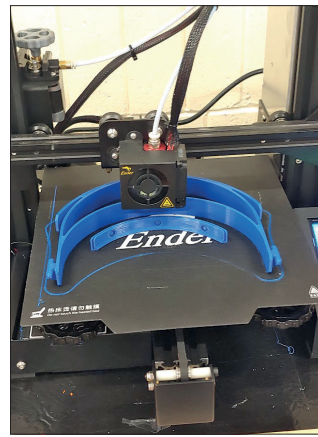
Anyone with 3D printers:
Email Michael Beckman at:
Michael_beckman@charter.net



Sixth grader Braylon Robbins helps his father, Shaun, with the COVID-19 shield initiative in Owatonna.



Owatonna Middle School instructor Shaun Robbins has been cranking out face shields for the past four weeks. So far he has printed 400 shields on a dozen 3D printers at the school.



Swanson nearly misses 77th birthday parade

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

It definitely was a birthday celebration that she will never forget.

Corinne Swanson nearly missed her 77th birthday celebrated by many of her friends and neighbors on Tuesday, April 14, 2020. Car horns were a-blarin' on her Blooming Prairie street at about 3 p.m. on this day, April 13, but Corinne Swanson did not hear them. She was busy on a sewing project on the lower level of her home.

Corinne's husband Dale did hear the racket outside their house, and he called Corinne to a telephone call. It was friend Linda Christianson who strongly suggested to Corinne: "Go to your front door."

Christianson was the organizer of this special birthday party. She called Corinne's friends and urged them to join a parade on her street south of town. Corinne followed the instructions to go to the front door and was surprised to see a large group of cars on her street with horns honking.

The motorcade consisted of 15 vehicles. Homemade signs and some balloons made the birthday party somewhat festive.

One of her friends departed her car and walked up to Corinne's front door, keeping a social distance of six feet.

A friend presented Corinne with a homemade angel food cake. Others in the parade got out of their cars, presented



It was a big day for Corinne Swanson on Tuesday, April 14, her birthday. She turned 77. She also shows an original T-shirt, depicting two rolls of toilet paper.

Corinne with birthday cards and stood safely in social distance as they sang Corinne "Happy Birthday."

These types of birthday observances are necessary because of the "Stay at Home" order issued by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.

"I'll long remember this birthday (No. 77)," said Corinne.



A friend of Corinne Swanson, presented an angel food cake to Corinne on her 77th birthday, April 14, 2020. Friends and neighbors paraded in front of Corinne's house on this cold, crisp afternoon.



Friends and neighbors of Corinne Swanson surprised her on her 77th birthday April 14, by giving her a birthday parade because of the COVID-10 outbreak. Linda Christianson organized the parade and was in the lead car.

Medford hosts Bunny Parade despite COVID-19 crisis

While the Medford Civic Club is used to putting on big summer festivals like Straight River Days, it also finds itself tackling smaller events, especially during trying times like the coronavirus crisis.

On April 11, the club hosted a Bunny Parade with the Easter Bunny perched on top of a Medford

fire truck. The bunny made a path through town as well as the Lazy U Community. "Our amazing community supporters donated bags of candy totaling over 6,000 pieces," said Erin Sammon, president of the Civic Club. "We threw out candy to the kids on the route. We encouraged people to stay in their

owner yards/driveaways or use public places to park while following the social distancing guidelines."

Sammon noted the club members wore gloves and drew bunny faces on their masks while staying apart as possible while throwing out candy. "It was awesome and very emotional," she said.



Members of the Medford Civic Club hosted a Bunny Parade on April 11 just before Easter. The club followed social distancing guidelines to give area kids a glimpse of Easter. "It was awesome and very emotional," said organizer Erin Sammon.

Council approves purchase of fire truck in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

A new fire truck for the Blooming Prairie came one step closer on April 13 when the City Council unanimously approved purchase of the truck.

The price tag is just under \$490,000 at \$489,609. Council member Mary Kittelson gave the motion to approve the purchase of the new fire truck. The truck's delivery is between 12-16 months out from delivery, said City Administrator Andrew Langholz.

The action was done at a virtual meeting where council members observed the social distancing practice and also had their meeting live-streamed on Facebook.

Fire Chief Dean Naatz informed the Times that the new pumper truck will replace the current ladder truck (1988) owned by the department. Naatz said the ladder truck had some issues and had to be replaced.

The ladder truck was key in fighting a fire on Main Street in Blooming Prairie last Jan. 28. The fire destroyed The Bakery and the building housing Sportstitch.

The new pumper truck will have a pumping capacity of 1,250 gallons of water per minute.

Council proceedings were live-streamed April 13 due to a mandate not to gather in groups of 10 or larger because of the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak.

Other council business included:

- Council set Monday, May 11 as the date for a public hearing to hear a request for a conditional use permit for a Remote Control Race Track on property owned at the intersection of Main Street and Mill Ave. by James O'Connor. Nathan Schumacher was making the request. The site is currently zoned industrial.

- Will the Pine Springs Swimming Pool be open this summer? That was

a question discussed by the council. Administrator Langholz said it is possible that the pool might not open this summer because of the COVID-19 scare. He said area pools and water parks, including Owatonna, have already announced closure.

Council member Kittelson offered a tabling motion of action until the May 11 council meeting. The tabling motion was seconded and approved. Some pool repair work also has to be done before the pool will open, said Mayor Esplan.

- Langholz informed the council that the city is purchasing an emergency kit at a cost of \$900 to allow city staff to work from home and access computers at the City Center.

- Council approved transfer of fire equipment and township equipment to capital outlay.

- Discussion was led by Langholz about illegal dumping taking place at the city's compost site on the northeast part of town. "I would hate to see this facility closed," said council member Brad Clark. Langholz said new security cameras could be installed to help solve the problem.

- Seal coating for the city in 2020 will cost approximately \$35,000, according to the top bid on the project.

- Annexation of the Gateway property was approved by council.

- City Attorney Jason Iacovino introduced discussion on violations of Shelter in Place, congregating in groups of 10 or more. Iacovino said if a violation is noticed, a warning will be issued. If that warning is defied, a misdemeanor violation will be written.

- Council member Kittelson called attention to Langholz's one-year anniversary in February. "I think he has really done a good job during his first year here," said Kittelson.

BP officials urge U.S. Census participation

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the regular monthly meeting of the Blooming Prairie City Council on April 13 was held in virtual surroundings in the council chambers.

State and federal restrictions mandate that no meetings consisting of over 10 people shall be held. Thus, Monday's meeting was live-streamed with only the five council members, the city administrator, the city attorney and city clerk in attendance.

Meeting participants expanded their seat locations to abide by the six-foot social distancing requirement.

A full slate of business was on the table with one of the more important items for the city coming toward the end of the night's agenda. It concerned the United States Census, which officially kicked off on April 1.

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City Administrator Andrew Langholz, Mayor Curt Esplan and council members Mary Kittelson, Bill Neuman, Tara Gimbel and Brad Clark urged all residents "to do their part" in completing the U.S. Census report, an exercise that comes every 10 years. The last census came in 2010.

There are three ways the census can be completed: online, by phone or by mail. The request is for everyone to count all persons living in their homes as of April 1.

"It's simple and it took me only 5 minutes to complete online," said Langholz. "The better turnout we get, the more funding we will get," he added. "We need to push for everything we can get."

The results of the 2020 census will determine the

number of seats for each state in the House of Representatives, which mirrors the number of delegates for each state in the Electoral College (less the two electoral votes allocated to each state regardless of population), for elections in 2022 to 2030.

Forecasters have projected which states will gain or lose seats due to the 2020 reapportionment. According to these estimates,

- New York is likely to lose 1 or 2 seats;
- Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia are likely to lose 1 seat;
- California and Minnesota may lose 1 seat or remain the same;
- Montana may gain one

seat or remain the same;

- Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina and Oregon are likely to gain 1 seat;
- Florida is likely to gain 2 seats;
- Texas is likely to gain 3 seats.

Census data is also used as a basis for federal funding distribution.

Dozens of federal programs use census data to help direct funding to state and local areas. Census results help determine how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is allocated to states and communities each year for roads, schools, hospitals (health clinics), emergency services, and more.

As required by the United States Constitution, the U.S. Census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790.

All persons in the U.S. age 18 years and older are legally obligated to answer census questions, and to do so truthfully (Title 13 of the United States Code).

OUT OF TRAGEDY: comes goodwill FROM A1

"It feels good that I can give back. It brings the community together."

Linda Klemmenssen
Sportstitch Owner

ber. When people order their shirts, they will have the opportunity to specify which business should get the money. There are about 120 chamber members to choose from.

Klemmenssen has teamed up with her nephew Jay's wife, Jamie Klemmenssen, who operates a graphic design service in Blooming Prairie, on the project. "Jamie and I created the logo together and she set up the chamber store online," Linda Klemmenssen said.

The Klemmenssens are taking orders online at www.bloomingprairiechamber.com/stores. If people don't want to use the computer, they can call Sportstitch at 507-583-7001 or email at sportstitch94@gmail.com. Orders need to be placed by May 4 with delivery planned on Thursday, May 14 from 4-8 p.m. in the parking lot of the City Center.

With social distancing concerns related to COVID-19, Klemmenssen plans to do a "drive by" in the city center lot where they will run the shirts out to the cars for people to pick up. "We'll be very good

at keeping our distance," she said.

Ever since the online store opened last Thursday, the orders have been rolling in, Klemmenssen said. "I had 29 orders in 12 hours," she said, emphasizing she has no particular goal in mind with this project. But, she was quick to point out, "people are ordering multiples."

She noted the more shirts that are sold, the more her cost goes down, which in turn will produce greater profits for the businesses.

"For me, it feels good that I can give back," Klemmenssen said. "It brings the community together with a sense of something not negative. T-shirts seem to do that for people. They love T-shirts."

Klemmenssen said the pandemic has been "shocking" to businesses. "I went through the fire with that shock," she related. "I was a few weeks ahead. People felt like I did on Jan. 29," she added.

Since the fire, Klemmenssen has been fortunate to keep her business functioning by operating out of her garage. But, like most



Linda Klemmenssen

other businesses, she is now feeling the effects of the shutdown as her business has significantly dropped. "I'm lucky that I am at home," Klemmenssen said. "At least from my house, I can still do some work. It has affected me, but I am keeping busy. I feel lucky."

Klemmenssen is still undecided about what she will do with the business long term. She is thrilled to be focusing on something to help the community. As her shirt suggests, "One small purchase can make a big difference."

It was a party on 4 wheels x 33



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

It was a sad farewell and goodbye as friends of Ken and Betty Behnken escorted the couple toward a new chapter in their lives.

The Behnkens, who have resided in Blooming Prairie for 54 years, built a house in Cannon Falls to live closer to their families.

Ken taught and coached in the Blooming Prairie school district for 34 years. Betty was a registered nurse for many years.

Close Friends Joanne and Roger Sorenson arranged for a vehicle caravan, taking the Behnkens to a road leading to a new home in Cannon Falls.

"We just wanted to give them a good sendoff," said Joanne Sorenson, who made many phone calls to arrange for the departure accented with love and kindness.

The lineup started at about 9:15 last Saturday morning just to the east of Prairie Manor and the



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Betty and Ken Behnken received a royal escort out of Blooming Prairie last Saturday, embarking on a new chapter in their lives, moving to Cannon Falls, 45 miles away. They were part of a 33-vehicle caravan that took them and their friends by their previous homes and past many other notable remembrances.

