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THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2025
 VOL. 119 NO. 32 COUNTYSTAR.COM

3.14: Braham's annual event adds up to another fun-filled Pie Day. **PG 6, MORE PHOTOS ONLINE**



BILL STICKELS III | COUNTY STAR

A real-life soap opera

A pair of girls enjoy the "Bubbly Foam Party" as part of North Branch's Night to Unite held in Central Park. For more photos from North Branch's, Cambridge's, and Isanti's events, go to www.isanti-chisagocountystar.com.

Cambridge Intermediate School avoids wrecking ball

BY BILL STICKELS III
 EDITOR@COUNTYSTAR.COM

Editors note: This is the fourth in a series of articles regarding the upcoming Cambridge-Isanti Schools referendum vote, focusing on one specific building.

If the Cambridge-Isanti School District had listened to almost every expert several years ago, the upcoming bond referendum would have taken place back then, would have looked vastly different, at least as far as the Cambridge Intermediate and Primary Schools are concerned, and it would have been significantly more expensive for taxpayers.

According to District Finance Director Chris Kampa, at that time, the district was looking at a nearly 100 year-old boiler system in the Intermediate School on the verge of failing. Complicating matters, that system had been retrofitted to also provide heat to the Primary School when that building was constructed in 1960. The connection was made via hard-to-reach underground tunnels. This retrofit greatly increased the cost and difficulty of making the mandatory replacement.

According to Kampa, if any



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With the exception of the upholstery color, the seats in the Cambridge Intermediate School auditorium/gymnasium are believed to be nearly original to the building's construction.

section of the boiler/steam pipes had failed during the colder, winter months, it would have rendered both school buildings unusable until repairs could be made. In fact, Kampa said one section did collapse, but it was in October, and the buildings didn't require heating. He added that emergency repairs cost the district \$100,000.

Based on this, plus all the other fixes/updates needed at the Intermediate School, most of the recommendations were to demolish the historic

building and start over new, plus either demolish the Primary School or adding in its own boiler system.

"That option would have cost approximately \$90 million," Kampa said.

Instead, the district chose to work with experts who asserted there was a way to fix the problem without demolishing the complex — and to do it with no impact to taxpayers to boot. According to Kampa, the district was able to borrow against its own

SEE REFERENDUM, PAGE 2

Third Bluejacket All School Reunion set for Saturday at fairgrounds

STAFF REPORT
 NEWS@COUNTYSTAR.COM

The third iteration of the Cambridge-Isanti All School Reunion is all set to take place this Saturday, Aug. 9, with a more condensed schedule than the previous years.

The first All School Reunion, which took place in 2017, was a huge success, bringing in around 3,000 Bluejacket graduates. The second event was originally scheduled for 2020, however it wound up being

delayed by a year due to COVID. The end result was a smaller turnout of approximately 2,000.

This year, after a four-year hiatus, organizers are hoping the attendance will rebound to at least closer to the inaugural event. At the same time, they have organized a somewhat stripped-down schedule that focuses a little more on classmates mingling with each other.

SEE REUNION, PAGE 2



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There's sure to be many selfies again taken during the All School Reunion on Saturday.

SCHOOLSIDE VILLAGE in North Branch

New Homes starting in the mid \$300s

Cathy Carchedi **651-248-6897**
 Zak Carchedi **651-263-2943**
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FROM PAGE I

PROPOSED PROJECTS

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FROM PAGE I



ISANTI-CHISAGO
COUNTY STAR

MON, WED & FRI

Exercise with Connie

At the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave., North Branch. From 10:30-11:30 a.m.

MON & WED

500 Cards

At the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave., North Branch at 12:45 p.m.

MON & THUR

Alcoholics Anonymous

7p.m. Main Street Church 6500 Main Street, North Branch, MN. Enter east door. Informational Hotline is 763-312-1088

MON - FRI

Senior Dining

North Branch, Chisago County Senior Center 11:45 a.m. Diners need to pre-register at least one day in advance call 651-674-1956 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. An annual registration form is required before dining.

MONDAYS

Bridge

1 to 3 p.m. at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Scrabble (2nd Monday)

10 a.m. to Noon at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Women's only Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families

7 p.m. at Cambridge Lutheran Church , 621 Old Main St N, Cambridge Mn 55008 For more information contact Rebecca at 612-702-2844 or CoraJayne 612-210-1605

Mahjong

Noon to 3 p.m. at Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Fresh Beginnings Alanon

Family Groups meets Monday's 7 - 8 p.m. at Access Church, 4359 - 392nd St., North Branch. Visit minnesotanorth-al-anon.org

Book Club

Third Monday 11 a.m. to noon at Isanti SAC, 140 Buchanan St., N. #164 Cambridge. Isanti County Library lends the books and there is no cost to participate. For info: sacs@midconetwork.com



FACEBOOK IMAGE

The Beatles tribute band A Hard Days Night will be the featured performers during North Branch's Summer Concert Series in Central Park Tuesday, Aug. 12.

TUES & THURS

Boxing for Those w/Parkinson's

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 115 Adams Street South, Cambridge. For more information, call 763-221-6883.

TUESDAYS

Braham Parkinson's Support

7 p.m. third Tuesday of the month. Braham Evangelical Lutheran Church, 905 Central Drive W., Braham. For info. call Lonnie Anderson at 612-423-1863.

Alzheimer's Support

Third Tuesday of each month from 10-11 a.m. at GracePointe Heritage Center, 322 River Hills Place North, Cambridge. For info call Lyndsey Larson 763-691-6172.

Memory Cafe

First Tuesday of every month, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at GracePointe Crossing Heritage Center, 322 River Hills Place North, Cambridge. Contact Julie at 763-306-5066 for info.

Music

Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave. Music provided before the meal 11:15 a.m.

Dominos

At the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave North Branch at 10 a.m.

Dominoes

10 a.m. to Noon at the Cambridge SAC

WEDNESDAYS

Cribbage

9 to 11 a.m. at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Wizard

11 a.m. to noon at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Pinochle

12:30 to 3 p.m. at the Cambridge SAC

Mahjong

12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Alanon

7 p.m. at the Isanti Alano Club, 790 Heritage Blvd. Isanti. 763-444-4605

Chisago County Drop-In Center

Open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Main Street Church, 6500 Main Street, North Branch. For individuals 18 yrs or older living with mental illness. Info: 651-213-5600 or Adultmental-health.org.

