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SCHOOL: Roof project on horizon, school staff shortage a balancing act. **P8**





MIKE DRAHOSH | ASKOV AMERICAN

Fire Departments respond to house fire in Rutledge

Finlayson, Sandstone and Willow River Fire Departments responded to a house fire on January 31, 2022 in Rutledge. Above right a fire fighter vented the attic where the worst of the fire was located. Also responding were the Essentia Ambulance and Pine County Sheriff's Department.

Pine County gains levying power for countywide HRA projects

BY T.A. LEBRUN
EDITOR@PINECITYMN.COM

Economic development was at the forefront for Pine County as a resolution was recently passed by the Pine County Board of Commissioners assigning Economic Development Authority (EDA) powers to the existing county Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).

This gives the County the ability to levy money which would expand upon the work of the existing HRA. Previously, only the county's EDA, explained Pine County Administrator David Minke, could only impact juridictions which pass a resolution to allow it. But granting EDA authority to the existing HRA will now allow the County to levy a maximum of .0185% of the market value of property ($18.50 on a $100,000 home) for general economic development projects.

The projects could include, according to Pine County Economic Development Coordinator Lezlie Sauter: broadband development; working with land developers to locate businesses and housing in the community; providing resources and connections to residents and businesses owners looking to move here, start a business, or expand into the area; and assisting with marketing the community to visitors, potential new businesses and residents.

"Given that the existing HRA has successfully managed two housing projects (Finlayson Manor and Sandstone Manor) and has a board of five active and interested community members, the HRA is well situated to expand its role and provide the leadership necessary for Pine County to develop a comprehensive approach to housing and economic development in concert with our local partners," stated Minke. He added that by assigning the EDA powers to the HRA, none of the current HRA powers would be diminished and that all projects would have to come through the county board for approval. He also

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Eagles lady hoopsters lose to Jaguars

MARY ELLEN DEWEY
RECIPE@PINECOUNTYCOURIER.COM

East Central Eagles had parent's night on Friday, February 4, against Hinckley-Finlayson. The Eagles lost 40-67.

Aly Huntington led the Eagles with 16 points. Lori Grundmeier, Kenzie Ludwig, Carly Watrin and Izzy Olson each had 4 points. Chandra Nelson had 3 points, Lilly Podlewski and Elsie Laursen 2 points. Jemi Keranen had 1 point.

"The girls played hard the whole game and we just couldn't score consistently enough. I want to thank all of the parents that continue to support us through the years and travel to our games. They are amazing at supporting the girls and our program and we couldn't do it without them." said Coach Peter Rogotzke.

This coming week the Eagles have senior night on Thursday, February 10, against Braham at East Central. Tuesday, February 15, the Eagles will play their last regular scheduled game at South Ridge in Culver, north of Cloquet.



Rebels enjoy winning week

BY PEGGY GRANQUIST

The MLWR Lady Rebels traveled to Mora on Monday, Jan. 31 to take on the Mustangs after playing Two Harbors at home on Thursday, Feb. 3.

The Rebels started out the game against the Mustangs with the tip and the score thanks to Natalie MIkrot who hit a 3 on the first possession. Maci Kukuk and N. Mikrot combined for six additional points before Mora hit their first bucket (9-2). The Mustangs added two more free throws before Mikrot and Hannah Roach hit a pair of threes to further the MLWR lead to 15-4. Mikrot, Roach, Kukuk, Ava North and Lilly Petty finished off the first half scoring with a 28-9 scoring spree. The Rebels went to the locker room with a 43-13 lead

Izzy Witz began the scoring in the second stanza for the Rebels, banking a shot off the back board while drawing the foul but was unable to complete the free throw. The Rebels continued their second half dominance as Kukuk, Witz and Sarah Christy combined for another 6 points to push the Rebel lead out to 51-16. MLWR put up another 10 points to bring the game to an end at 62-31. The Lady Rebel JV also won their game 42-22.

Natalie Mikrot led all scorers with 24 points, Lilly Petty contributed 9, Hannah Roach (8), Maci Kukuk (8), Izzy Witz (6), Sarah Christy (5) and Ava North (2).

