



Chromebooks and hotspots
Library makes hotspots and Chromebooks available
Page 12



New blood
Ranger football welcomed newcomers
Page 13

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Forest Lake Area School District makes changes due to COVID-19 case spike

Massey announces that Forest Lake Area High School will move to distance learning

Joe Hiti
Community Editor

The Forest Lake Area School District is switching its current education model for Forest Lake Area High School from hybrid learning to a distance model which started on Wednesday, Nov. 18 and is expected to last through at least Jan. 22.

The school board will evaluate the coronavirus situation in January and decide whether or not they will return to hybrid.

Superintendent Steve Massey addressed the school board and presented the update that he, alongside the district's administrative team, worked on to switch from the current model.

With COVID-19 case counts spiking within all three counties that the district serves, the district is making the change to help stop the spread of the virus within the community and keep students and staff safe.

In the two-week positive case report that the district receives from the Minnesota Department of Health, Washington County saw a jump to 60 cases per 10,000 people — this number is adjusted without the current outbreak from the prison located in Washington County — Anoka currently has 75, and Chisago has over 100.

Forest Lake Area Middle School and the STEP program will continue to remain in a hybrid model for the time being. However, the district will evaluate the circumstances, and whether or not they should make the jump to full distance, at a later date.

However, Massey wants families to be prepared for a switch to full distance.

"Families should be prepared for a transition to distance learning if local circumstances and cases persist or worsen," Massey said.

Massey also pointed out that while the high school is making the jump, due to the number of case counts currently in the school, the middle school has the staff and

School District see page 2

Walz imposes new limits on bars, restaurants, gatherings

Walz likely to impose new restrictions on gatherings soon

Steve Karnowski
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Gov. Walz, in a press conference on Tuesday, Nov. 17, discussed the likely impending restrictions on gatherings, including Thanksgiving celebrations, due to the increasing numbers of COVID-19 patients. Walz said that he has not yet announced his plans due waiting on the legal process. Minnesota has seen a 90% increase in hospitalizations in the 10 days prior to Monday, Nov. 16. Walz also said his guidance regarding youth sports will be released on Wednesday, Nov. 18 after press day.

On Tuesday, Nov. 10, Walz discussed Minnesota bars and restaurants must stop serving at 10 p.m. and attendance at weddings, funeral and social gatherings will be limited under new restrictions Gov. Tim Walz announced Tuesday, Nov. 10 to try to slow the accelerating spread of the coronavirus.

Walz see page 4

Veterans honored



Photos by Joe Hiti

VFW Post 4210 hosted this year's Forest Lake Veterans Day service on Wednesday, Nov. 11, in partnership with American Legion Post 335. The keynote speaker for the event was Bill Strusinski, who was a combat medic during the Vietnam War and has recently published a book detailing his experiences titled "Care Under Fire." Strusinski spoke about his experiences in Vietnam during his speech and recognized today's front-line workers, who are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing that they are fighting a similar fight.

Columbus approves preliminary plat for Loves Travel Center

Joe Hiti
Community Editor

The city of Columbus is in the final stages of allowing a Loves Travel Center to be constructed at 15400 block of Hornsby Street, on the southeast side of the I-35 and Highway 97 intersection.

The Columbus City Council met on Thursday, Nov. 12, to

discuss it and voted on allowing the truck stop and convenience store a preliminary plat — the to-scale drawing of the design for the construction project.

Board member Shelly Logren mentioned that she thinks the new Loves Travel Center will be built well and represent Columbus.

"Loves has an enormous sign

and it's going to brand Columbus," Logren said. "Loves is a statement and I really don't have a problem. I think you have great buildings and that everything is really tasteful."

However, Logren also brought up the need to have the truck stop and convenience store

Columbus see page 4