THURSDAYS

East Central Baby Cafe

Free drop-in breastfeeding support from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Adult Enrichment Center, 540 5th Ave NW, Cambridge, MN. For info. call 763-689-1711.

Cambridge-Edgewood AFG

Cambridge-Edgewood Al-Anon Family Group meets

from 7-8 p.m. at Cambridge Lutheran Church, 621 Old Main Street N. Visit minnesotanorth-al-anon.org for info.

Parkinson's Support Group

Third Thursday of the month - 1-2:30 p.m. The Levande, 2011 6th Lane SE, Cambridge, MN for info call 763-325-0100

Bingo

At the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave North Branch at 10a.m.

Hand and Foot

At the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave North Branch at 12:30p.m.

500

12:30 to 3 p.m. at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

Bunco

Third Thursday 10 a.m. to Noon at the Cambridge SAC, 140 Buchanan St, Cambridge

ACA Adult Children of Alcoholics/ Dysfunctional Families Meeting

7 p.m. at Access Church, 4359 392nd St, North Branch. For info. call 612-251-6556 or email acanorthbranch@gmail.com

Fresh Beginnings Alanon Family Group

From 7-8 p.m. at Access Church, 4359 392nd Street, North Branch. Visit minnesotanorth-al-anon.org for info.

Medicare and Medicaid 101 Open House

Third Thursday of the month from 1-3 p.m. Get your questions answered by trained agents. (763) 689-7390 or eclrib.org for info.

FRIDAYS

Cribbage

12:45 p.m. at the Chisago County Senior Center 38790 6th Ave., North Branch.

AUG 9

All School Reunion

at Isanti County Fairgrounds. Gates open at 3 p.m. Opening ceremony at 4 p.m. Food trucks, music, car show, art show.

Officer Elmstrand Memorial 5K

begins at 8 a.m. at Cambridge-Isanti High School parking lot. Register at runsignup.com.

Summer Spectacular Car Show

hosted by Rum River Rods. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Main Street, downtown Isanti. Food trucks on site.

Isanti Street Dance

featuring the band Rustic. 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Main Street and 1st Ave. downtown Isanti. Food trucks and beer wagon.

AUG 10-14

Joy Lutheran VBS

6-8 p.m. nightly, Joy Lutheran Church, Cambridge. For ages 3-10. Theme: the story of Joseph. Register: PTL4joy@yahoo.com.

AUG 10-15

Vacation Bible School at Bethesda Church

Kickoff rally Aug. 10, 2-4 p.m.; VBS Aug. 11-15, 9 a.m.-noon. For ages 4-entering grade 6. 38180 Hemingway Ave., North Branch. Register: tinyurl.com/VBSinNB.

AUG 12

MyChart 101

Noon at Zion Lutheran Church, Chisago City (lunch) or 3:30 p.m. at North Branch Senior Community Center (appetizers). Free class on using MyChart, for older adults and caregivers. Register by Aug 8: 651-674-1025.

Waters of Chisago County

This presentation explores the health of Chisago County's lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Presented by Barbara Heitkamp, Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership educator. 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Recommended for adults. Registration required.

North Branch Summer Concert Series

featuring Beatles tribute band Hard Days Night. Storytime begins at 6:45 p.m. Concert begins at 7 p.m. Food trucks, bounce house, kids activities begin at 6 p.m. Central Park.

AUG 13

Chisago County baby shower & toddler event

9-11 a.m., North Branch Area Education Center, 38705 Grand Ave. If you've had a baby between 2020-2025, enjoy donuts, gifts, play, resources, lactation consultant. No registration required.

Braham community invited to attend Highway 107 public meeting

The community is invited to attend a public meeting hosted by the City of Braham on Wednesday, Aug. 13, to learn about plans to reconstruct and improve Highway 107 in Braham, Isanti County, reports the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The open house-style event will be held 6-7:30 p.m., at the Braham City Hall, 201 Broadway Ave. S. Guests can stop by, view a design layout and learn more about the project. MnDOT and city staff will be available to answer questions. Construction timing and traffic impacts will be discussed at a later date closer to construction.

MnDOT will reconstruct and improve Highway 107 from Highway 65 to Isanti County

Road 4 (Sixth Street NW) in Braham, which includes new storm sewer, city water main and pedestrian updates. The project is currently in the design phase and is scheduled for construction in 2027 or 2028 (TBD next summer).

For more information, project map or MnDOT contacts, visit the project web page at www.mndot.gov/d3/projects/braham.

MnDOT invites and encourages participation by all. If you need an ASL, foreign language interpreter, or other reasonable accommodation, or need documents in an alternative format (such as braille or large print), please email your request to Janet Miller at ADArequest.dot@state.mn.us or call 651-366-4720. - MNDOT

Isanti County Medallion Hunt

The Isanti County Parks Department will kick off its 11th annual Find it in the Parks Medallion Hunt on Monday, Aug. 18. Participants will have the chance to search for a hidden medallion worth \$1,000 in prizes.

New clues will be posted daily at 8 a.m. beginning Aug. 18 on the county's parks website at www.co.isanti.mn.us/184/Parks-Recreation. The hunt will continue through Friday, Aug. 22 or until the medallion is found.

The event is limited to the six Isanti County parks. Whoever

er finds the medallion must return it to the Isanti County Parks Department Office at 555 18th Ave. SW in Cambridge to claim the prize.

The medallion hunt is sponsored by donations from Crawford's Equipment, Cambridge Family Dental, Larson's Cycle, Walmart, Coborn's Grocery, Cub Foods and Mills Fleet Farm.

For more information, contact Barry Wendorf at the Environmental Services Division at 763-689-8220 or barry.wendorf@co.isanti.mn.us. - Isanti County

American Eagle ads might be sexist, but they're not racist

The recent uproar over a series of American Eagle commercials featuring actress Sydney Sweeney has me perplexed.