Heather Haus. The cars and trucks kept on coming to join the caravan. "We don't know how it will turn out," Roger said as he and Joanne took the lead position with their Ford truck. The entourage waited for the Behnkens to depart their last place of residence, Geri Oswald's home.

"Here they come," said Joanne, spotting the Behnkens getting into their car. The Sorensons then took the role of "pace car" and directed the Behnkens to fall in behind.

The car party then toured the five different homes where the Behnkens resided the last 54 years. The tour also took the

group through the Blooming Prairie High School parking lot, then south to First Lutheran Church, through the parking lot and on to the south, then back north and into the north high school parking lot. Ken and Betty waved to their friends gathered in their vehicles in the high school parking lot and



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

There's nothing more fun than to go on a parade through Blooming Prairie on a Saturday morning. People have been yearning to get out of the house because of the coronavirus outbreak. They had an excuse and that was to join a parade with Ken and Betty Behnken who are moving from BP to Cannon Falls.

resumed the tour through Blooming Prairie, going down Main Street to Highway 218, north to the Red Ball Road and then on to County Road 26.

Ken and Betty then exited their car, waved and yelled "thank you" to their friends passing by. The Behnkens were extremely active in the

Blooming Prairie community and it is hoped that they will return to Blossomland for frequent visits. Your Blooming Prairie friends may come and visit you in your new home.

Don't forget your Blooming Prairie friends because they will never forget you both. You are both Awesome Blossoms. God Speed!

OBITUARIES

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Vernon Bau, 92, Truman

Vernon Bau, age 92, of Truman, passed away on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020 at Heartland Senior Living in Truman.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines, services will occur at a later date. Zaharia Family Funeral Home in Truman is entrusted with arrangements. www.ZahariaFamilyFuneral.com.

Vernon Bau was born on a farm near Monango, N.D. on June 5, 1927 to Peter and Esther (Farmer) Bau.

He was raised in the farm life and attended country school through 8th grade near Frankfort, S.D. He started working and later joined the army and served in WWII for 16 months. Upon his return, he took his GED and enrolled at SDSU in Brookings, S.D.

He met Delores Anderson in the summer of 1949 and they married on June 14, 1952 in Redfield, S.D. They became live-in house parents at the Methodist Student Center to help with expenses while in college. While as a member of the Army Reserve, his education was interrupted in 1950, where he served in Japan during the Korean War. Upon his discharge, Vernon graduated from SDSU in 1954, first in his class, in the College of Agriculture, where he majored in Agricultural Economics and minored in Agronomy. He appreciated the education he had received from SDSU.

He followed college with a long career as a farm loan appraiser and loan manager for Equitable Life Assurance Society in Truman. He continued his education to earn a master's of science in 1958 with a major in economics while working for Equitable.

He and Delores moved to Truman in 1957. He believed in community involvement and was the chairman of the Truman Planning and Zoning Board for many years. He was politically active and was delegate for county and state caucuses for years. They were long-time members of the Madella United Methodist Church where he had served since 1957.

He enjoyed playing cards, fishing, hunting and golfing. They were members at Interlaken Golf Club in Fairmont. He flew a private plane and was a member of the St. James flying club. He enjoyed taking friends and family for trips near and far to Mexico, Canada, Louisiana, New Mexico, California, South Dakota and many other states. After retirement, he and Delores, wintered in Mesa, Ariz.

He was a lifetime VFW member and a 70 year American Legion Member. He was active in the Truman Historical Society and Truman Museum. He provided financial scholarships to students at his alma mater, SDSU.

Vernon is survived by his wife Delores; children, Gordon (Jane) Bau of Austin, Cindy (Greg) Graif of Sherburn, Connie (Elliot) Belgard of Truman and David (Sue) Bau of Slayton; 14 grandchildren, Stacy (Derek) Nelson, Tanya Ryan, Matt Bau, Josh (Angela) Bau, Melissa (Jeff) Paradis, Laura Urban, Jerriek (Jesse) Urban, Foster (Alyssa) Graif, Brenna (Darren) Thate, Molly Markwart, Miranda Belgard (fiancé) Chris Tulowetzke, Brian Bau, Mark Bau and Heidi Bau; 13 great-grandchildren, Raya, Meghan, Isla, Josselyn, Ryker, Alexis, Adalynn, Grayson, Kennedy, Finley, Dustin, Londyn and Madison; sister-in-law, Teresa Bau; numerous other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Wesley and Arlan; two sisters, Lena Paulson and Eva Masat.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the Truman Historical Museum or SDSU Foundation. Vernon Bau Scholarships; SDSU, PO Box 525 Brookings, S.D. 57006-9935 or www.SDSUStateFoundation.org.



Vernon Bau

LOW CASES: in Steele continue FROM A1

will be a "slow integration" with bringing people back to out into society.

Asked why Dodge County has double the cases of Steele, Caron speculates that it is due to the number of cases involving health-care workers, who commute to work in Rochester.

The number of cases in Freeborn County rose to 27 over the past week while Mower County has seen 25 cases. No deaths have been reported in either of those counties.

The first death reported in this region came last week in Rice County. Rev. Craig Breimhorst, who had currently been serving at a church in Dodge County, died from COVID-19 complications. Breimhorst, of Faribault, had been among the first southern Minnesotans with the virus. He had reportedly contracted the virus on a trip to Israel in early March.

NEW HOT SPOT

On Monday, JBS USA announced the indefinite closure of its Worthington pork production facility. The plant employs more than 2,000 people and processes 20,000 hogs per day.

"We don't make this decision lightly," said Bob Krebs, president of JBS USA Pork. "We recognize JBS Worthington is critical to local hog producers, the U.S. food supply and the many businesses that support the facility each and every day."

JBS becomes the second major pork plant to shut down in the past week. Last week, Smithfield in Sioux

Falls closed down after more than 500 workers tested positive for the virus, becoming the biggest single-source hotspot of COVID-19 in the U.S.

Gov. Tim Walz sent a group of health care workers to Worthington over the weekend to handle the crisis. "What is learned at JBS will be applied to other facilities across the state," Walz said Monday.

Minnesota Public Health Director Jan Malcolm said, "This is a stunningly fast moving virus."

As of Monday, there were 2,470 confirmed cases in Minnesota with 143 deaths. Malcolm said 126 people remain in ICU across the state.

AREA FACILITIES CLEAR

Caron is happy to report that there have been no cases in any long-term care facilities in either Steele or Dodge counties. She estimated there are about 18 facilities between the two counties with the majority of them in Steele County. Facilities include nursing homes, assisted living and group homes.

She attributes the success of keeping the virus out of the long-term care facilities to the lockdowns that the facilities took on at the start of the outbreak. Caron also said it's because they are "monitoring their own employees and watching what is coming into their facilities."

While she is happy with the local numbers all around, Caron also believes that there still are lots of unreported and

undetected coronavirus cases out there. She said of the cases showing up, they are attributed to community spread.

Summer festivals and celebrations are beginning to cancel. Last week, Medford cancelled its annual Straight River Days celebration. "It's unfortunate that we have to cancel these type of things, but I support that this is the right thing to do," Caron said.

Asked about the upcoming Steele County Free Fair in mid-August, Caron said she had no recommendation at this time. "It will be a tough decision," she said. "I don't know where the point is to start cancelling," she added.

Caron said part of the problem right now is that it's unclear when the virus will peak in Minnesota. Different models have predicted peaks at the end of May to August. And, she warned, once Minnesota reaches peak, it doesn't mean we are out of the woods. She added there could also be a second wave of the virus hitting.

Public Health has been collecting donations from community groups and organizations over the past few weeks. Caron said they have been receiving many donations, which have been distributed to places around the county where they are most needed.

While Caron points out that cloth masks are not ideal, they do help in curbing some of the spread. She also reminds people that cloth masks do not protect the individual wearing



Amy Caron

them, but rather other people. "We need people to practice social distancing even with the masks on," she said.

Caron was complimentary to area businesses, especially grocery stores and convenience stores, for taking measures by placing 6-foot markers on the floors, directional arrows on the floors and Plexiglass at the checkout lines. "All those things are helping slow the community spread and give our healthcare workers the time to raise their capacity to take in ill people," she said.

The director said she is displeased with reports of groups of individuals congregating at other people's houses and ignoring the social distancing guidelines. Caron urged people to "go beyond ourselves and think about other people." She reminds people that they can be carriers of the disease without being sick themselves.

"We need to be careful until we get the vaccine," Caron says, noting there currently is no vaccine and it could be as long as 18 months before one is discovered. "We need to take any precautions we can to slow it down."

COVID-19: PRECAUTIONS FROM A8

it takes outweighs the safety of the responders," said Bondhus, whose center dispatches emergency services for both Steele and Rice counties.

Shawn Smith, a paramedic with Mayo Clinic Ambulance based in Owatonna, said the biggest change he has noticed since the COVID-19 outbreak began is how paramedics are approaching situations when they enter homes. Based on the information they receive from dispatchers, paramedics determine how much personal protection they need to take. In some cases, they may end up wearing a full gown, mask and shield, Smith said.

"We are still doing our job," Smith says. "We just have to adapt to make sure we are protecting ourselves."

Glenn Lynden of Mayo's public affairs team noted that residents may notice it takes paramedics a few extra minutes to come into their home once they

"This is for responder safety to minimize the exposure."

Jill Bondhus

Rice-Steel 911 Director

arrive because they are putting on their protective equipment. "It's for their protection as well as our protection," he said.

Since the coronavirus broke out, paramedics are now wearing masks during their entire shift. "It's just another layer of protection just in case we have an exposure we don't know about," Smith said.

Fortunately, Smith said the coronavirus isn't widespread in Steele County as it has been in areas like Rochester or the Twin Cities metro area. He said there have only been a couple times that he's aware of where paramedics have donned the full personal protection gear on calls. However, he points out, just because patients answer

positive on the screening questions from dispatchers doesn't mean they have COVID-19.

While coronavirus has created a lot of anxiety and fear with people, Smith says he is not afraid to handle whatever comes his way. "I have a healthy respect for the coronavirus," he said. "I'm aware of it, but I'm not afraid. If you let fear rule it, you will sit in your house never wanting to leave."

Mayo's Lyden said as an organization, Mayo has stepped up with a commitment to communicate with paramedics and other team members. Mayo has daily leadership conference briefings with staff on COVID-19 issues. "Sharing information

and making sure people are informed will reduce anxiety," Lyden said.

Smith agrees. He said Mayo's approach has given him and others "a sense of calmness in the storm."

Ironically, one of the biggest changes Smith has found with the coronavirus epidemic is that the local ambulance crew is handling fewer calls than before. "Calls have reduced, it seems strange," he said. "I think there is a lot of fear of going to the hospital."

Moving forward, Smith wonders what the new normal will become for area paramedics. "People may not call us for some of the things they have called us for in the past," he said.

Both Smith and Lyden appreciate the support they have received from community members in recent weeks.

"We don't have the luxury of doing our job from home," Smith said. "It's really nice to see people rally around us."

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BOOK NOOK

New ideas for staying safe at home



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

Here are a couple of new ideas for you to try while the Blooming Prairie Branch Library is closed. These do require an internet connection but can be a challenging way to spend your time.

The first idea is to try a Digital Escape Room! You may have heard about Escape Rooms, or even been to one in Rochester or the Twin Cities. This is a similar concept but done totally online so you can still stay safe at home. There are a series of clues that help you unlock doors or find your way down dark passageways.

There are a variety of book-based Escape

Rooms - Pete the Cat or Alice in Wonderland for the younger set and several Hogwarts and Harry Potter schemes for a bit older. Teens and adults can find plots based on Greek mythology or murder mysteries. To find a Digital Escape Room that you would like to try, search "Free Digital Escape Rooms." (Some sites do charge.) You can limit your search to include kids or teens or your favorite fictional characters.

