Help Support Your Local Paper

See envelope inside your paper for opportunity to become a voluntary subscriber and support local journalism.

STAR NEWS

Elk River, MN 55330 · Vol. 149, No. 29 – $1.00 · 763-441-3500 · www.erstarnews.com

· July 17, 2021 ·

ELK RIVER OTSEGO ROGERS ZIMMERMAN

INSIDE

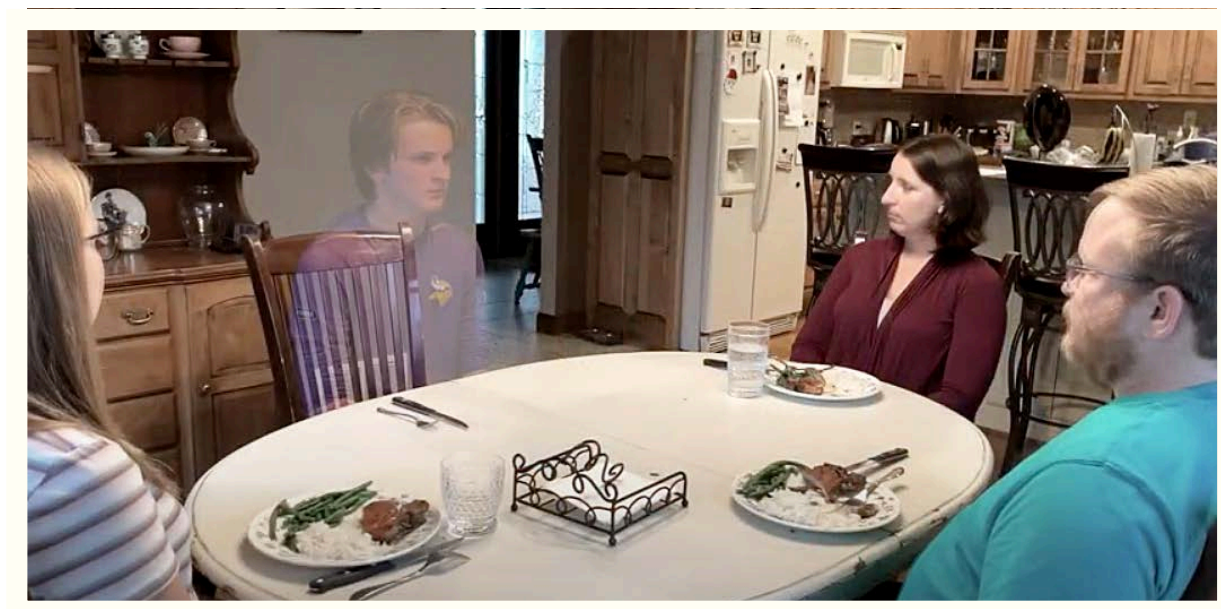
■ We invite you as the reader to support journalism. – 6

SCOREBOARD

■ Legion baseball team extends winning streak. – 18

‘Life as we know it can change in an instant and this PSA illustrates that fact.’

— Sherburne County Deputy Roxanne Schreder



Screen shot

In this screen shot from Zach Knapp’s new public service announcement, a family is seated around the dining room table with one chair occupied by a faded image, representing a loved one lost to a fatal crash caused by distracted driving.

New PSA hammers home distracted driving warning

Spectrum graduate wrote, directed and narrated the video that’s seeing airtime

by Joni Astrup
Associate Editor

A Spectrum High School student wrote, filmed, directed, narrated and edited a public service announcement on the dangers of distracted driving that is now being aired in Minnesota.

Zachary Knapp completed the 40-second PSA as his Senior Legacy Project at Spectrum, a public charter school located in Elk River. He is a 2021 graduate of Spectrum, which Knapp said focuses heavily on community service. The Senior Legacy Project was the grand finale for seniors’ community service efforts.

“Everyone has to leave a legacy,” Knapp explained in a recent appearance before the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners.

Some students made tie blankets and donated them to hospitals. Others raised money or organized food drives. Knapp decided to use his video production skills for the greater good.

Submitted photo

Zach Knapp is the creative force behind a new public service announcement about the dangers of distracted driving.

“I knew I had a passion and a skill for it, and I really wanted to use my skills to benefit my community,” he said.

Knapp said he focused on traffic safety in the PSA because it’s an issue that affects young people.

“If you look around, I’ll bet you’ll see it — people driving and texting and making full-course meals in their passenger seat at a stoplight. It’s kind of crazy. I ... wanted to do something to change that,” he said.