For those unfamiliar, Sweeney is a gorgeous, 27 year-old actress who has quickly made a name for herself based on several roles — most of which are on series only shown on streaming services, and are rather “mature” in nature. Now, she is the new spokesperson for American Eagle bluejeans. If you are unfamiliar with these commercials, they are essentially a modern-day ripoff of the controversial Brooke Shields Calvin Klein bluejeans ads, which were decried for sexualizing the then-15 year-old Shields.

I would completely understand a similar uproar over Sweeney’s ads based on the current environment of not using women as eye candy for men. But while that issue has been brought up regarding these ads, the biggest backlash has been from the theme of the words she says and the tagline “Sydney Sweeney has great jeans.”

What is wrong with that? Well, according to many, touting a gorgeous, blonde hair, blue eyes, white female as having great “genes/jeans” is not-so subtly referencing eugenics and Adolf Hitler’s “superior race.”

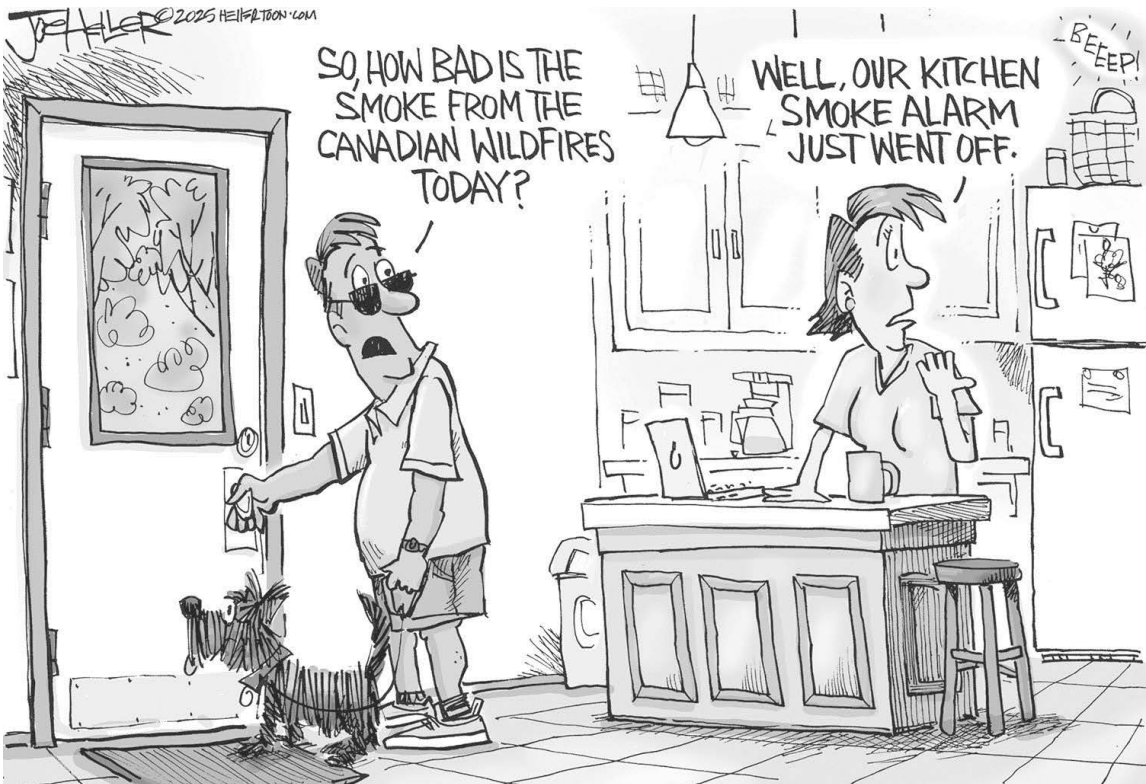
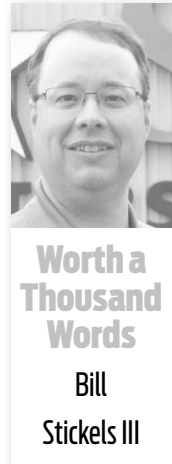
Granted, the wordplay of “genes” versus “jeans” could be considered rather minimalistic humor, but I find it a very long stretch to call it in essence Nazi-like propaganda. For one, my guess is American Eagle had already settled on using this new tagline before selecting Sweeney. They could have gone with a gorgeous brunette or red-head and all of this would have been moot. But, they chose Sweeney, most likely because she is a major star right now, and based on the fact she has done multiple nude scenes, isn’t against being viewed as eye candy.

Besides Shields’ CK ads, the other comparison being made is Beyonce’s recent Levi bluejeans ads, where the gorgeous singer is photographed in similar poses to Sweeney. These comparisons brought up a new, unasked question in my mind. What if it was American Eagle’s original plans to run a whole series of ads under that same theme, but rotating gorgeous celebrities of different races, and they just happened to start with a white blonde with blue eyes? For all we know, they could have been planning on stating the exact opposite of what they are being accused of. People of any skin/hair/eye color can have “great genes/jeans.”

Now, we will never know if that is the case. If they continued to roll out the series of ads, they would simultaneously be accused of trying to refute the allegations after-the-fact from those critics and placating to those critics after-the-fact from those who disagree with the critics.

This theory may very well be far-fetched. But, in my opinion, it is just as far-fetched as the claim that Sweeney is being used to push a modern-day eugenics agenda. Or even more far-fetched, that she is complicit in spreading that message.

BILL STICKELS III is editor of the Isanti-Chisago County Star. He can be directly reached at 651-407-1245, through our main office number at 763-689-1181, ext. 156 or editor@countystar.com.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Myths vs. Facts

To the editor,

A few weeks ago, a writer challenged my letter to the editor. The average blue-collar worker, baby boomers average \$1223 per month from social security. Correction; the \$3,874 plus housing, medical taxpayer dollars come from welfare programs not social security, my mistake.

Regardless, Democrats open border State/Federal taxpayer burden will cost taxpayers billions. Refer to HHRG-118-JU01-Wstate-CamarotaS-20240111 taxpayer dollars spent on illegals. The migrants the writer met I bet came into this country legally.