Thursday, Feb. 3, the Lady Rebels took on the Agates of Two Harbors. Lilly Petty started out the Rebel scoring by hitting a free throw. Izzy Witz added to that by hitting one from the stripe as well (2-0). Two Harbors started out slow on the scoring end, but it quickly turned into a 3 point Agate lead after a 5-0 run. The Rebels responded by hitting a bucket of their own (5-4). Two Harbors kept the lead for

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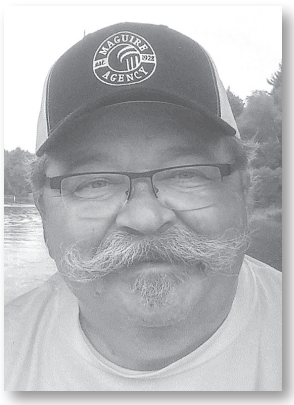
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OBITUARIES

Thomas Herzfeldt

September 9, 1956 - February 3, 2022

Thomas "Tom" Herzfeldt passed away Thursday, February 3, 2022 peacefully at his home with his loving wife of 38 years with him. Tom was born September 9, 1956 in Shawano, Wisc. to Richard and Phyllis Herzfeldt.



He graduated from Shawano High School where he was the captain of the Wrestling Team. Tom attended Wisconsin State University - Stevens Point before transferring and graduating from Wisconsin State University Stout. It was at the Minneapolis Airport where he would fall in love with his wife, Debbie, in 1981 while she was a server and he was a food and beverage supervisor. They married in 1984, welcomed their son, Richard, in 1985, and their daughter, Rachel, in 1987. Tom worked at Canterbury Downs before moving the family to Sturgeon Island in 1992. He took great pride in his work when he was hired as Director of Food and Beverage at Grand Casino Hinckley and helped establish the food and beverage department in 1991 before retirement in 2018 after many years of hard work, dedication and fun. Tom enjoyed making memories with family and friends at his home, in Shawano, fishing in Canada and at summer and deer camp in the UP of Michigan. Fishing and hunting were his favorite hobbies. He was an avid Minnesota Twins and Wild fan, but loved his Packers. He will be remembered for his kindness and can-do, if not stubborn, attitude. Always the man with a carefully written plan, and a smile and friendly greeting to whomever he met.

He is preceded in death by his father, Richard, and mother, Phyllis Herzfeldt; and parents-in-law, Kent and Melanie Peterson.

Tom is survived by his wife Debbie; son, Richard Herzfeldt; daughter, Rachel (Richard) Skog; grandsons, Victor and Harold Skog; man's best friend, Bo dog; brother, Rick Herzfeldt; sister, Julie (Kevin) Wirtz; in-laws, Marci and Jay DesJarden and Brian and Megan Peterson; many nieces, nephews, and friends that were chosen family.

A visitation to honor Tom's life will be held in Hamlin-Hansen-Kosloski Funeral Home from 4 – 6 p.m. on Friday, February 11, 2022. Visitation will continue on Saturday, February 12, 2022 from 11 a.m. until the 12 p.m. funeral service.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in memory of Tom to your local Animal Shelter or Food Bank.

Arrangements are with Hamlin-Hansen-Kosloski Funeral Home

Glen M. Mortensen

April 29, 1930 - February 4, 2022

Glen "Buzz" Marvin Mortensen died on Friday, February 4, 2022 at Essentia Health in Sandstone. He was 91 years old.



Buzz was born on April 29, 1930 in Askov, Minn. After graduating high school he served in the U.S. Army from 1949-1951. After being honorably discharged he returned to Askov and enjoyed many different careers in construction, carpentry, self-employment and care taking. On June 12, 1954 he was united in marriage to Sally Kelch. They lived in many different locations but they were never far from Askov. He and Sally returned there in 1993 and they have remained ever since. Buzz was a long standing member of the Askov American Legion and a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Minnie Mortensen.

Buzz is survived by his wife of 67 years, Sally; his children, Randy (Cindy) Mortensen, Julie (Pete) Saxe, Wendy (Rob) Best and David (Sandy) Mortensen; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and extended family members.

Services will be held in the spring of 2022.

Arrangements by Methven Funeral and Cremation Services.

Lady Rebels face Hibbing/Chisholm in first hockey playoff game

BY JANNA BODE
STAR GAZETTE

The Moose Lake Area Girls Hockey Association added two more wins and are entering the playoffs with 18-6-1 record

Team captain Gabby Gamst expects their first playoff game against Hibbing/Chisholm will be a hard fought battle.

MLWR VS. PRINCETON

The Moose Lake Area Girls Hockey Association added another win to their record Feb. 2 when they shut-out the Princeton Tigers with a score of 6-0.