Knapp had initially connected with the Sherburne County Safe Roads Coalition about doing the PSA and worked for several months with coalition members to design multiple PSAs, one of which was ultimately chosen.

He first met with the group on March 11, 2020 — just two days before the pandemic shutdown hit.

Knapp said he planned to feature friends as the actors in the PSA in a big outdoor production, but COVID-19 changed all that. Instead, his mom, Jennifer; dad, John; and sister, Grace, have the starring roles. The PSA shows them eating at the dining room table with one chair vacant to represent a family member lost to a fatal crash caused by distracted driving. Knapp makes a brief appearance as the lost family member, appearing as a faded image seated at the table with the family.

Knapp shot the PSA at his family’s home in Elk River using his iPhone.

Roxanne Schreder, a Sherburne County deputy and member of the Sherburne County Safe Roads Coalition, said the PSA has been uploaded to Sherburne County’s YouTube channel, shared via Facebook by law enforcement entities and submitted to various organizations like the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association. The video is also running on ErTV Cable Channel 180, was referenced in a blog post published by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and was featured in a KNSI radio story.

“We have had a very good reaction to that, not only locally but also statewide,” Schreder said of the PSA.

She said Knapp dedicated numerous hours to the project and should be

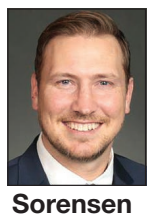
PSA to page 10

Rock will be turned into mural

Iowa artist will paint Big Lake’s Freedom Rock beginning July 20

by Jeff Hage
APG of East Central Minnesota

The completion of the Big Lake Freedom Rock is about to become a reality.



Sorensen

Internationally known rock mural painter Ray “Bubba” Sorensen will be in Big Lake for about two weeks to put his local interpretation on the rock, which sits in Big Lake’s Lakeside Park. Sorenson will begin painting the rock on Tuesday, July 20, and plans to wrap up the project on Aug. 2.

Sorensen has challenged himself to design and paint a military history mural on huge, magnificent boulders for every state in the Union, said Big Lake Freedom Rock committee member Linda Paulson. Big Lake’s rock will feature the painted stories of Big Lake’s veterans from each of the branches of the military.

The rock painting is Sorensen’s way of giving a very unique “thank you” to veterans everywhere, Paulson said.

Big Lake’s Freedom Rock will serve as a special canvas for Sorensen.

The rock is a 10-foot by 10-foot piece of pink granite donated by Martin Marietta, which came from the company’s quarry in Waite Park.

T.J. Potter Trucking of Becker transported the rock to Big Lake in September 2020. Landwehr Construction provided the crane that lifted the rock onto its final resting place in Lakeside Park.

The idea behind Free-

Freedom Rock to 10

Photo by Joni Astrup

The Freedom Rock in Cresco, Iowa, one of many painted by artist Ray “Bubba” Sorensen.

Group assembled 53 bikes for children living in foster care

Photo by Jim Boyle

Kelly Swanson and Matthew Petz, of Elk River CrossFit.

by Jim Boyle
Editor

The sense of family that has been established at CrossFit Una Stamus in Elk River flexed its collective heart and muscle on Saturday, July 10, while assembling 53 mountain bikes for children living in foster care.

It was the second such event at the Elk River fitness facility at 13469 Business Center Drive, and it was twice as successful as the first based on the amount of money raised — $8,000 — and the number of bikes that were assembled. Participants even got a Saturday morning workout in to boot.

“This is an amazing group,” said Matthew Petz, the owner of the Elk River CrossFit.

The Elk River gym’s membership includes a large contingent of adults with young families whose kids have become accustomed to seeing their parents work out in a relaxed, friendly environment. Many of them enjoyed watching the charity event play out.

The group also has a heart for less fortunate kids and has taken a liking to Nexus-Kindred Family Healing. Kindred Family Healing is one of Nexus’ agencies. It provides adoption and foster care services throughout the state.

Kindred’s clients are often taken in by foster care families with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, according to Rachelle Holm, a development officer for Nexus-Kindred Family Healing. Nexus also provides residential treatment as well as outpatient and community mental health services.

Bikes to page 9

Public notices are published in the Star News, beginning on page 15.

Plaisted Companies INCORPORATED

JOIN OUR TEAM

Aggregate Quality Control
Class A & B Drivers
Diesel Mechanic
Heavy Equipment Operator
Lube Tech
Pit Laborer
Shop Foreman
Wash Bay Tech

www.plaistedcompanies.com

APG
EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Phone: 763.441.3500
Fax: 763.441.6401
www.erstarnews.com