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## Former Chisago County sheriff pleads guilty to harassment, misconduct

*Richard Duncan to serve four more years of probation*

Hannah Davis  
News Editor

A former sheriff of Chisago County pleaded guilty to harassment and misconduct of a public officer on Thursday, Oct. 22, according to the Anoka County Sheriff's Office.

The Anoka County Attorney's Office charged Richard Duncan, of Chisago City, in 2018 for acts that occurred in October and November of 2017, during which Duncan was Chisago County sheriff.

According to the charges, Duncan repeatedly contacted a sheriff's office employee with inappropriate and threatening messages while using a pseudonym. The Anoka County Sheriff's Office and Anoka County Attorney's Office handled the investigation and subsequent prosecution. Duncan's sentence is two years of jail time, which he has already served, and four years of probation, during which he cannot possess a firearm.

"We are grateful that we could resolve the case in this manner, a resolution which was supported by the victim, in an effort to allow her to obtain closure after nearly three years," Anoka County Attorney's Office Criminal Division Chief Wade Kish said in a press release. "This case is an unfortunate example of an elected official abusing his position of power. We are committed to holding public officials accountable for their behavior to ensure credibility of the justice system."

According to the criminal complaint, between Oct. 26 and Nov. 3, 2017, Duncan engaged in a pattern of stalking an adult female employee of the

Sheriff see page 4

## Election day nears: What you need to know to vote

*Minnesota voters already submitting record number of absentee ballots*

Hannah Davis  
News Editor

The 2020 election is Tuesday, Nov. 3, and at the top of the ballot is the presidential race, which pits incumbent President Donald Trump against former Vice President Joe Biden. Minnesota has U.S. Senate and House seats up for election, which for readers of the Forest Lake Times is either the 6th or the 8th U.S. Congressional District. All of the state House and Senate races are up for election as well. Depending on where Forest Lake Times readers live, that would mean Senate districts 31, 32, or 39, and State House districts 31B, 32B or 39A.

Two contested council seats are up for election in Forest Lake, Columbus, Scandia, and Wyoming. In Columbus, Scandia and Wyoming, the mayor seat is up for election. (Forest Lake Mayor Mara Bain is running for reelection unopposed.) Four seats on the Forest Lake Area School Board are also up for election, but the four incumbent candidates are running unopposed. In Linwood Township, all four open seats are also unopposed. The Forest Lake Times voter guides can be found online at the ForestLakeTimes.com.

Also up for election are two local county commissioner races: Washington County's 1st District and Anoka County's 6th District.

### Early voting

With less than a week to go before the election, voters have already begun casting absentee ballots. Early voting via absentee ballots, whether in-person or by mail, is well ahead of past elections, according to data gathered by the Minnesota Secretary of State's office. A record 1.76 million absentee ballot applications



Photo by Joe Hiti

Voters decide to cast ballots early on Oct. 27 at the Forest Lake Service Center. Data shows that more Minnesota voters are choosing to cast their ballots early by absentee in-person voting in contrast to the past two elections.

were requested by Minnesota voters as of Oct. 23, and of those, 1.18 million had been completed and turned in. What is unknown is how many of those ballots were cast by regular voters simply voting early due to concerns over the coronavirus and how many are from voters who would not normally vote, which would indicate a higher turnout. In contrast, only 676,722 absentee ballots were accepted in 2016, the last presidential election.

Any eligible voter can submit a ballot either in-person or via mail and can apply for an absentee ballot through Nov. 2.

In-person early polling locations are as follows:

The closest location for Forest Lake voters is at the Headwaters Service Center (19955 Forest Rd. N., Forest Lake). For Scandia residents, the Forest Lake location or the Washington County Government Center (14949 62nd St. N., Stillwater) are the closest early voting locations. Residents of Wyoming can go to the Chisago County Auditor-Treasurer's Office. For Linwood Township residents,

Vote see page 3

## New playground, will play



Photos by Joe Hiti

Linwood first and fifth graders got the chance to play and try out the new equipment on the new Linwood playground during a snow storm on Oct. 22. The playground opened to students under the supervision of Linwood's gym teacher Aaron Rickart on Oct. 19. The playground was a project started almost seven years ago by three fourth grade girls, Syndey Weiner, Ava Saxe, and Isabella Hesli and came to its completion on Oct. 13.

## As COVID-19 cases rise, elementary schools change learning model

*Superintendent says no cases have been spread within the schools*

Joe Hiti  
Community Editor

The Forest Lake Area School District is moving out of its current education model that has primary school students, grades K-6, doing in-person learning, transitioning them to a hybrid model starting on Nov. 10. Secondary students in grades 7-12 will not see a change in their school model as they will continue with their own hybrid learning schedule.

Superintendent Steve Massey delivered the updated coronavirus

Model change see page 4