I reached out to get information from many writers’ concerns regarding Medicare/Medicaid from H.R.1 legislation. Tina Smith’s office plead the 5th. Pete Stauber’s office sent me the facts directly from “Council of economic advisors”

Myth: Just tax breaks for millionaires Fact: Bill will add up to \$13,800 for the working-class family of four per year. Millionaires pay the majority of federal taxes (Tax Foundation).

Myth: Kicks families off of Medicaid and SNAP. Fact: This legislation strengthens Medicaid and SNAP for those who rely on it; pregnant women, children, seniors, folks with disabilities, low-income families by eliminating waste fraud and abuse specifically, removing illegals. HR-1 bill enforcing work, volunteering, or education requirements for able-body adults without children to 20 hours a week. On July 23, 2025, local news reported millions of Medicaid fraud paid in Minnesota. Bill Clinton did the same with welfare reform bill, work requirements, able-body adults must be employed to receive their welfare check. Thanks Bill Clinton. Welfare needs to be completely overhauled.

Myth: Bill cuts Medicare. Fact: This bill does not touch Medicaid. Go ahead and fact check. Democrats currently have a 19% approval rating.

Division started when Trump threw his hat into the political arena from Democrats. Career Repub-

lican/Democrat politicians created a \$36 trillion deficit. It was time for a government shakedown. Trump in six months created great trade deals, inflation stabilized even with tariffs, second quarter GDP up 3%, two trillion international investments and growing, 113 billion FY2025 tariff revenues.

**Jerry Grell
Cambridge**

Help protect our voting rights

To the editor,

Our rights are not guaranteed — they must be protected. That’s why a group of concerned residents is coming together to form a local chapter of the League of Women Voters in Isanti County, and we’re calling on our neighbors to join us.

At a time when voting rights are under attack across the country and misinformation clouds the truth, we believe it is more important than ever to stand up for the values that protect all of us: fair elections, equal representation, and access to trustworthy, nonpartisan information.

The League of Women Voters has a long history of defending democracy and advancing civil rights. Our local chapter will carry on that mission right here at home — by watching how decisions are made, asking tough questions, and ensuring that no one is left behind in the democratic process.

If you care about your rights — the right to vote, the right to be heard, the right to fair and transparent government — then now is the time to act. Join us as we build a space for civic engagement, advocacy, and education in Isanti County.

Our first public meeting is scheduled for August 9, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the East Central Regional Library, Opportunity Room, and we invite everyone to be at the table.

Democracy only works if we do.

**Karin L. Becklin-Greene
Isanti County League of Women Voters Organizing Committee**

Your Best Source for Community Information

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Noon Monday



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Rooted in community, committed to every learner



**C-I Schools
Communi-
ty Ed**
**Christina
Thayer
Anderson**

As the first days of a new school year draw closer, excitement is building across our community. Educators are putting the finishing touches on buildings and classrooms. Leaders are finalizing schedules and preparing for student welcomes. Bus drivers, custodians, food service staff, support teams, coaches, community education staff, and countless others are getting ready to greet each and every Bluejacket with care and purpose. From our youngest Bluejackets in ECFE to the graduates of 2026, we are thrilled to welcome back our learners and families for what promises to be a meaningful year of learning and growth.

At the heart of our work is a simple truth: strong schools and strong communities go hand in hand. Our schools thrive when we work in partnership with families, community members, and local organizations. We are guided by your voice—conversations at every event from

parent-teacher conferences to summer community events, feedback in surveys, committees and advisory councils, and the hopes and dreams you share with us throughout the year. We especially see this in Community Education, where programs are shaped by what our community seeks and values. Whether it's enrichment classes, early childhood programming, or adult education, these offerings reflect shared priorities and a commitment to lifelong learning for all ages.

Public education is a promise. It's the promise that every student—regardless of background, ability, or life circumstance—deserves access to opportunity, support, and high-quality learning, every day. We take that promise seriously. We are committed to serving all learners and all families, just as they are. We meet learners where they are, and we walk with them toward their goals.

That means supporting not just academic growth, but the social, emotional, and developmental needs of the whole child. We believe in building welcoming environments, strong partnerships with families, and wraparound supports to ensure every learner can thrive. Our educators are mentors, advocates, and partners in your child's journey.

Our schools are deeply woven into the fabric of this community. They are more than places of learning—they are hubs of connection, support, and inspiration. Whether you're a classroom volunteer, a lifelong learner in a Community Education course, a grandparent cheering from the stands, or a neighbor who simply believes in the power of education, you are part of our story. You remind us that our mission extends beyond the school day and beyond the classroom, enriching lives and strengthening our entire community.

This year, as we continue our commitment to educate, empower, and inspire every student, every day, we invite you to stay connected. Not sure how to get connected? Visit our Volunteer with Us website ww.c-ischools.org/community/volunteer or send us an email dist-communications@c-ischools.org. We need you! Your influence and your support matters. Your engagement makes us stronger. And your belief in the power of public education helps every Bluejacket shine. We are proud to serve this community, honored to be your advocates, and grateful to be your partners. It's going to be a great year!

Chirstina Thayer Anderson is director of Community Education of Cambridge-Isanti Schools. She can be reached at 763.689.6220 or canderson1@c-ischools.org.



STEVE DEWEY/JUTAH STATE UNIVERSITY BUGWOOD.ORG

Siberian Elm leaves are alternate and toothed

Siberian Elm a highly invasive species

I've been noticing a lot of new growth in an area near my home that was for several years a horse pasture. So far this year, it has quickly been populated by dozens of "new" shrubs that I now know are the very invasive Siberian Elm plants. And recently I've noticed many of that same plant growing on roadsides that haven't been mowed. Walking along my own street who's borders are rarely mowed, I see this plant becoming more and more prevalent. And once you notice it, you start seeing it along roadsides and open grassland everywhere.

Some quick facts about this plant are:

1. It's seed germination is very high
2. It quickly dominates disturbed prairies and takes over.
3. It grows in areas with poor soil and low moisture.
4. It has an extensive root system but young plants are pulled easily.
5. It is a prolific seed producer.
6. It can cross pollinate with native elms.