The second suggestion is to dig into Mango Languages, available through www.owatonna.info. Over 70 world languages are taught with an audio emphasis. I'm presently reviewing my German since it's been awhile since I studied it. But wouldn't it be fun to learn Swahili, Farsi, or Pirate?

When you get back to your regular routines, you can impress people with your new language skills and your increased problem-solving abilities!

Worship & Faith

Breath and Life

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020

A9



Rev. Amanda Floy

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
OWATONNA

It started as a normal prenatal appointment. I woke up feeling good. I expected a quick appointment before heading out to a full day. However, my plans quickly disappeared as my doctor took my blood pressure, and

then took it again, and again. It was scary high. Before I knew it I was on my way to Rochester with severe preeclampsia. Twelve hours after my first blood pressure reading of the day I was having an emergency C-Section, and welcoming our baby boy into the world. He was born at 26 weeks and 4 days old, weighing 1.76 lbs.

How quickly life and priorities can change! For the last 55 days, I have spent every day in the Neonatal ICU at St. Mary's Hospital. Every day I walk into our little boy's room, look into his isolette, and hold my breath hoping for positive progress. For a little guy who weighs slightly more than a pineapple goals seem simple, yet they are

profoundly important – Grow. Breathe. Power. On my favorite days they place his tiny body directly on my chest in what is called Kangaroo Care (Skin-to-skin). I am pretty sure this is one of the most holy things I have ever experienced in my life. As the two of us sit there together I am blessed with the opportunity to feel every breath he takes. Now this may not seem like a big deal, but for a micro premie with very immature and sick lungs this is monumental. In fact, he can't breathe by himself. According to his gestational age, he shouldn't be breathing yet. He should be swimming in my belly taking gulps of amniotic fluid. Instead, however, he has been thrust into this world

outside of my belly where he must gulp in air on his own to survive. For the first 37 weeks of his life he was on a ventilator which would breathe for him. I can't imagine how small his breathing tube was, or how impossibly difficult it must be to intubate someone so tiny. Now he is on a BiPap machine, and will continue to be dependent on a machine to breathe for a while. During our skin-to-skin time, I can't help but watch these machines, and count each of his breaths. My heart stops when I see the machine drop in numbers. It is not uncommon for him to stop breathing, or "ride the vent" (let the machine do all the work). When this hap-

pens the nurses give him a couple of seconds to breathe before giving him a boost. One day I watched as they hit the code button twice and then scrambled as the team to help him. No parent should have to see this. The gift of breath has never meant so much to me. I don't ever want to take for granted the ease in which I breathe, and I pray that my little one will someday get to a place in his growth and health where he will breathe with ease – where his needs for ventilators, and breath support are a memory. My baby boy has been born into a rather precarious time in history. We are surrounded by a virus that is capable of literally taking someone's breath away. This

virus has put the entire world into an unprecedented situation in which the best way to love and care for one another is to practice physical distancing. It goes against our communal instinct, and yet it is necessary. We can literally help people to breathe by staying away from one another. Dear friends, there is a real possibility that this virus is not going to go away quickly. We may have to keep physically distant from each other for longer than we want to, but I implore you to take this seriously. This is a matter of life or death. Every breath is a gift from God. Please take your breaths at home, so that others may have a chance to breathe in the future.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696
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: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST LUTHERAN – AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Sliper
507-684-2451
Men's Bible Study: 8 a.m. Saturday
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday (Kids church- 9 a.m. and Confirmation- 10:15 a.m.)
Jews 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.,
Bloomington
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walenius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMS
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
Worship: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA
7618 NE 44th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edvardson
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
Rev. Suzanne Froelich,
Interim Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.rogllutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School
(Sept. – May): 10:15 a.m.

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., Sergeant
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 Klaviter and Jacie
Richmond
507-451-7293
sjlphowatonna.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 Dolcil
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
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
lkowatonna.org
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon: Kris Oppegard
Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday: 8:15
a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Sunday
Sunday School: 8:15 a.m.
& 9:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS
108 Third Ave. SW, Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m.
Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.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
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:30 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

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING
205 Second Ave. NW, Medford
507-451-6353
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

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

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave. Owatonna
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m.
with Children's Church
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.
Faith Formation classes for
K thru Confirmation
Second Sunday of month:
Family Faith Formation
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other month

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

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father John Sauer
Parochial Vicar
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m., 8:10 a.m. Sun.

Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.
Adoration:
8 a.m. - 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC PARISH
114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father John Wilmut
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
Deacon Patrick Fagan
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.
(Communion Service
8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Key off required after
hours 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 Elhazar 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 Cirkens
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. Scott Jakel
Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-4734
www.uowatonna.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY
130 W. Bridge St., Owatonna
Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 9 a.m. Sun.
Reformers Unanimous Meetings:
7 p.m. Friday

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.destinyc.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
Pastor Scott & Joan Peterson
507-413-0209
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

SIMPLE CHURCH
4515 NW 22nd Ave., Owatonna
Country Goods building across
the freeway from Cabela's
Pastor Todd Lundgren
507-451-5661
Worship: 9-10 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 7 p.m. Wednesday

MENNONITE

PRAIRIE MENNONITE
13638 750th St., Blooming Prairie
Bishop Dennis Martin
507-583-7332
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.

PRESBYTERIAN

ASSOCIATED CHURCH
Presbyterian Church (USA) and
United Church of Christ
800 Havana Road, Owatonna
507-451-1546
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
507-955-4032
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.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Kids Church: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BAPTIST

FIRST BAPTIST
104 First Ave. NE,
Bloomington
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.

FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna's oldest church)
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
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Biking to the store



The spring weather conditions seem perfect for a brother and sister to ride their bicycles to Vandal's Family Market in Blooming Prairie recently. Riding their bikes are Mila Meres, 7, and Owen Meres, 5, of Blooming Prairie.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO RECYCLE RIGHT!

NEW ONLINE RECYCLING TOOLS

Steele County has launched an on-line residential recycling calendar where residents can search their address by visiting steelecountymn.recollect.net.

Calendar features wide range of helpful tools in English and Español:

- Reminders and serve alerts
- What goes in the bin
- Recycling drop off sites
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- Other helpful information

Check out this calendar also on Steele County Facebook page!

Coming soon... WASTE WIZARD

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AREA NURSE FIGHTS: COVID-19 FROM A1

Hagen said it is a little concerning to see the progression of the coronavirus and how fast it progresses.

She admits this is a little different than anything she has handled before, but she is prepared. "Whatever God wills you will happen," Hagen said. Hagen is excited about the opportunity of going out and helping others in New York. "Being able to make a difference and give relief to those nurses. They are tired," she said. She also relishes the opportunity of working closely with her sister, though they're not certain they will be together at work.

Getting ready for the trip out to New York didn't come without some uneasiness for Hagen. She said her grandson, who is a first grader in Blooming Prairie, told her he hates the word coronavirus.

"My heart just broke," Hagen said. But the life-long nurse knows one certainty as she ventures into this new opportunity. "We will come back as different

people and probably better people," Hagen said. "I feel this is such a once in a lifetime (opportunity)."

As she headed off to New York, Hagen expressed appreciation to many people around the area that offered supplies. They included Donovan Eaker and Rachael Lee of Steve's Meat Market, Ben Cleson, Anthony and Lynsey Kartes, Jackie Miller and Kathy Pollock.

"I had extremely good response from people in the community," Hagen said.



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Parole denied for Claremont cop killer

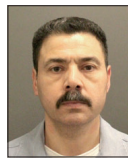
Salinas to be moved to lower security prison

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A Dodge County cop killer will be moved to a lower-risk prison after action taken April 14 by a Parole Review Board consisting of the state's corrections commissioner and others.

Salinas is serving a life sentence for brutally murdering Claremont Police

Chief Gregory Lange in July 1988. Lange responded to a late night domestic disturbance near his home in Claremont. He never made it back home.



Andrew Salinas

don't discuss placement ahead of time for security reasons," said Nicholas Kimball, spokesperson for the DOC. He pointed out medium security is behind a secure perimeter fence.

"It is common to transfer inmates to the facility that best fits their needs," Kimball

said. "Salinas' life sentence was continued, and he will be in the facility that will make his incarceration most effective."

SEE PAROLE DENIED, B2

Who's behind the masks?



STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD

In light of the coronavirus epidemic, many folks are sporting new attire through the form of a cloth mask to protect other people. Top: Vandal's Family Market worker Helene Sauter wears a colorful protective mask as she sets out some tasty pastry products for customers to buy. Bottom row, from left: Rhonda Akkerman, a customer at Highway 218 Liquors; Pam Farr, teller at U.S. Bank and Tracy Duenes, a worker at Vandal's. See page B4 for more area residents wearing their masks during this critical period.

Republicans endorse candidates for state races

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Despite the coronavirus that has everyone hunkered down, the local Republican party didn't let the pandemic stop them from endorsing candidates for upcoming state races.

Last week, the Republican delegates endorsed Gene Dornink for Minnesota Senate District 27, Patty Mueller for Minnesota House District 27B and Peggy Bennett for Minnesota House District 27. The senate seat is currently held by Dan Sparks, DFL-Austin, while the house seats are occupied by Jeanne Poppe, DFL-Austin and Bennett, R-Albert Lea.

The endorsing convention took on a different feel than in the past as delegates joined together by utilizing computer and call-in options in order to comply with the state's stay-at-home order due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In the past, the convention has been held in Austin.

Republican chairwoman Jennifer Hagedorn, the wife of U.S. House Representative Jim Hagedorn, who

serves most of southern Minnesota, led the convention. Despite the uncertain times and restrictions on meeting together, it proved to be an opportunity to gather as an united political party to hear from future

representatives and to be encouraged about work being done to protect communities and freedoms.

"Because of the virus, we used Zoom and the phone," said Dornink. "Everyone has to think outside

the box right now," he said, noting there really were no glitches with the convention by held online.

Dornink, who resides in Hayfield, grew up on a

SEE REPUBLICANS ENDORSE, B2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Republicans held an endorsing convention via online technology last week in which they endorsed Minnesota House District 27 incumbent Peggy Bennett, left, Gene Dornink of Hayfield as District 27 Senate and Patty Mueller of Austin as District 27B House.

Fair optimistic in face of COVID-19

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Last week Fair Manager Scott Kozelka, President Dan Deml, and the board of directors reviewed their options and discussed some possibilities moving forward with the 2020 Steele County Free Fair.

With the current pandemic threatening the possibility of summer events, the board is confident that the fair will still go on due to its late-summer date and the potential easing of the current shelter in place order before that time.

At this time all off-season events on the fairgrounds have been canceled, with the exception of a few weddings. "The weddings at this point are going to depend on what the governor does and how many people can gather," Kozelka said.

"As far as what everyone's doing, everyone's doing the same thing we are," Kozelka said of the other Zone 4 fair boards. "We're all just wondering what's going to happen next."

The board is weighing its options when it comes to all facets of the fair, including in regards to 4-H and other livestock activities. Liaison Tracy Ignaszewski of Steele County 4-H informed the board of the current state of the organization and how that might affect the fair going forward.

"As of today, it was announced that suspending all face-to-face activities are to be extended until July 1," Ignaszewski explained. "Right now, anything we do cannot be with face-to-face contact."

Ignaszewski also touched on how these orders could affect county fairs. "County fairs are governed by local offices, so the decision on whether a fair will take place is not made by the Extension office," she said. "A lot of people now are looking at local counties for what the determination will be for county fairs."