The Rebels brought their game from the beginning with freshmen defenseman Sandra Ribich scoring in the first 30 seconds of the game. Then, with just over 12 minutes remaining in the first period, freshmen defenseman Hallie Klavu landed the puck in the net, assisted by Ribich. With just over seven minutes remaining, sophomore forward Megan Hattenberger was able to score, assisted by both senior defenseman Raechel Painovich and Ribich once again.

Ribich said "I think it was overall a very good team win. We got pucks deep and controlled it in the offensive zone. We got pucks to the net early, which generated good scoring opportunities. Defensively, we played our systems very well, and our goalie, Mallory Hartl played lights out."

With the Rebels leading 3-0 going into the second period, the pace seemed to slow. One goal was scored in the second period by Klavu with just under eight minutes remaining, making that her second goal of the night. This goal was assisted by Hattenberger.

The third period brought even more excitement as the Rebels continued to dominate the ice. Senior forward Julia Jusczak scored with 12 minutes remaining in the game. Sophomore forward Gracie Hartl assisted this goal.

Then, for the final goal of the night, seventh-grade forward Autumn Painovich was able to score her first goal, assisted by freshmen forward Lily Ludwig.

This brought the final score to 6-0 for their last regular-season home game of the season. The Rebel defense had a strong night, not allowing a single goal from their contenders.

MLWR VS. NORTH SHORE STORM

The following night, the Rebels played another impressive game in Silver Bay, coming out with another win with a score of 6-1 against the North Shore Storm for their last regular-season game.

PLAYOFFS BEGIN

Senior captain Gabby Gamst gave a recap on their season.

"Our regular season was great, we ended with a record of 18-6-1, which has been the best record we've had in a long time," she said.

The Lady Rebels faced Hibbing/Chisholm on home ice for their first playoff game on Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m.

Gamst said she anticipated the game will be hard fought.

"In the regular season we beat them at our home barn 2-1 and then ended up tying them 1-1 at their rink. Tuesday night will definitely be a battle, but I think that if we all show up and play our game, we can definitely pull out the win to advance to the semifinals," she said.

WINNERS: Lady Rebels work for tough wins

FROM PAGE 1

the remainder of the half but the Rebels held the Agate's within striking distance. The game see-sawed back and forth from a 1-3 point Agate lead, but at about the 10 minute mark in the game, Two Harbors pulled away. The Agates went on a 12-0 run before Lexi Kliniski banked a shot into the basket to stop the Rebel bleeding. Natalie Mikrot then hit a three that was answered by the Agates, but Maci Kukuk didn't let the Two Harbors three go unanswered. The Agates led the game 26-18, Kukuk trimmed to lead to 26-20 and Lilly Petty added two of her own to bring the Rebels within four(26-22). Two Harbors started to pull away again thanks to some sharp shooting from the arc (35-26). The Agates took a 45-34 lead into the locker room.

MLWR began the second stanza on a 4-0 run thanks to a three by Lilly Petty and a free throw by Maci Kukuk. The Agates broke the run with a free throw but Maci Kukuk answered with a layup (45-40). The Agates hit an unanswered three stretching their lead to 49-40. It looked like the Agates were going to run away with the game in the second half as they hit back to back threes that went unanswered by the Rebels (55-42) but Izzy Witz started the MLWR comeback by hitting a short jumper off a rebound. Contributions by Maci Kukuk, Natalie Mikrot, and some Agate turnovers allowed the Rebels to slowly scratch and claw their way back into the game (64-57). L Petty hit a three to bring the Rebels within 4. Maci Kukuk drove down the middle of the lane for a layup and N. Mikrot hit a jumper to tie the game at 64 with three and a half minutes to go.. Sarah Christy, M. Kukuk and Lexi Kliniski rounded out the Rebel second half scoring. MLWR pulled out a comeback win 76-69. The MLWR JV squad also went home victorious 37-19

Maci Kukuk led all Rebel scorers with 24 points, Natalie MIkrot had 22, Lilly Petty (13), Sarah Christy (8), Izzy Witz (3), Hannah Roach, Ava North and Lexi Kliniski each had 2 points.

The Lady Rebels were in Carlton on Monday, Feb 7 and in Floodwood on Thursday, Feb. 10.

HRA: Project will expand role and open doors for new projects, accessibility

FROM PAGE 1

stated that these general economic development activities will help to attract and retain good jobs and a trained workforce.