There are various methods of control. One is Herbicide control. That can be done by cutting the stem and applying glyphosate or triclopyr to the cut stump. Oil-based triclopyr ester products can also be sprayed along the base of an un-cut stem, coating all sides of the lower 12-18 inches of the main stem. These are systemic herbicides that are taken up by plants and move within the plant, which can kill leaves, stems, and roots.

You can find more information on the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture web site under Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*)

Chisago County Master Gardeners is part of a collaboration between Chisago County and The University of Minnesota Extension to deliver practical education and research you can use at home, at work and in your community. You can reach Chisago County Extension services by email at mnext-chisago@umn.edu or by phone at 651-277-0151.

The basics of safe trailer towing

Question: I see a lot of motorists pulling campers and trailers that don't have experience or simply don't know what they are doing. I see some crashes that I suspect are due to this. Can you talk about pulling campers and trailers?

Answer: If you pull a camper or trailer with your vehicle, you must maintain at least 500 feet of following distance from other vehicles.

When loaded, 10 to 15 percent of the trailer's weight should be balanced on the hitch between the trailer and vehicle. When correctly loaded, the trailer's floor should be level. After the first few miles, stop and check the hitch, tires, lights and load. Repeat this process at all rest stops.

Travel at a slower speed. Many trailers have smaller wheels that turn faster than your car wheels, causing heat buildup that can lead to trailer wheel bearing failure.

Remember that the brakes on your vehicle were probably not designed to handle heavy



Ask A Trooper
Jesse Grabow

trailer loads. A sudden stop at high speed could flip both the trailer and the car.

Speed up carefully, using a lower gear if necessary. Maintain enough following distance to prevent the need for sudden stops. When passing other vehicles, remember the additional length of your trailer and be aware that your ability to accelerate is reduced.

Wind and rain will affect your ability to handle and control a vehicle pulling extra weight. When towing a trailer or camper in wet or windy conditions, slow down more than you would normally do in such weather.

Allow plenty of room for turns. Long trailers will swing closer to the edge of the road than your vehicle.

Pay extra attention to your vehicle's cooling system when towing extra weight. Your engine will overheat more easily in warm weather, at high speeds and in hilly areas.

A portion of state statutes were used with permission from the Office of the Revisor of Statutes. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Trp. Jesse Grabow – Minnesota State Patrol at 1000 Highway 10 West, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501-2205. (You can follow him on X @MSPPIO_NW or reach him at jesse.grabow@state.mn.us).

Play Inc seeks actors for fall production

Play Inc Arts is set to return to Leader for their second Dinner Theatre production following last year's sold out production of Choose Your Heist.

This year, Play Inc will bring a heartfelt family production entitled Mom's Gift. In this comedy with a heart, Mom has been dead for 11 months and shows up at her husband's birthday party as a ghost with a mission. Like Clarence in It's A Wonderful Life, she has to accomplish a task to earn her wings. Only what the task actually is is a mystery. There are so many things to fix. The problem is complicated by the fact that the only person who can hear or see Mom is her daughter, who has been ordered by the court to spend Dad's birthday with him as part of her Anger Management Program. One by one, the family's secrets are peeled away, revealing a shocking truth that surprises even our ghost. This is a heartwarming piece that will appeal to performers of all experiences.

To prepare the production, Play Inc is holding auditions on Saturday, August 16th from 10:00 am until Noon. The

casting needs for Mom's Gift include six actors which includes two actress's ages 20-30, an actor presenting in his 30's, and actor and an actress about 60, and actress in her 40's, an actor in his 30's and an actress in her 70's.

Performances are in late September and tickets will be on sale early next month. For a full character breakdown, rehearsal informaiont, and to sign up for an audition, visit www.playincarts.org. -Play Inc. Arts

STUDENT NAMES IN THE NEWS

Student Achievement Lists Degrees

Anna Ramberg (Asian Studies and Accounting), of Cambridge, from Augustana University.

Oerto Gutierrez (Associate of Arts) of Isanti; **Derek Dowell** (Associate of Arts) and **Katrina Page** (Bachelor of Science in Homeland Security) of Cambridge; and **Patrick White** (Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice), Magna Cum Laude,

of North Branch, from University of Maryland Global Campus.

Larissa Block (Bachelor of Science, Early Childhood Education) and **Molly Siedlecki** (Bachelor of Science, Video Production), of Cambridge; **Megan Vanhout** (Bachelor of Science, Dietetics), of Isanti; and **Brittany Kellum** (Master of Science, Rehabilitation Counseling), of North Branch, from University of Wisconsin–Stout.

Braham Pie Day slices up fun



Isanti Ambassador Chloe Olson shows off her cleaned pie plate during the Ambassadors Pie Eating contest. Olson ate through the entire plate of “pie” (actually chocolate pudding) and whipped cream in under one minute. For more Pie Day photos, go to www.isanti-chisagocountystar.com.



This couple and their dog enjoy their pie while relaxing in front of the city's digital sign.



Members of the Braham state tournament softball team modeled the pies being auctioned off.



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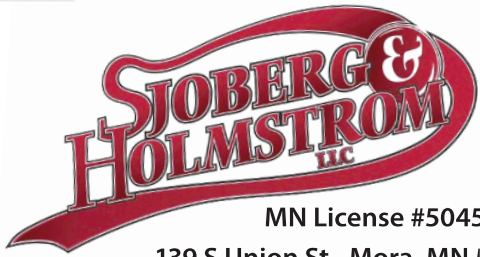
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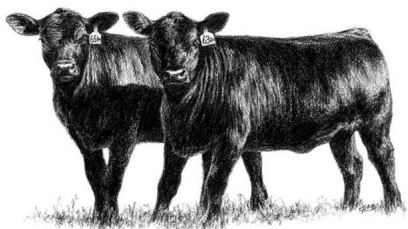
Pine Technical & Community College
900 Fourth Street SE, Pine City

The College invites alumni to share stories,
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Cambridge changes animal control services

BY BILL STICKELS III
EDITOR@COUNTYSTAR.COM

Cambridge residents needing to procure their impounded pooch will now need to do so from a new location.

The city of Cambridge is entering into a new agreement with Michelle Russell for the city's animal control services. Russell does business as an animal controller under the name Isanti County Animal Control, along with operating an animal boarding and training business under the name On-Line Retrievers, based out of Ogilvie.