She also explained that, sadly, any county

SEE FAIR OPTIMISTIC, B2

How COVID do you do?

So how are you doing? Really.



Steele Talkin'
STEPHANIE KIBLER

With all that is happening during this strange time in history, there is a strange silence throughout our communities. City streets are empty, churches sit quiet, school children are learning from home. Add to that the grocery shelves that are bare and the lack of basic supplies available and not being able to eat dinner out or see a show. It is a lot to deal with.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am on COVID overload. The media has continual coverage, social media is nonstop with information—accurate and inaccurate, and the "new norm" does not offer much in the way of human interaction and fun!

However, it has also brought with it a new way of connection—Zoom happy hours, free webinars, online coaching, and more! We have seen florists offering Easter lilies for those in residential programs, neighborhood photo shoots, social distancing exercise programs. It has forced us to think outside the

box and get creative on we connect with one another. And that is, after all, what community is all about.

So, during this time of frustration and financial challenges, I am going to focus on ways my community is benefiting from the "social distancing."

While our local restaurants are closed, they have continually offered new menu items to go. Lerberg's Foods and Steve's Meat Market are seeing folks from other communities coming in to shop. Our local churches are finding new ways to connect with parishioners with online services and music. Teachers and school staff are using social media and school windows to let students know they are not alone.

I am proud of how this community has pulled together and is supporting one another during this uncertain time. Let's keep looking for new ways to connect as we progress through this challenging time and take a moment to appreciate the simple things that too often get forgotten.

We will all get through this together!

Stephanie Kibler is a resident of Ellendale and serves on the city council. She is also the executive director of the Freeborn County Historical Museum. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

County ponders tax relief in light of COVID-19

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

The issue of property tax relief for local businesses is currently being discussed by the Steele County Board of Commissioners.

Brad Meier of the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce has been advocating for a measure to give local businesses property tax relief and it is something the board is carefully considering. "The discussion lately has turned towards property tax relief," County Administrator Scott Golberg said. "With the current economic hardship that some of the businesses and individuals are facing and will be facing, I think the discussion centered around providing some relief in the form of not changing the due date but moving the penalties or abating the penalties to a date in the future," he said. "That's where most of the focus has been, at least on a county level."

While the board have not taken action on property tax relief at this time, it is something which is possible in the future. "I think at this point it might be prudent just to hold off a little bit and make sure that something doesn't come down from the state level and then finish gathering our information and put together a policy to be considered at a future date," Golberg told the board.

"I think it's the small businesses that really need the cash flow to get through this situation more so than the large businesses so I would urge that when we look at this to look at some sort of a program there," Commissioner Greg Krueger said. "If we could extend this out to farm taxes with no penalties through the end of the year, just to give them a little break so they have some extra cash for seed, and fuel, and fertilizer come planting season."

The board has also extended its current public restrictions from county facilities until further notice, as well as continue to implement a telework policy for much of its staff. "We are still conducting essential services to the public mostly by appointment," Golberg explained. "Most of our services are being performed via phone, online, drop box, or via postal mail."

"I hope that we watch this and revisit it as necessary because I think we have a population out there that wants to start moving about and doing things, and I think that I would like to see us be a little bit proactive on this," Krueger said.

All of the commissioners were grateful for the way the county has responded to this ongoing crisis. "I just want to say thanks to all the citizens of Steele County for following the guidelines, and I especially want to thank all of our essential service people for stepping up and doing their part," Commissioner Krueger said.

"I'd also like to urge people to support the local restaurants and use their curbside and pickup services," he continued. "They're a vital part of our community, and I hope that when this is all over that every one of them reopens and continues to be a vital part of our economy."

Those who continue to work through this crisis were also not forgotten. "I want to thank our staff, and certainly the frontline people in the community," Commissioner Jim Abbe said. "Sometimes we forget about the people that are working in our grocery stores and those people are really frontline people as well."

"This is a difficult time, but we'll get through it," he concluded. The county will continue to weigh its options when it comes to battling the COVID-19 virus as the days slowly tick towards summer.

Keeping social distance



Customers and employees of Vandal's Family Market are following CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines by wearing protective equipment. Here's owner Brandy Vandal-Holmberg showing her recent attire for work at the market.

PAROLE DENIED: for Claremont cop killer FROM B1

happened. He will still be behind bars.

Lange said she received a phone call from the DOC's Schnell explaining the situation the next day after the decision was made by the review panel. "He told me with his being locked up for 30 or more years, there are no more programs. There is nothing new to offer lifers," she said. "In a medium secure facility, he will have access to a lot more stuff. This is mainly to keep him focused on positive things rather than thinking of stupid things."

She said the DOC assured her they are not preparing Salinas for release. "It's not in the cards to release him," Lange said. Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose called last week's decision, "disappointing at best." Rose reminds people that not too long ago Salinas attempted to escape from a stillwater prison. "It's not like he has been a model inmate," he said.

Asked if she is she ever

"We are sentenced to life without Greg, why should be (Andrew Salinas) get off?"

Sue Lange
Fallen Chief's Widow

worried about Salinas' release, Lange replied: "It's always in the back of your mind. You have no idea what some of the politicians come up with. New York has released a lot of bad criminals. That is our biggest fear."

After speaking to Schnell, Lange said she understood the predicament with Salinas. "It's for the safety of everyone involved that they don't have too much time on their hands," she pointed out. "He has been given a lot of goals and expectations and will have three years to accomplish them," she added.

Lange said she could find out what the DOC has in store for Salinas with new programs at the medium-secure facility. However, in order to do

Construction resumes on Oak and Cedar Avenues

Construction on Oak and Cedar Avenues (County Highway 45) resumed last Friday. Traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction in several locations from 18th Street to Rose Street. Motorists should expect delays.

The work is part of a two-year construction project that is expected to be completed by August.

Oak Avenue will be reconfigured from four lanes of traffic to three lanes of traffic with one lane in each direction and a left turn lane in the center. The signal at Main Street will be upgraded with a new vehicle detection system and modified for the new lane configurations.

The traffic signal at the Hy-Vee entrance will be upgraded to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, including installing audio pedestrian prompts. The

signals at the intersections of Vine Street and McKinley Street will be removed. Pedestrian sidewalk ramps at those intersections will then be reconstructed to meet ADA standards.

A pedestrian signal system will be installed at the intersection of Oak Avenue and School Street. During the 2019 construction season, the project completed concrete pavement repairs.

All dates are subject to change due to weather or other factors. Steele County advises motorists to drive with caution and slow down through work zones for their safety and for the safety of the construction crews.

For updates on this or other Steele County Highway construction projects, visit: www.co.steele.mn.us/highway_construction.

"He was given a life sentence," she said. "We are sentenced to a life without Greg, why should he get off? Everything was taken from us."

She added, "We will do what we have to do to keep him there the rest of his life."

The review hearing coincided with what would have been the 50th wedding anniversary of Gregory and Sue on April 18. "A lot weighed on my mind," Lange said. "Andrew took all of my and Greg's hopes and dreams away," she said, adding "I'm grateful for the 18 years we had together."

Lange is enjoying two great grandchildren. And when she thinks about what Gregory is missing, she says, "It's just not right. Greg would have been there the moon with all these babies."

For now, Lange will be forced to wait another three years to determine the fate of Salinas. "I'm not looking forward to it because it's so hard on us," she said.

FAIR OPTIMISTIC: in face of COVID-19 FROM B1

fair that takes place in June will not have face-to-face 4-H activities at their fair. "The fair can still go on, it's just that for them there will not be a 4-H show," she said.

"It's tough, and that's the same thing we've heard in our zone meetings," Kozelka said. "There's a lot of talk about virtual stuff and a lot of talk about how that's going to work. Whether early June fairs do virtual shows and how that's going to work."

Kozelka and board members consider themselves lucky seeing as the Steele County fair will not be held until later in the summer. "We're a lot more fortunate, seeing that it's not until late August," he said. "For a lot of these fairs it's a wait and see thing."

"Everybody's in the same boat and are trying to figure this out as we go along," Deml remarked of the other fair boards across the state. "There's no really right or wrong,

it's just that wait and see, and I think we are fortunate to have a late fair. For folks in June or early July, they're really scrambling now because it's getting to be time for them to make a decision."

With time currently on their side, the board will continue to move forward with the hope that this year's fair will still be underway come August. "I think a lot of our decisions will be determined by what other fairs are doing

and what happens in the next two months," Deml said.

"I'm staying positive, and I've always been positive," Kozelka said to the board as he wrapped up his review. "The ship's sailing, and we have to steer it in the right direction."

At this time the Steele County Free Fair is currently scheduled for Aug. 19-23. Time will tell if the board will have to make a decision on whether to cancel or not.

REPUBLICANS ENDORSE: candidates for state races FROM B1

family dairy farm where he learned hard work. That hard work became a career in residential and commercial construction as a carpenter after graduating from Austin Vo-Tech (now Riverland Community College), where he became a Carpenter's Local Union 1382 member.

In 2009 when financial crisis hit the country, he started his own small business using those skills and now works together with his family. His family includes his wife, Vicki, of 35 years and 12 children.

As a candidate for the Minnesota Senate, Dornink hopes to bring a common sense return to southern Minnesota values and to be a voice of the people, where he can work side-by-side with men and

women to improve opportunities for our district and state. More information about Dornink can be found on Facebook, Gene Dornink for Minnesota, or his website, DorninkforSenate.com.

Mueller grew up in a family deeply involved in music, church and the community. It was always her dream to become a teacher and that became a reality after graduating from Winona State University. Her 16 years of teaching have included Roseville, Bloomington, China, Indiana, Owatonna and Austin High School where she has been twice nominated for Teacher of the Year. She has gotten her Master's Degree and is currently working on her Doctorate in Education

Leadership hoping to improve educational literacy for secondary students.

She has been married to her husband, Dan, for 16 years. She has continued her involvement in music, church and community involvement in the lives of her students and the multicultural community. As a candidate for the Minnesota House, Mueller hopes to inspire her students and others to get involved in making a difference and bringing change when important issues are brought up. Her campaign motto is "To Be Brave and to be Free," where everyone is called to get involved and have their voice heard. For more details about Mueller, check out Facebook and the website, which both feature the same name: Mueller

forMinnesota.

Bennett was elected to the house in 2014 when she defeated the DFL incumbent Shannon Savick. Bennett taught for 33 years prior to becoming a state representative.

Said Dornink on behalf of the Republicans: "2020 is an election year, where many decisions about the future of our region, state and country will be decided. This is a time to get involved. Check out what is happening in the local Republican Party as we work together to bring growth, opportunities and prosperity to each community, culture, and family across our state and these United States. God bless you and your family and God bless the United States of America."

Sudoku Corner

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

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

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USDA announces extensions for marketing loans

Agricultural producers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities.

"Spring is the season when most producers have the biggest need for capital, and many may have or are considering putting commodities under loan. Extending the commodity loan maturity affords farmers more time to market their commodity and repay their loan at a later time," said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "We are extremely pleased that USDA can offer these marketing flexibilities at this critical time for the agriculture industry and the nation."

Effective immediately, producers of eligible commodities now have up to 12 months to repay the commodity loans. The maturity extension applies to nonrecourse loans for crop years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Eligible open loans must in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020, or later or new crop year (2019 or 2020) loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020. All new loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020, will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval.

The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional three months. Loans that matured March 31 have already been automatically extended by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Producers who prefer a nine-month loan will need to contact their local FSA county office. Loans requested after Sept. 30, 2020, will have a term of nine months.

Eligible commodities include barley, chickpeas (small and large), corn, cotton (upland and extra-long staple), dry peas, grain sorghum, honey, lentils, mohair, oats, peanuts, rice (long and medium grain), soybeans, unshorn pelts, wheat, wool (graded and nongraded), and other oilseeds, including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower,

sunflower seed, and sesame seed. Seed cotton and sugar are not eligible.

About MALs
Placing commodities under loan provides producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low and allows producers to store production for more orderly marketing of commodities throughout the year.

These loans are considered nonrecourse because the commodity is pledged as loan collateral, and producers have the option of delivering the pledged collateral to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for repayment of the outstanding loan at maturity.

MAL Repayment
Under the new maturity provisions, producers have in our food supply chain to repay the loan as they would have before the extension:

- repay the MAL on or before the maturity date;
- upon maturity by delivering or forfeiting the commodity to CCC as loan repayment; or
- after maturity and before CCC acquires the

farm-stored commodity by repaying the outstanding MAL, principle and interest.

Marketing Loan Gains
A Marketing Loan Gain occurs when a MAL is repaid at less than the loan principal. If market gain is applicable during the now-extended loan period, producers can receive a gain on the repayment made before the loan matures.

For more information on MALs, contact the nearest FSA county office. USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All services, including inspections, that are mandatory for plants or plant products to be sold or moved. This includes phytosanitary certification and shipping point inspection, as well as hemp THC analysis and nursery grower inspections, and fruit and vegetable grading under our agreement with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. For our other inspections that do not have a mandated timeline, such as seed, grain, and nursery dealers, we are pausing those inspections and will resume them when the Governor's Stay-at-Home Order is lifted. MDA will continue to respond to complaints or other incidents.

Contact: Mark Abrahamson, Director, Plant Protection Division, 651-201-6505, mark.abrahamson@state.mn.us.

Stay safe on the farm: grain bin safety reminders



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

The week of April 13-17 was Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week. This time of year is the perfect time to refresh our memories with grain bin safety tips, plus after harvesting a lot of wet grain last year, it is especially important to be cautious.

There is no shortage of sad grain bin-related tragedies. Nearly two dozen people are killed each year in the U.S. in grain entrapment incidents. Flowing grain is dangerous, and behaves like quicksand. In just 20 seconds, an adult can be completely buried. The pressure of the grain usually hinders self-escape, and can make assisted escape nearly impossible. A person buried to the waist in grain requires a force equivalent to their own body weight plus 600 pounds to free them.

Here are some grain handling scenarios that are dangerous and could result in a grain-related accident.

The first is flowing grain. Around 80% of reported engulfments involve a person inside a bin when grain-unloading equipment is running. Engulfment in flowing grain can also occur in outdoor storage piles, grain wagons, and semi-trailers that unload from the bottom. As grain is unloaded through the bottom outlet, a funnel-shaped flow develops on the surface of the grain. Anyone standing on the surface while grain is being removed from below is at risk of being rapidly pulled down toward the outlet with the flowing grain.

Additional dangerous scenarios are bridged grain and vertical grain

walls. Spoiled grain clumps together and can develop a crust on the top surface or form a mass that adheres to the vertical wall of a bin. Crusts appear solid, but are unstable and may hide open voids below that develop as grain is removed. Bridged grain can collapse under a person's weight, resulting in a person being buried by falling grain. A vertical wall of grain that is higher than the person is dangerous because the grain can break loose and fall like an avalanche.

What are some safety precautions we can take to prevent grain-related incidents?

Manage grain to prevent spoilage. The most common reason people enter bins is to address problems associated with spoiled grain. To reduce the chance of grain spoilage, maintain aeration equipment and store grain at the correct moisture content when possible. If some grain needs to be stored at higher moisture, make a point to empty that bin first.

Work from outside the bin. If clumps or crusts develop in the grain, use a pole from outside the bin to probe or knock the clump free.

If you enter a bin or other grain storage area, take proper safety precautions. Never enter alone; have at least one other person in a safe position to watch you and there to help if something goes wrong. You should also wear harness equipment.

Grain entrapment is a huge risk on farms, and these accidents almost always end in tragedy. Keep yourself and your family safe by reviewing the dangers of the farm — and how to avoid them.

Claire LaCanne is the agricultural extension educator for the University of Minnesota for Steele and Rice counties. Her column appears in this newspaper regularly.

MDA continues services during COVID-19

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is continuing inspection services during Governor Walz' two-week Stay-at-Home Executive Order and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes inspections of dairy, meat, and food manufacturing facilities, retail food outlets, pesticide and fertilizer operations, and seed, grain, and nursery companies.

MDA appreciates the cooperation of our regulated industries during this time of change and uncertainty while we continue to ensure a safe food supply for Minnesota residents. MDA Inspection Staff will exercise every option to conduct any field activities in a manner safe for both themselves and the industries we regulate. Our inspectors are following the general hygiene and social distancing recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health.

MDA has made some minor modifications to its inspection services for the protection of employees, enabling all of us to practice social distancing when possible.

These inspection modifications include:

Food and Feed Inspection

Retail Food Inspectors continue field services at operations including grocery stores and other retail food stores. Some inspection activities will be abbreviated and focus on the significant food safety activities which are occurring. MDA will increase outreach by phone and email to efficiently meet information needs about food safety and COVID-19.

The Manufactured Food Inspection Program and the Commercial Feed Program continue to perform regulatory oversight and inspection activities while prioritizing response to adverse incidents, high risk complaints, and illness investigations.

The Produce Safety Program does not have inspection activities scheduled at this time but remains available for response to a natural disaster or other major adverse event. Program staff members are maintaining operations to provide technical support, education, and other outreach for growers.

Contact: Katherine Simon, Director, Food & Feed Safety Division, 651-201-6586, katherine.simon@state.mn.us.

Dairy Processing Facilities

Dairy Inspection Staff is expected to follow all biosecurity and health precautions instituted by dairy manufacturers during in-person visits, and our primary inspection approach will continue to be in-person inspection work. However, the staff understands some facilities may be concerned about allowing inspectors to visit their facilities. During the COVID-19 situation, MDA Dairy Inspectors will, upon request, conduct virtual or video-based routine inspections at dairy processing facilities in lieu of conducting in-person inspections.

Because of the importance of pasteurizer testing in ensuring pasteurizers are functioning properly, in-person work will still be expected. However, if concerns exist, alternatives may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Requests for virtual inspections or other accommodations should be made directly to the Inspector.

The staff also recognizes the key role milk haulers have in our food supply chain. An online testing format has been made available to help expedite the testing process and to allow options for better social distancing during evaluation and licensing procedures.

Contact: Nicole Neeser, Director, Dairy & Meat Inspection Division, 651-201-6225, nicole.neeser@state.mn.us.

Pesticide Licensing

With the passage of legislation last week, MDA will now exempt individuals from testing and other licensing requirements to allow them to apply general use antimicrobials for hire to disinfect buildings and control the spread of COVID-19. This exemption will expire on April 1, 2021. There are several specific measures tied to this exemption:

ONLY to commercial application of general use pesticide products for the sanitizing or disinfecting treatment for COVID-19.

This exemption DOES NOT include those who commercially apply pesticides in HVAC systems or cooling towers in industrial, commercial and institutional buildings, residence, and other buildings to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate indoor mold, bacteria, or other microbes beyond COVID-19.

Contact: Roger Mackedanz, Assistant Director, Pesticide &

Fertilizer Management Division, 651-201-6400, roger.mackedanz@state.mn.us.

Seed, Grain, and Nursery Dealers

MDA will continue to provide services, including inspections, that are mandatory for plants or plant products to be sold or moved. This includes phytosanitary certification and shipping point inspection, as well as hemp THC analysis and nursery grower inspections, and fruit and vegetable grading under our agreement with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. For our other inspections that do not have a mandated timeline, such as seed, grain, and nursery dealers, we are pausing those inspections and will resume them when the Governor's Stay-at-Home Order is lifted. MDA will continue to respond to complaints or other incidents.

Contact: Mark Abrahamson, Director, Plant Protection Division, 651-201-6505, mark.abrahamson@state.mn.us.

J & H LIQUOR

Future events will depend on the State of Minnesota COVID-19 guidelines.

OFF-SALE

OPEN Monday – Saturday
10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Sunday – Closed

BAR

The bar will remain closed till May 1st or until the State of Minnesota allows it to re-open.

FIREHOUSE PIZZA

TAKE OUT AVAILABLE Frozen \$9 Cooked \$10.50

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE AND SUPPORTING YOUR HOMETOWN BUSINESSES.

A jump in the leaves



With spring finally arriving in Blooming Prairie, Leah Krell, 4, finds a jump into the leaves is something fun to do.

BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 24
Jane Gardner
Kelly Braaten

APRIL 25
Brad Clark
Coleen Hanson
Laura Iversen
Clay Coleman

APRIL 26
Missy Korman
Angela Krueger
David Kramer
Matthew Worke
Marge Ilk
Chris Garcia

APRIL 27
Thomas Kramer
Margaret Noble
Wyatt Tocko

APRIL 28
Patrick Trotman

APRIL 29
Wendy Hines
Kayde Bush
Sondra Hanenberger

APRIL 30
Cash Kruckeberg
Linda Christianson
Charlie Wallace
Lori Krekel Schultz
April Smith

ANNIVERSARIES

APRIL 24
Peter & LeAnn Vogt

APRIL 25
Jason & Debbie Williamson

APRIL 27
Linn & Shirley Thoen

APRIL 28
Ron & Diane Nelson

APRIL 29
Dale & Mary Ramsey

APRIL 30
Greg & Betty Johnson

APRIL 31
Christopher & Rena Anderson

This weekly feature sponsored by:
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AUSTIN 7-DAY FORECAST

THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
80	78	81	81	82	79	76
62	63	62	63	62	63	

WEEKEND Weather Forecasts

7am & 6pm

KSMQ TV

The Better Choice

COVID-19 Protection



STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Many people are following recommendations to wear cloth masks as a way to protect other people from the coronavirus. Top: Ann Weedman of U.S. Bank. Right: Andrew Reisen of Vandal's Family Market. Middle from left: Becky Josephson of U.S. Bank, Craig Lunning, shopper at Vandal's and Howard Lestrud, Times writer. Bottom from left: Terri Vandal, Vandal's and Marilyn Severson, Vandal's shopper.



Food, financial assistance available during pandemic

Minnesotans who are struggling to feed themselves and their families or make ends meet should know that help is available and accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has temporarily modified procedures to make it easier for people to get, keep and use essential programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which offers monthly food benefits.

Information about SNAP and other hunger resources is collected on the department's new food emergency webpage. People who use SNAP and don't want to leave their homes to get food can authorize a trusted relative, friend or neighbor to pick up and deliver groceries using their electronic benefits card. They must contact their county or tribal financial worker to make the authorization.

Using her emergency authority to waive and modify procedures during the peacetime emergency declared by Governor Tim Walz, Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead has approved

these temporary changes to other economic assistance programs:

- Eliminating paperwork, in-person meetings and other requirements that would be difficult or impossible to meet under social distancing restrictions, for economic assistance programs including the Minnesota Family Investment Program, General Assistance, Housing Support and Minnesota Supplemental Aid.

- Ensuring that people who receive assistance don't have to repay overpayments caused by worker or system errors.

"We want people to have the nutrition and other help they need to stay healthy during this time of upheaval," Harpstead said. "We encourage anyone who has experienced a sudden loss of income to find out if they are eligible for SNAP and other economic assistance programs."

Minnesotans can fill out an application for SNAP online at ApplyMN.dhs.mn.gov. For help applying or additional food resources, contact the Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151 or visit Hunger Solutions.