According to Cambridge Police Chief Shawn Machin, the city needed to contract with a new animal control service after Gratitude Farms, based out of East Bethel, had its interim use permit for animal control services revoked by the East Bethel City Council.

Machin recommended going with Russell as she currently has animal control contracts with both the city of Isanti and Isanti County.

"The fact that all other agencies in Isanti County currently use Isanti County Animal Control offers a regional benefit," Machin said. "It streamlines coordination, ensures continuity in procedures, and reduces confusion for residents whose pets may cross into neighboring jurisdictions."

Machin said that when looking at the number of impounds the city has had in the past year, the cost for the services should be relatively comparable. Gratitude Farms charged a flat, \$400 per month fee. Isanti County Animal Control will charge \$100 per animal, mileage reimbursement, plus \$30 per day per dog for boarding if the dog is not picked up in a timely manner. He estimated the new cost would be between \$435 to \$535 per month.

Council member Aaron Berg, who previously worked for the city of East Bethel, acknowledged his familiarity with the contentious relationship between the city and the owner of Gratitude Farms and the controversy surrounding the city's revocation of its IUP.

"As you might know, social media has accused me of being on 'Team Tammy' (Gimpl, the owner of Gratitude Farms)," Berg said. "Therefore, I would like to make a motion to approve the animal control agreement with Michelle Russell."

"I would second that, and I am on 'Team Tammy,'" Council member Bob Shogren said. "I think she's a good business person. And I believe the city of East Bethel has screwed her over."

The motion passed unanimously.

APARTMENT COMPLEX ON PAUSE

It looks like the construction of an apartment complex just north of the old Perkins Restaurant property will be put on hold for at least a half-year.

According to Cambridge City Administrator Evan Vogel, Reuter Walton, the developer of the proposed complex, was unsuccessful in July in obtaining Minnesota Management and Budget bonding, despite the city being willing to act as a conduit for that bond. Vogel said Reuter Walton will now have to wait until December to make a second attempt at receiving MMB bonds.



CONTRIBUTED

The Hardy family of Rust Hill Ranch, Chisago County Farm Family of the Year 2025 recipient.



CONTRIBUTED

Pam Streed of Red Pine Winery Isanti County Farm Family of the Year 2025 recipient.

Isanti and Chisago county families named Farm Families of the Year

Two Isanti and Chisago county families have been recognized as 2025 Farm Families of the Year by the University of Minnesota for their contributions to agriculture and their communities.

The Farm Family Recognition Program, coordinated by University of Minnesota Extension, the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences, and the College of Veterinary Medicine, has honored Minnesota farmers since 1979. The awards are presented each August at Farmfest.

The Streed farm in Isanti County has been in the family for more than 100 years. Pam Streed's great-grandparents purchased the property after emigrating from Sweden. In the 1950s, her grandparents planted rows of red pine trees across the land. Those trees later inspired the name for the farm's next chapter, Red Pine Winery.

About 15 years ago, Pam and her mother attended a University

of Minnesota seminar on growing wine grapes. The sandy soil seemed a good fit, so they planted a test plot. By 2014, the Streeads expanded to a full vineyard covering five acres with five cold-hardy grape varieties. All work, from pruning to picking, is done by hand. The family uses sustainable practices and drip irrigation to maintain vine health. The wine is made and bottled on-site, sold in a small tasting room and at local stores.

The winery also gives back by hosting community events, supporting fundraisers, contributing to university research and making its space available to local nonprofits. Pam's mother lived on the farm until her death last year at age 94.

Becky and Matt Hardy of Rust Hill Ranch in Chisago County were also honored. Becky grew up on her family's farm, homesteaded in 1919 by her Norwegian ancestors, the Rustebakke family. In 2021, the Hardys

started Rust Hill Ranch, a 40-acre small-scale, diversified farm producing grass fed lamb and beef, forest-raised pork, and pastured chicken and eggs.

The Hardys raise animals using traditional methods, rotating them through pastures to improve soil health and support natural ecosystems. Matt handles the livestock while Becky manages a large garden, coordinates events and sells at the local farmers market. Their children, Bennett and Avery, help with chores.

Matt serves on the East Central Chapter board of the Sustainable Farming Association and the Chisago County Soil and Water Board. He also works to connect farmers with resources through USDA programs and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, advocating for policies that strengthen small farms and rural communities. - University of Minnesota Extension

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A hand holding a smartphone displaying the newspaper's website, with a coffee cup to the right. The phone screen shows the 'NEWSPAPER' header, a world map, and various news articles. The coffee cup is white and filled with dark liquid. Four arrows point from the phone towards the coffee cup.

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CONTRIBUTED

L-R Officer Kyle Lund, Officer Duane Southworth, Tanner Ryan, Savannah Ekstedt, with Sgt. Dave Janssen presenting the awards.



CONTRIBUTED

L-R Tanner Ryan, Randy Nelson, and Savannah Ekstedt.



CONTRIBUTED

L-R Tanner Ryan, Randy Nelson, Savannah Ekstedt, Officer Kyle Lund, and Officer Duane Southworth.

Four honored with Life Saving Award

The North Branch Police Department honored four individuals with the Life Saving Award on Sunday, July 27, for their roles in saving a man's life earlier this year.

The ceremony took place at the North Branch Fire Hall and recognized the swift efforts of two automotive shop employees and two police officers following a medical emergency on Friday,

April 4.

That morning began like any other at Russell's Automotive in North Branch. With owner Jason Russell away on a family vacation, lead mechanic Randy Nelson was overseeing operations with help from two recent high school graduates, Tanner Ryan and Savannah Ekstedt.

Nelson suffered a major heart attack

during the workday. Ryan and Ekstedt discovered him unresponsive and without a pulse. They immediately called 911 and began CPR, continuing until North Branch Police Officers Kyle Lund and Duane Southworth arrived to take over care.

Nelson was transported by ambulance to the North Branch Fire Department, where he was airlifted to a

Twin Cities hospital. He required three defibrillation shocks en route before being stabilized.

While the recovery has been slow and, at times, painful, Nelson said he is grateful for those who acted quickly and gave him a second chance at life.

WORSHIP *guide*

Baptist

First Baptist Church

304 S. Main St., Cambridge, 763-689-1173. Call the church office or visit our website for current service times and programs.
firstbaptistcambridge.org

North Isanti Baptist Church

Lead Pastor: Travis Blake
2248 313th Ave. NE, Cambridge, MN 55008. www.nibchurch.com
Email: nibchurch@msn.com
763-689-3576.
8:30am Worship Service (traditional style)
10:45am Worship Service (contemporary style)

Springvale Baptist

Pastor Zane Hall
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Sunday Worship
Wednesday: 6:00 pm Band of Brothers
Thursday: 10:00 am Ladies Bible Study
410 County Road 6 NW
Stanchfield, MN 55080
763-689-1373
springvalechurchmn.org

Sunrise Bible Church

41300 Second St., North Branch, Pastor David Stertz. Sunday school for all ages
9:30am, Sunday morning Worship
10:30am, Sunday evening 6pm, Wed. Kids 4 Truth & Bible studies for all ages 6:30pm. More info at sunrise bible church.org or 651-674-4107.

Catholic

Christ the King

305 Fern Street N
Cambridge, MN 55008
763-689-1221
Friday 8:30am
Saturday 4pm
email brigitte@isantiacc.org
Website: isantiacc.org

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

207 Whiskey Rd NW, Isanti, MN. 763-444-4035
Email: brigitte@isantiacc.org
Mass: Tues. & Wed. 8:30am.
Sun. 8:30am.
isantiacc.org

Evangelical Covenant

Karmel Covenant Church

5799 County Road 6, Princeton, MN 763-389-3169
Lead Pastor: Jason Hovis
Pastor of Youth: Kohl Hanson
Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am
Karmelcov.org

Evangelical Free

Dale Evangelical Free Church

45268 Brunswick Rd, Harris, MN 763-689-5817
Pastor/Teacher Dr. Harvey Martin.
Sunday School – all ages 9am.
Sunday Service 10:25am.
www.daleefc.com

Kost Evangelical Free Church

37405 Kost Trail, North Branch, MN – Jct. of CR 11 & CR 72
651-583-3281 • Kostchurch.org
Pastor Josh Jensen
Sunday worship service 9:30 am followed by fellowship & Sunday School
Youth group Wednesdays 7 pm
Respawn Gaming Ministry for teen boys – 2 Fridays per month.

Oxlip Evangelical Free Church

29237 Roanoke St NW, Isanti (1 mile West of Cty 5 and Hwy 47)
763-444-5134 oxlip.org
9am Worship Service
10:45am Christian Education
Awana children's ministry Wednesdays 6:30 to 8pm

Wyanett Evangelical Free Church

12 Miles West of Cambridge on Hwy 95
www.wyanettevangelicalfree.org
Pastor Bruce Talso 763-221-4469
Sunday School 9:30 am
Morning Worship 10:30 am
Mondays - Women's Evening Bible

Study 6:00 pm
Tuesdays - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm
Wednesdays - Midweek Bible Study/
Prayer 2:00 pm
Thursdays - Women's Morning Bible Study 9:30 a.m. at Heart Matters Ministry, 403 1st St. Princeton
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Lutheran

Braham Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Central Drive W. & Cty Rd 4, Braham 320-396-2755
Sunday: 10 a.m. Worship Service - In-person & Live on Facebook
Office hours 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tues., Wed., Thurs.

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church Of Rush Point (ELCA)

Pastor Vicki Vandervegt.
320-358-4829, 600 Rush Point Dr.
10:30am Worship with Fellowship following
my.calvaryofrushpoint.org.
Office: calvaryrushpoint@gmail.com

Cambridge Lutheran Church (ELCA)

621 Old North Main Street, Cambridge 763-689-1211
Traditional service: 8:30 a.m.
Contemporary service: 9:30 a.m.
www.cambridgelutheran.org - Facebook: fb.com/CambridgeLutheran
YouTube: tinyurl.com/CambridgeLutheran

Christ Ev. Lutheran Church (WELS)

32962 Vickers St. NE, Cambridge, 763-689-5333
Pastor Samuel L. Biebert.
Sunday Worship 9am, Sunday School/
Bible Class 10:30am
www.christcambridge.com

First Lutheran Church (ELCA)

43779 Gates Ave., Harris. 651-674-4498. Handicapped accessible.
Pastor Vicki Vandervegt
Sunday Worship 9:20am
Coffee & fellowship following service

Email: firstlutheran@q.com
www.firstlutheranharris.org

Joy Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)

1155 Joy Circle, Cambridge 763-689-4355
www.joylutheran.net
Pastor James Ritter
8:30 a.m. Traditional Service
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Service

Living Branch Lutheran Church (LCMS)

6486 Elm St (PO Box 335), North Branch 651-674-5576
Pastor Glen Kleppe
Sunday Worship 8am
www.livingbranch.org
email: office@livingbranch.org

Long Lake Lutheran Church (ELCA)

3921 277th Ave NW Isanti, MN 55040 763-444-5315
Pastor Sue Olson
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Sunday Schedule
Worship: 9:00 am
Communion the 1st & 3rd Sunday

Salem Lutheran Church

4638 381st Ave. NW, Dalbo, MN 55017. 763-689-1687
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www.salemlutherandalbo.com

Spring Lake Lutheran Church (ELCA)

8440 Erickson Road, PO Box 958, North Branch, MN 55056 (9 mi. E. of Cambridge on Hwy. 95, North one block on Erickson Road). 651-674-4606.
Pastor Vicki Vandervegt.sllchurch.org
Email: sll.church@gmail.com
8:15am Worship with fellowship following

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28168 Jodrell St. NE, North Branch Located 6 mi. E. of Isanti on Co. Rd. 5; (or 7 mi. W. of North Branch on Co. Rd. 5); then 1-1/2 mi. S. on Co. Rd. 12. 763-444-5988, Paul Anderson, Pastor; Sunday 9am Worship; 10:20am Adult Bible Study; Thursday 6:30pm Bible study.
Email: stjohnlutheran@att.net

St. John's Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)

980 West 4th Street, Rush City 320-358-3623
Sunday 8:45am Worship
Monday 10am Longer Look Bible Study
stjohnsrushcity.org