The Minnesota Family Investment Program

serves more than 29,000 families each month. MFIP provides temporary income support and employment services to families with children experiencing poverty, with Medical Assistance and child care assistance available to most families.

Temporary changes affecting MFIP include:

- Modifying requirements so that participants won't face sanctions if they can't attend meetings or submit paperwork.

- Ensuring that participants experiencing family violence won't have to be put in potentially dangerous situations, such as face-to-face meetings with an abusive partner.

Executive Order 20-12, signed by Governor Walz on March 20, 2020, allows the Department of Human Services to temporarily waive or modify state requirements to ensure that services can be delivered safely and without undue delay, protecting vulnerable Minnesotans and those who care for them.

The agency serves more than 1 million Minnesotans through health care programs, economic assistance programs and other programs and services.

Credit Unions are working to prevent COVID-19 fraud

Minnesota Credit Unions are alerting older Minnesotans and their loved ones to be especially aware of potential phone and email scams during the COVID-19 pandemic.

April is Financial Literacy Month, and Minnesota Credit Unions are continuing their commitment to enhancing the financial wellbeing of Minnesotans with online forums, public service announcements and resources for credit union members.

Media reports have indicated that there is a surge in robocalls to seniors since the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the MN Department of Commerce, the Minnesota Attorney General and the FTC have issued warnings about increased vulnerability on price gouging and online scams.

"Credit unions, as financial institutions, are often a first line of defense against fraud targeting older and vulnerable adults," said Mark Cummins, Minnesota Credit Union Network (MnCUN) President and CEO. "We want Minnesotans to know that credit unions can help their members spot fraud."

Many Minnesota Credit Unions regularly offer guidance and services for older adults and their families to avoid senior financial fraud. Throughout April, Minnesota's Credit

Unions are offering assistance and guidance online and in socially-distanced environments to educate, inform and make sure Minnesotans have the financial tools to navigate current challenges.

MnCUN reminds Minnesotans consumers:

- Your credit union will never call you and ask for your personal account information. When you get a call from someone who is trying to pressure you to hand over money or provide personal financial information, hang up.

- If you are confused or concerned by a call, contact a trusted friend, loved one or your credit union.

- Don't click on a link or open an attachment in an email unless you are absolutely certain who the sender is and the link or attachment is safe. Malicious links and attachments can secretly download software to steal information from your

computer. To be better safe than sorry, call the sender and confirm that they sent you the email with the link or attachment.

- Regularly monitor your accounts to keep track of your transactions so that you can spot suspicious activity and report it immediately. If you need assistance with accessing your accounts online, just ask your credit union to assist.

The Minnesota Credit Union Network recently launched a consumer website mncun.org to offer consumers tools to get financial assistance and prevent fraud related to the unprecedented financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The website includes warnings and information from the Minnesota Attorney General, the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Federal Trade Commission to help Minnesotans protect their finances.

STEELE COUNTY **Times**

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**BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT**
BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: At 12:18 p.m., a hit and run accident resulting in property damage occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.

Drug binge ends in burglary, arrests

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

An apparent drug binge and burglary at a Dodge County service station has resulted in the arrests of two Owatonna men and the hospitalization of a Waseca woman.

Sheriff's deputies arrested Justin Mertins, 44, and Darrel Persell, 22, both of Owatonna. They are being held on felony charges in the Steele County Detention Center.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office responded to a burglary-in-progress at the Claremont Service Station around 9:30 p.m. Thursday. A caller reported hearing a crash at the center and saw a black


Darrel Persell

Ford Taurus leaving the scene. Deputies later discovered the front glass door of the business had been busted out.

A deputy saw what he


Justin Mertins

believed to be the suspect vehicle turning west-bound from Claremont onto Hwy. 14. Sheriff's deputies stopped the vehicle on Hwy. 14 east of

120th Avenue and found it was occupied by two men and a woman.

Sheriff Scott Rose said the deputies arrested the three suspects after questioning. They discovered about 70 packs of unopened cigarette packs in a red duffel bag believed to be taken during the burglary, Rose said. He added the deputies also found drug paraphernalia with substances that field tested positive for both methamphetamine and heroin.

During the stop, Emilie Perkins, 25, of Waseca, became unresponsive due to an apparent drug overdose, according to Rose. He said deputies provided medical care

to the woman, including administering Narcan, which is an opioid blocker and is used to treat opioid overdose and temporarily reverse the effects.

Perkins was taken by ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. Rose said she will be taken into custody once she is released from the hospital.

Sheriff Rose said the total value of the items stolen and the damage to the business are yet to be determined. He said charges likely to be filed will be second-degree burglary, possession of drugs and paraphernalia, criminal damage to property and possession of burglary tools.

CRIME BRIEF

Police discover man violating protective order


James Williams

A Medford man trying to hide in a vehicle has been charged with violating a domestic abuse order.

James Williams, 40, faces a gross misdemeanor for violating a no contact order. It has been enhanced due to a previous conviction for a domestic violation related offense.

Williams also was arrested on other outstanding arrest warrants.

On April 9, a detective with Owatonna Police spotted a man sitting in a vehicle with a woman. The detective was familiar with both subjects and was aware of a no contact order between the two.

As a patrol officer drove by the vehicle, Williams tried to hide in the passenger seat, police said. The car was stopped and officers arrested Williams.

Weber, 26, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32.

**KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Timothy R. Fugleberg, 35, Byron, speeding, \$140; Maricella R. Romero, 22, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Luke J. Scherger, 43, Dodge Center, hands free violation, \$130; Ryan A. Stedman, 20, Mantorville, seat belt, \$105.

**MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER**

Kim M. Hartly, 57, Waseca, speeding, \$120; Justin M. Hollenbach, 37, Dodge Center, speeding, \$120; Benjamin D. Jensen, 29, West Concord, hands free violation, \$130; Lucas M. Johnson, 16, Sun Prairie, WI, speeding, \$280; Thomas E. Rieke, 41, Hayfield, expired registration, \$110.

**COURT NEWS
Steele County**

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of April 6 – 12:

**MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER**

Duane D. Birkey, 72, Manson, IA, unsafe lane usage, \$125; Amanda E. Blessing, 51, Eagan, speeding, \$115; Lyric R. Broton, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Ross R. Bullert, 25, Webster, SD, speeding, \$125; Maria DeLeon, 54, Albert Lea, suspended license, \$275; Sabirin F. Gabri, 21, Owatonna, unsafe lane usage, \$125; Taylor N. Horsman, 19, Rochester, speeding, \$135; Evan R. Horstmann, 20, Austin, DWI, \$406, no trespassing, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Kaden W. Lopez, 20, Owatonna, window tint violation, \$125; Sagal Mohamed Nur, 33, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Timothy M. Nelson, 44, Swea City, IA, speeding, \$115; Mikayla L. Ogren, 23, St. Peter, speeding, \$215; Luis M. Reyes Valenciana, 32, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Orlando Ross, 66, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135; Cole M. Savick, 22, Minneapolis, speeding, \$275.

**OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Zachary R. Allen, 19, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Lance R. Cummins, 53, Owatonna,

DWI, \$375 and 1 year of supervised probation; Austin D. Eppens, 17, Mason City, IA, speeding, \$135; Hannah C. Johnson, 19, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Thomas D. Lehrer, 18, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Alfredo D. Rosas, 29, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Garrick R. Sneed, 46, Rochester, theft, 90 days in county jail; Tatum B. Walkingstick, 18, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Tamara J. Wood, 49, Northfield, failure to yield, \$175.

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Zachary R. Allen, 19, Owatonna, speeding, no license and revoked license, \$615; John M. Dinse, 25, Owatonna, speeding and stop sign, \$165; Jaye M. Fix, 27, Savage, speeding, \$135; Jazmin Herrera, 29, Austin, speeding and no insurance, \$335; Craig A. Johnson, 53, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Deanna M. Kanewischer, 41, Waseca, speeding, \$135; Kai P. Lor, 43, Brooklyn Center, speeding, \$115; Connie J. Nelson, 59, Waseca, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$125; Dylan P. Spencer, 21, Waseca, speeding, \$275.

**POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County**
**BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE**

April 16
Drugs: Police responded to drug activity in the 100 block of 1st Ave. SE at 5:33 p.m.

**OWATONNA
POLICE**

April 10
Theft: At 8:22 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 100 block of 22nd St. NW.
Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 700 block of Bridge St. W. at 9:45 a.m.
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 500 block of Mound St. SW at 7:57 p.m.
April 11
Suspicion: Police received a report of suspicious activity in the 200 block of Vine St. E. at 4:43 a.m.
Mental Health: Officers assisted with a mental health incident in the 100 block of 18th Place NE at 6:26 p.m.

April 12
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 100 block of Main St. W. at 12:17 p.m.
Disturbance: Police responded to a disturbance at McKinley St. SW and Oak Ave. S. at 2:24 p.m.
Trespassing: At 3:14 p.m., a subject was trespassing in the 100 block of Winona St. NE.
Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 1900 block of Hartie Ave. SE at 5:18 p.m.

April 13
Arrest: Police assisted another agency with arresting a subject in the 200 block of Rose St. E. at 3:14 p.m.
Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 600 block of Bridge St. W. at 7:39 p.m.
April 14
Assault: Officers

responded to an assault in the 400 block of State Ave. NW at 9:36 a.m.

April 15
Burglary: Police began a burglary investigation in the 400 block of Glendale St. NW at 12:19 p.m.
Shoplifting: At 12:43 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

April 16
Hit and Run: At 4:15 p.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 400 block of 18th St. SE.

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF**

April 11
Threats: Deputies arrested a subject for making threats in the 200 block of 2nd Ave. SW in Medford at 10:21 p.m.

April 12
Crash: At 12:45 p.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred on Interstate 35 in Summit Township.

April 13
Child Protection: Deputies received a child protection report from the 1800 block of 44th Ave. SE in Havana Township at 3:34 p.m.

April 14
DWI: Deputies arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated in the 200 block of Main St. N. in Medford at 6:49 a.m.

Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 4100 block of 50th St. NE in Merton Township at 1:58 p.m.

April 15
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 8400 block of Rose St. in Havana Township at 2:09 a.m.

WARRANTS: The following individuals have active warrants in Steele County. The Sheriff provides this information as a public service

1. Diane Bedney – issue dishonored check - \$1,000 bail
2. Joshua Benson – false name, no insurance - \$500 bail
3. Jessica Blunt – DWI – no bail
4. Ronnie Boyd – order for protection violation – no bail
5. Sagonia Bradley – revoked license, no insurance - \$500 bail
6. Martel Brooks – theft by swindle - \$3,000 bail

7. Malik Brown – DWI - \$500 bail
8. Isaiah Brownlee – DWI – no bail
9. Jesse Bruley – drugs – no bail
10. Jeffrey Bryant – warrant – no bail
11. William Buchanan – theft - \$300 bail
12. Edgar Cabrera – alcohol to minor - \$1,000 bail
13. Linda Card – warrant - \$1,000 bail

14. Roberto Castilleja – hit and run - \$1,000 bail
15. Coj Castral – domestic abuse - \$1,000 bail
16. Noe Cavazos – DWI – no bail
17. Thok Chul – drugs - \$5,000 bail
18. Luis Clara – DWI - \$1,000 bail
19. Stephen Clendenin – theft - \$1,000 bail
20. Calvin Collier – assault - \$1,000 bail

Disclosing active warrants promotes public safety and aids in the identification and apprehension of wanted individuals

NOTICE

City Hydrant Flushing APRIL 27-30

All city fire hydrants in Blooming Prairie will be flushed on Monday–Thursday, April 27–30, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and continuing until 4 p.m., weather permitting. Flushing of hydrants can cause some rust to come out of pipes in areas; particularly where the water system is not looped.