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)

400 SE 8th St., (Isanti #4 E.), PO Box 37, Braham 320-396-3103
9:30am Sunday School & Adult Bible Study.
10:30am Worship.
ststephensbraham.org

Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA)

38460 Lincoln Trail, North Branch 651-674-7047 Pastor Paul Cannon
In person and online worship
9 am worship
10 am Fellowship and Coffee Hour
9 am Sunday School
www.trinitynorthbranch.org
office@trinitynorthbranch.org

Methodist

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404 Cypress St. North, Cambridge. 763-689-2071.
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Non-Denominational

Grace Gospel Church

37126 MN-65, Stanchfield, MN 55080 763-308-5618
Coffee fellowship: 9:45am
Service: 10:00am
Pastor: Tim Miller
www.gracegospelmn.org
info@gracegospelchurchmn.com
Located just north of Grandy on 65, across from East Central Diesel, with three large crosses near the road.
We look forward to having you!

Journey of Faith

Bible based worship.
651-600-9878.
faiththroughaction777@gmail.com
Sunday fellowship 9am
Worship & Youth Ministry 10am
Come as you are. All welcome.
Junction Bowl. 123 Cajima Street, NE, Isanti. Refreshments served.

JustPassinthru IHS Ministries

Becoming Agape – Allowing the Holy Spirit to transform lives
763-228-0883
Meeting at Crossroads Commons
1001 1st Ave. E., Suite 100, Cambridge MN
justpassinihs@gmail.com
Justpassinthru.net
Pastor Tom Bakke
Sunday mornings at 10 am
Sunday nights and Wednesdays

Pentecostal

The Journey New Life Church

601 Heritage Blvd NE, Isanti
Pastor David L. Willis.
Sunday 10am Worship & the Word & Kids' Church.
Sunday 6pm Family Worship.
Wednesday 7pm Family Breakout Classes.
763-689-4471
Thejourneynlc.org

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North Branch

Area Chamber of Commerce

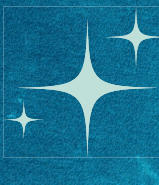
651-674-4077 • 6063 Main Street, Ste B. North Branch, MN 55056



August 2025



SAVE THE DATE





LOCATION: Flickabirds Resort
50091 Clover Trail Rush City, MN

CATERED BY: Flickabirds

SPEAKER: Chris Swanson

TOPIC: Strengthening, supporting and empowering entrepreneurs to succeed

AUGUST 12TH LUNCHEON
11:30AM - 1:00PM
CONTACT@NORTHBRANCHCHAMBER.COM
651-674-4077



register at northbranchchamber.com & network with us!

- LRS PORTABLES
 - MAYTAG LAUNDRY
 - TLG OUTDOOR SERVICES, LLC
 - CHISAGO COUNTY HRA
 - NORTHBROOK CHURCH
 - VIKING COCA-COLA
 - NORTH BRANCH GOLF COURSE
 - ANDERSON & KOCH FORD
 - PRISM DESIGN & EMBROIDERY
 - RE/MAX CATHY & ZAK CARCHEDI
 - ARROWHEAD TRANSIT
 - MIDCO
 - LAKES REGION EMS
 - ISANTI-CHISAGO COUNTY STAR
 - USA NORTHLAND DIRECTORIES
 - OPTIONS FOR WOMEN OF CHISAGO COUNTY
 - POST HASTE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
 - EDWARD JONES - ADAM CABRERA
 - ANYTIME FITNESS NB
 - BOZEMAN-NEWTON INSUARANCE AGENCY
 - FOCUS FINANCIAL
 - LAKES & PINES COMMUNITY ACTION COUNIL
 - ACCESS CHURCH
- JONES CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
 - RISE TREE SERVICE
 - FLICKABIRDS RESORT
 - COLORFUL BEGINNINGS
 - CLEAR CREEK DENTAL
 - BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PLUMBING
 - EAST CENTRAL ENERGY
 - PIZZA PUB
 - IMAGE CONTRACTING
 - ECM PUBLISHERS
 - BULRUSH GOLF CLUB
 - WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE
 - LAMPERT LUMBER
 - WAYNE'S GREENHOUSE & GARDEN CENTER
 - VISION PRO OPTICAL
 - RUDDY'S RENTAL
 - HERMANN INSURANCE
 - OLSON POWER & EQUIPMENT
 - WILD RIVER STATE PARK
 - JOSH LEONHARDT / COLDWELL
 - PARKER SATROM LAW
 - TOM KADLEC CHEVROLET
 - VFW POST 6424

Thank you for renewing your membership with the Chamber!



North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce
Annual Golf Classic

FORE G'S X
NORTH BRANCH AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



REGISTRATION
OPEN & LIMITED
ALL FORE G'S AT
612-360-6300
TO SIGN UP

SAVE THE DATE
THURSDAY AUGUST 21ST, 2025



Fall Harvest Festival Business Expo

Saturday | September 27th | 10am-3pm
North Branch Area High School

New Location!



- Food Trucks
- Live Entertainment
- Giveaways
- Variety of Vendors & Businesses
- Family Friendly

Enjoy a colorful mix of arts, crafts, goodies, local businesses, entertainment, and more. Whether you're here to shop, snack, connect, or just soak up the season, this is the one event you won't want to miss!

FREE ADMISSION
Indoor & Outdoor Event



FREE: for chamber members
\$10 for non-chamber members

Morning Networking

Morning coffee networking is an informal meeting over coffee where people can connect, exchange ideas, and find opportunities. It can be a vital tool for career advancement, mentoring, and networking. JOIN US!

Tuesday August 26th, 2025 from 8:00-9:00am
Hosted by NorthBrook Church
6943 St. Croix Trail North Branch, MN 55056



Please thank these businesses for sponsoring the North Branch Area Chamber News!

For Member News, Chamber Focus, Community Updates and other information check out our website at www.northbranchchamber.com



NORTH BRANCH LIQUORS

East Store - 5846 Old Main St.
Mon - Sat 9am-9pm • Sun 11am-5pm

West Store - 5466 St. Croix Trail
Mon - Sat 9am-9pm • Sun 11am-6pm

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