Thank you for your cooperation

Blooming Prairie
Public Utilities

WIC is open to support families

WIC wants families to know that it is here for them. The Steele County WIC Program is open for current participants and new participants.

To reach the Steele County WIC program, call 507-444-7660. Families can find the phone number for other WIC programs by calling 1-800-942-4030.

Due to social distancing, WIC has changed the way services are delivered. WIC participants and those interested in WIC should call their local WIC clinic to ask how they are providing services.

In 2019, WIC changed from a paper voucher to a card, similar to an EBT-style card. WIC participants can continue to use this WIC Card in stores.

WIC is hearing of social media reports with inaccurate information about the program. The best source of information about current WIC services is the Minnesota WIC website <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/index.html> and with Steele County Public Health.

WIC is a health and nutrition program and provides a variety of healthy foods! WIC staff can answer nutrition and breastfeeding questions, and refer to other resources.

WIC provides services to women who have recently had a baby or who are pregnant and

to infants and children until their fifth birthday. WIC wants families to know that if they have had changes in income due to COVID-19 or if they participate in Medical Assistance, SNAP or other programs, they may be eligible. To learn more, see the Minnesota WIC website or call 1-800-942-4030.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES:

Nutrition

Prenatal, infant, child and postpartum nutrition information. (English, Spanish, Somali) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/nutrition/index.html>

Recipes <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/recipes/index.html>

Breastfeeding

Preparing for breastfeeding, getting off to a great start, and more.

• Nutrition Information – English (Breastfeeding Women) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/nutrition/more-nutrition.html#bfwomen>

• La Nutricion – La Lactancia Materna (Breastfeeding – Spanish) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/spanish/nutrition.html#bf>

• Af Soomali – Nuujinta (Breastfeeding – Somali) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/somali/index.html#bf>

USDA WIC Breastfeeding Support website: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>

Hy-Vee offers free full-service fueling

Hy-Vee, Inc. announces that it will be offering free full-service fueling at its more than 165 convenience stores across its eight-state region, including its Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh stores.

The service will be offered at select fuel pumps from at least 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. Upon arrival, customers who wish to use the service can select the pump's "Fuel Help" button or call a designated phone number found on signs at each pump. Food and

items from the convenience store can also be ordered and delivered to customer vehicles using the service.

Once notified, employees will meet customers at their vehicle and process their transaction and fuel order without the customer having to leave their vehicle. Full-service fueling can be paid with cash or credit card. As an added safety measure, employees will be wearing gloves for every customer interaction.

Medford hosts chalk contest

To spread joy throughout Medford while supporting social distancing, the Medford Civic Club is hosting a driveway chalk contest.

All ages are being encouraged to create their own driveway chalk masterpiece beginning Sunday, April 26 through Saturday, May 2 at 6 p.m.

Two designs will be randomly drawn to receive a Buffalo Wild Wings wing party provided by the club.

To enter the contest,

you must post a picture of your masterpiece in the comments on the Civic Club's event page, "Medford Driveway Chalk Contest," and also like the club's Facebook page. Photos must be uploaded by 6 p.m. on May 2 to be eligible for the prizes.

Winners will be announced on Sunday, May 3.

"Please maintain and follow social distancing guidelines for this contest," said Erin Sammon, president of the civic club.

Medford cancels Straight River Days

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

At least some summer fun is going to take a hiatus this June in Medford thanks to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Medford Civic Club has cancelled Straight River Days, a three-day celebration that has been around for nearly half a century.

"It was a huge deliberation between members," said Erin Sammon, the club's president. "We were going to hold out to make the call until April 30, but it doesn't look like things are going to clear up anytime soon," she said, noting many small town festivals throughout the region have already cancelled. "We felt it was time to face the inevitable."

Sammon said, "We have a great support system in Medford and our surrounding communities so we are hoping they all understand that this is for everyone's safety. Trust me, we want to get out and be active and see friends and family as much as everyone else."

The group, Sammon said, kicked around various alternatives prior to making the decision to



TIMES FILE PHOTO

The coronavirus epidemic sweeping across America is forcing many summer celebrations to cancel this year. The Medford Civic Club just announced late last week that it is cancelling Straight River Days, which had been scheduled for June.

cancel. Some of the ideas were doing a festival on a smaller scale and having the events where people could spread out. The group also talked about doing mini events on random weekends. But, she said, it would involve logistical nightmares of getting deposits and contracts if the

events kept getting pushed around.

"It's very hard to plan for the future when that is so unknown," Sammon said.

She noted that she is not aware that Straight River Days has ever been cancelled in its 49-year history.

With this year's cancellation, Sammon hopes to put

some energy behind planning a bigger 50th anniversary next summer. "This year off break will give us more time to find unique events, tweak our planned events to make them better, gather more prizes, get more donations and just get as much planned as we can in advance," she said.

No stopping spring fun



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The coronavirus pandemic has caused many families to adjust their routines over the past few weeks. However, COVID-19 isn't stopping families and individuals from enjoying some fresh air outdoors and spring fun. To reward her distance learning students, Jamie Klemmens promises her kids a tour around Forest Lake. Shown with Jamie are Bergen, 5; Andi, 7 and Bailey, 2. The kids are children of Jamie and Jay Klemmens.

Loan program available for farmers affected by COVID-19

The Minnesota Disaster Recovery Loan Program is now accessible to farmers who are suffering financial damages related to the COVID-19 outbreak after the Legislature expanded access to the funds.

Legislative approval of a bill on March 26 increased program flexibility, providing a resource to farmers for expenses not covered by insurance.

"These funds are an important tool that is available for farmers that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak," said Rep. Brian Daniels, R-Faribault. "If you are a farmer, I encourage you to reach out to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more information regarding eligibility."

MDA indicates program dollars can be used to "replace livestock or flocks, make building improvements, or cover the loss of revenue. Loan proceeds may also be used to repair or replace septic and water systems, and replace destroyed agricultural buildings."

The program is coordinated by the Rural Finance Authority and farmers will work through their local lenders to secure financing. The MDA reports that RFA participation in a qualifying loan is limited to 45% of the principal amount, up to \$200,000. Other terms, conditions and qualification standards apply and can be found at the MDA website, or by calling 651-201-6666.

USDA unveils tool to help rural communities

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has unveiled a one-stop-shop of federal programs that can be used by rural communities, organizations and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide (PDF, 349 KB) is a first-of-its-kind resource for rural leaders looking for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic.

"Under the leadership of President Trump, USDA is committed to being a strong partner to rural communities preparing for and

impacted by COVID-19," Perdue said. "This resource guide will help our rural leaders, whether they are in agriculture, education, health care or any other leadership capacity, understand what federal assistance is available for their communities during this unprecedented time."

USDA has taken many immediate actions to assist farmers, ranchers, producers, rural communities, and rural-based businesses and organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information on these actions, visit www.usda.gov/coronavirus.

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Frontier customers urged to apply for rebates, credits

Current and former customers of Frontier Communications may be eligible for rebates or bill credits for certain past service quality and reliability problems. Those eligible are urged to act fast because the settlement claim period lasts 90 days beginning on April 13 and ending July 20.

"Thousands of Minnesotans across the state may be entitled to rebates or bill credits from this settlement," said Commerce Commissioner Steve Kelley. "Current and former Frontier customers should review the settlement categories soon to see if they qualify. The window to make claims is open now through July."

Applications for refund or bill credit have been mailed to Frontier customers and are also available online at <https://frontier.com/forms/minnesota-bill-credit>.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ordered the rebates and bill credits, consistent with negotiated terms reached between the Minnesota

Department of Commerce and Frontier. Customers of Frontier Communications of Minnesota, Inc. and Citizens Telecommunications of MN, LLC, collectively referred to as Frontier, should have received notice from Frontier in bill inserts and direct mail starting on April 13.

"This settlement provides some relief to those who dealt with less than adequate service," said Commissioner Kelley. "Nearly two thousand people from across the state came forward with concerns and complaints about Frontier's practices, unreliable service and being overcharged for their phone service."

"It is important to note that both current and past Frontier customers may be eligible," added Kelley.

The complaints, investigation and settlement resulted in the following categories for which a former or current Frontier customer may claim a refund or bill credit.

- Telephone was out-of-service and not restored

within 24 hours.

- Incorrect billing for service related to vacation rate.
- Late fees charged for phone service despite bill being paid on or before due date.
- Frontier did not cancel telephone service upon request, resulting in additional charges.
- Charged to receive a paper bill for telephone service.
- Charged for three-way calling without subscribing to the service.
- Wrongly charged for directory assistance or 411 calls.
- Charged an early termination fee on or after January 1, 2016, without having signed an agreement.
- Inappropriately charged fees to reconnect telephone service.
- Telephone disconnected without proper notice.
- Refusal to install local telephone service.
- Inability to use the telephone due to static, cross talk, or other notice.
- Installation delay of

more than 3 business days for primary local service line.

- Same trouble on the same line within 30 days.
 - Frontier missed a repair appointment for telephone service.
 - Customer service representation claimed no trouble report exists from an earlier call regarding the same phone issue.
- The above categories of complaint addressed a significant portion of the complaints received from Frontier's Minnesota consumers. But, consumers should be aware that the Department is continuing to investigate issues that were not settled, including the following:
- Customers not being informed that local telephone service is available with no additional features.
 - Customers being told that local telephone service cannot be disconnected without losing internet service.
 - Customers being told

you cannot purchase internet service without also purchasing telephone service.

- Customer is paying \$29.99 for Digital Phone Essentials package that includes 30 minutes of long distance service, but the customer is unaware that Digital Essentials is available for \$21.99 if the customer wishes to pay for long distance service only when it is used.
 - Customer is paying \$39.99 (or more) for the Digital Phone Unlimited package, which includes unlimited long distance service, but the customer is unaware that Digital Essentials is available for \$21.99 if the customer wishes to pay for long distance service only when it is used.
- Frontier Communications of Minnesota, Inc., and its affiliate, Citizens Telecommunications of Minnesota, LLC, provide telephone service to approximately 75,000 Minnesota households and businesses, as well as inter-

net service to many more households, in many parts of rural Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro area.

Applications for refund or bill credit are online at <https://frontier.com/forms/minnesota-bill-credit>.

WITH YOU EVERY DAY

Wherever you are in Minnesota, the Department of Commerce is with you every day. Whether you're filling up on gas, purchasing a home, working to reduce energy consumption or rebuilding after a disaster—we are with you, no matter what.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce oversees more than 20 regulated industries, ensuring that Minnesota businesses are strong and Minnesota consumers are protected. Our mission is to protect the public interest, advocate for Minnesota consumers, ensure a strong, competitive and fair marketplace, strengthen the state's economic future and serve as a trusted public resource for consumers and businesses.

PUBLIC RECORD

STEELE COUNTY BIRTHS

AUGUST 2019

Truett Gerard Lammer, Parents: Heather and Beau, Aug. 2.
Cove Maria Pedersen, Parents: Dajasha and Easton, Aug. 3.
William Christian Ebenhof, Parents: Vikki and Alexander, Aug. 5.
Hanna Mohammed Abdullahi, Parents: Dababo Abdulle and Mohammed Sharif, Aug. 6.
Saleem Salah Rashid, Parents: Vikki and Alexander, Aug. 6.
Anabella Katie Del Toro, Parents: Christina and Micah, Aug. 7.
Athena Anastasia Sonia Elmhurst, Parents: Maria and Brandon, Aug. 7.
Pedro Sebastian Olivo, Parents: Cynthia and Victor, Aug. 7.
Emmett James Will, Parents: Amber and Aaron, Aug. 7.
Isabel Pool Mendez Stuenkel-Braze, Parents: Heidi and Jonathan, Aug. 9.
Ophelia Ann Bohnen-Flischer, Parents: Heidi and Joshua, Aug. 11.
Graham Allen Le Blanc,

Parents: Amy and Brandon, Aug. 14.
Deliah Azalea Padilla Rodriguez, Parent: Ashley, Aug. 15.
Everly Marie Yates, Parent: Brittany Miklas, Aug. 18.
Adeline Linda Schmidt, Parents: Amy and Joseph, Aug. 17.
Josephine Gladys Resler, Parents: Jill and Steven, Aug. 20.
Jocelyn Marjorie Moeckig, Parents: Robyn and Daniel, Aug. 21.
Anabella Katie Del Toro, Parents: Christina and Micah, Aug. 21.
Athena Anastasia Sonia Elmhurst, Parents: Maria and Brandon, Aug. 7.
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STEELE COUNTY DEATHS

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Stephens A. LaCroix, 68, Medford, Aug. 5.
Doris Helen Paulson, 86, Owatonna, Aug. 7.
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Ingbert Alexander Wanger, 101, Owatonna, Aug. 18.
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Karen Virginia Benoit, 73, Owatonna, Aug. 13.
Gregory John Miller, 80, Owatonna, Aug. 13.
Nancy Lee Stewart, 83, Owatonna, Aug. 15.
Lisa Mae Sharp, 67, Owatonna, Aug. 16.
Jody Lee Severson, 70,

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Sharon Ann

NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF STEELE

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 74-PR-20-495
NOTICE OF INFORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND
APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of JoAnna Olson,
Decedent

Notice is given that an application for informal probate of the Decedent's Will, dated June 20, 2008, and ("Will"), has been filed with the Registrar. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Janice M. Pederson, whose address is 425 East Hwy 30, Ellendale, Minnesota, 56026, 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: March 31, 2020
/s/ Deanna Verdick,
Deputy Probate Registrar
Dated: March 31, 2020
Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator
Representative
Marty G. Helle
Hoveston Johnson Beckmann & Hovey, LLP
807 West Oakland Avenue
Austin, MN 55912
Attorney License No: 0307476
Telephone: (507) 433-3483
FAX: (507) 433-7889
Email: mhelle@hovestonlaw.com

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NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF STEELE

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 74-PR-20-603
NOTICE OF INFORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND
APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of Kenneth D. Long;
a/k/a Kenneth Dwane Long,
Decedent

Notice is given that an application for informal probate of the Decedent's Will, dated August 3, 2011, and ("Will"), has been filed with the Registrar. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Perry S. Long, whose address is 4664 Flag Avenue N, New Hope, Minnesota, 55428 and Cory A. Long, whose address is 7981 174th Street, Lakeville, Minnesota, 55044, as personal representatives 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.

proper 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: April 8, 2020
/s/ Deanna Verdick,
Deputy Probate Registrar
Dated: April 8, 2020
Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator
Representative
Molly R. Wiese
Decker & Van Loh, P.A.
12912 53rd Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN 55369
Attorney License No: 0391941
Telephone: (763) 587-7100
FAX: (763) 587-7100
Email: molly@deckerandvanloh.com

4/15, 22

NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA
February 18, 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 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

Dean Meshke, Jenny Thurnau, Jon Sunde, Steve Ile, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten
ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools, Elementary School Principal, High School Principal, Associate Principal, Member of the BPTA.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pam Hameister

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Steve Ile to approve the agenda with additions of the February payroll amount, transfer of funds, and resignation. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Principal reports given by Mr. Schwarzw, Mr. Worke, and Ms. Mach.

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

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

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ile to approve school board minutes, bills, treasurer's report, resignation, and donation as presented. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

B. Employment

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve Alexis Shaw as the Science Fair Advisor. Placement on step 0 of the prevailing Extra-curricular Schedule. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

C. Volunteer Coaches

None to be noted.

D. Administrative Assistant

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Kelly Braaten to approve an adjustment in pay for Karl Forsythek due to staffing changes and additional duties. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

E. Final Seniority List for Teachers

Motion by Steve Ile and seconded by Dean Meshke to approve the final seniority listings for our teaching staff with no changes made from the preliminary listings. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

F. Strategic Planning

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Steve Ile to approve an updated lunch policy. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

G. Resolution Discontinuing and Reducing Educational Programs and Positions

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Steve Ile to approve a resolution discontinuing and reducing educational programs and positions. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

A. Class Sizes/Sections

Administration will continue to provide updates.

B. Committee Reports

A report update was given on the following committees: Education Foundation, Staff Development, and ZED. Upcoming meetings to take place for the following committees: Ag/Industrial Trades and Wellness.

C. Enrollment Data

Enrollment for the 2019-20 school year as of February 12, 2020, is 428 at the elementary school (grades K-6) and 372 at the high school (grades 7-12) (361 attending BPHS and the equivalency of 11 attending

PSEO). The PSEO number consists of 4 seniors and 5 juniors with attendance being full-time plus 4 juniors with attendance being part-time.

D. Date to Note

The Board noted dates of importance.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

1. Career & technical classes are being reviewed for enhancement with ZED.

2. Mr. Staloch and Mr. Worke have met with Dennis Heimerman regarding acoustics in the high school gym.

3. Acknowledged a thank you for a memorial from the Kaplan family.

4. The administration acknowledged the school board for their work.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ile to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Work Session will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 6:00 a.m. in the Board Room at the High School. Tentatively, the next regular meeting of the School Board will be Monday, March 16, 2020, at 7:15 p.m. in the High School Media Center (Open Forum begins at 7:00 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,

Jenny Thurnau
Pro Tempore Clerk of the School Board

Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota 4/22

NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA
February 13, 2020

A regular school board work session was held at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 13, 2020, in the Board Room at the High School.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pam Hameister, Dean Meshke, Jon Sunde, Steve Ile, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jenny Thurnau

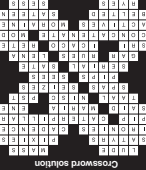
ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools; Member of the BPTA

DISCUSSION ITEMS: General review and discussion was held on agenda items for the February 18, 2020, regular school board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board

Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota 4/22



CLUES ACROSS

1. Methuqualone pill (slang)
5. Religious service
9. Woodland gods (Greek myth)
11. "Where Is My Mind?" rockers
13. Deliberately contrary states of affairs
15. Inflection of the voice
16. "Great Expectations" character
17. Becomes a butterfly
19. Spoke
21. Tennis player Sharapova
22. Midway between north-east and east
23. Afrikaans
25. No instruction set computing
26. Pacific Standard Time
27. Relaxing places
29. Confiscates
31. Gladys Knight's fellow performers
33. Witnesses
34. Taking place in a series
36. Satisfy
38. Freshwater fish of N. America
39. Laments
41. "Girls" creator Dunham
43. Indian title of respect

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics, I am on the fence about installing a replacement engine in my Silverado truck or just selling it for a yard for scrap. I have owned it for ten years and really like it and if the engine would not have failed, I would not even think of getting a different vehicle. I have already spent a lot of money on repairs the past two years including a new transmission and brakes and tires to name just a few. When should you keep a vehicle versus scraping one?

Peter in Park Rapids MN

We advise people on this subject carefully. In the end it is your decision but here is what we have to offer. First you need to look at the value of your vehicle assuming it had a good running engine. What are those vehicles selling for? Once that is established find out what it will cost to repair yours with a new or low mileage used engine and do some math. Selling a vehicle for scrap is one of the lowest prices you will get and often you can put an used engine in and recover the cost of the engine plus a decent amount for the vehicle when running correctly. You have already put a lot into it, so you know the vehicle well. If your cost to fix it is comparable to buying another similar model vehicle, you are likely better off than buying someone else's problem.

Take care, The Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics, I am a diehard Chevy fan just like my father and his before him and its time for a new truck and I'm really looking hard at a Dodge diesel truck like my neighbor has. I feel like I'm being disloyal to Chevy if I purchase a Dodge, but I really like the towing capacity and the looks of the new ones compared to past models. Being a guy who has never owned one I am concerned about the reliability of them and the service I will get. How do I find out accurate information about them?

Joe in Salina Kansas

The tale of Ford VS Chevy VS Dodge and now Toyota and other trucks goes back as far as trucks themselves. Like most of the things we make up our minds about, we need to look, do the research on our own, and make our decisions based on facts. Too many times people hear someone give their opinion about something and take it as fact when often the person the information is coming from does not own the item and may never have had any contact with it. All the trucks offered today by the big manufacturers seem to be pretty decent as judged by what we see hands on in our own shops. Get on the internet and read the forums written by actual consumers of the product and see what they have to say about actual use of them.

Take care, The Motor Medics

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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

4. Guitar great Clapton
 5. Slang for type of skirt
 6. Figure skating jump
 7. Innocent
 8. Mathematical ratio
 9. Slowly drinks
 10. Line where edges meet
 11. Offices of the pope
 12. Dry or withered
 14. "The Mary" Musical
 15. Difficult situations
 18. Greek goddess of discord
 20. Marked by smartness in dress and manners
 24. Habitat
 26. Annoy constantly
 28. Full of life
 30. Great energy
 32. BBQ and soy are two
 34. Virtuous
 35. Not fatty
 37. Foes
 38. Merchandiser
 40. Dishonest scheme
 42. Repents
 43. Protective crust
 45. Native American people
 47. Any place of bliss or delight
 49. Bring up
 50. Birds
 51. Geological times
 55. Consumed
- CLUES DOWN**

 1. Rope used to lasso
 2. Idyllic places
 3. Field force unit
 44. Cocoa plum
 46. Network of nerve cells
 48. Link together in a chain
 52. Cool '70s crew "The Squad"
 53. Persons engaging in energetic pursuits
 54. Accumulation of glacial debris
 56. Fastened
 57. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
 58. Whiskey and bread are two
 59. Scottish tax

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T-shirts are \$20 each.

\$2 will go to the Blooming Prairie Chamber and the remaining amount will be donated to the business of choice (listed below).

Order yours by May 4th

Online at

www.bloomingprairiechamber.com/store
or contact Linda Klemmensen at Sportstitch.

Pickup will be Thursday, May 14th from 4-8 pm in the parking lot of the City Center.



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Heather Graphite



Antique Heliconia

2020

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BP Cancer Group	H2O On The Go, Inc	Owatonna People's Press
BP Country Club	Heavy Metal	PlanWell Financial Guidance, LLC
BP Cue Company/Pizza Cellar	Hen House & Co	Plemel Insurance Agency-State Farm
BP Dental Center	Henefield & Iacovino Attorneys at Law	Prairie Family & Sports Chiropractic
BP Education Foundation	Home Sellers of Minnesota, Inc	Prairie Home Floral-Decor-Gifts
BP Fire Dept	Hometown Insurance	Prairie Manor
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BP Public Utilities	Ingvalson Farm, Inc	R&R Insurance LLC
BP Quarterback Club	J&H Liquor	Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church
BP Servicemen's Club	Jaguar Communications	Rolling Green Fencing, Inc
BP Veterinary Clinic	Joe's Repair Service, Inc.	S&S Classic Motors
BP Women of Today	Johnson Construction & Tree Service	Saddle Butte Ag
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Dr. Deborah Lien	Koster's Car Korner	The Bakery
Eagle Prairie Insurance	Krejci Ford	TNT Body Shop
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