Administrator Minke said that gaps were identified which included lack of communication among the existing development agencies, inconsistent services and lack of resources, lack of access to the county's revolving loan funds, no branding effort for the region, and a general lack of consistency of zoning information for zoning. And for these reasons, the committee felt this was the right move.

Pine City Council and HRA member, Mary Kay Sloan, said, "We have a very good HRA board and have had positive discussion about connecting with EDA … I think it is a good group that is willing to put some hard work into this."

Commissioner Steve Hallan noted, "The idea that the HRA board would go wild with a levy is pretty much nonexistent because of safeguards in the resolution and in statute in the amount they can levy."

Commissioner Matt Ludwig said, "It [levy amount] will always come back to us. I think it has to do with the fact that we have a levy, the school district and townships have levies … and the public is effected by all of it. It just adds up, but it's good that it will come through us first."

Commissioner Terry Lovgren added, "It will open a lot of doors."

It was determined at the meeting that two commissioners, J.J. Waldhalm and Matt Ludwig, would sit on the HRA board as liaisons from the County.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

I am writing to let you know that the sun is shining and all is well. Have a great day.

Unwinding the rebuilding of lives, homes, after devastating fire

King has had visits from family and friends who mourn with him. He greets his visitors in the barn, then heads outside. It is going to take me some time to get over the loss of Prince, too. As you have read, he had such an innocent, clearly selfish but honest, personality. The other night I lay in bed and remembered our first meeting and the act that endeared that horse to me just minutes after our introduction began.



Finlayson News

Maxine Meyer

The guy who owned them at the time was taking the team out of his barn to demonstrate their good training. He walked King out on a lead rope knowing Prince would follow. I hung back in the barn watching. Without missing a step and barely leaning over, Prince grabbed a 70 pound square bale of hay that happened to be near the door and out it went with him. It looked like he was happy to go to work, but didn't want to forget his "lunch bale." I knew that horse and I were going to have some crazy days ahead and I looked forward to them.

On another subject, we are hearing about many close friends getting this mysterious cough, for some it lasts 24 hours, but former COVID-19 suffering folks seem to get taken right down to a more serious level. These acquaintances have tested negative for COVID-19, but none-theless, they are sick. We wish all our friends a quick recovery. These days any sickness is scary. Gary and I wear our masks constantly, sanitizing quickly after public exposure like touching doors, shopping carts, etc. It's still a pandemic and rumors are another "variant" is getting recognized.

The continuing Mecl's Store story picks up nearing 1934. While writing this I realize how much thought was put into the store/home's floorplan. I have to admit, growing up in the store I had no appreciation for any of it. I really felt like we were stuck in "Abe Lincoln" era, but now when I look back I am impressed. I have more questions than answers, but the cousins and I have put "best guessing" together believing it's construction is right around 1934-35 when the three men began building. But, the barn had to be built first and I'll tell you why I think that.

Since James played the fiddle his wife protected in the culvert in the 1918 fire, I have a hunch he designed the barn. Someone considered music when the barn was designed and I know it was never used for farming. The first floor had a bar that went the length of the barn, it was wide open down the center and the opposite side was a wall separating an office/storage area for the bar. A stairway going up from the bar leads to a huge dance floor, and in the far corner was a raised stage.

James' grandsons were very young at this time, but I know for a fact they provided music for many a good dance at very young ages. Jimmy played accordion, my dad, George R. played saxophone, and a friend on drums. Their three piece group was called the "Merry Makers."

My guess is that the barn was completed around 1934, shortly after Prohibition ended in 1933, (at least that's my story and I'm sticking to it.)

In 1934-35 supplies begin to show up for the construction of the Log Cabin store. I have a photo of the Mecl men unloading what I believe to be their first load of logs. Someone was smart enough to get a camera to take a snapshot of the rebuilding about to take place 17 years after the fire. A lot of water has gone under the bridge in those 17 years and yet, here they are. They're finally rebuilding and the boys are home and they have their families with them. James has a smile across his face, William has a bit of a smirk as he gazes at how tickled his dad seems, and my grandfather, George A. stands on the other side of James, holding a horse a bit timidly for the picture. I'm not sure I can even imagine the parental excitement James and Mary must have felt to have their boys and families there, helping again.

MAXINE MEYER Is a columnist for the Askov American and Pine County Courier. She can be reached at 612-590-6907, or email mnmaxgram@yahoo.com.

Super Sunday Snacks



Food N' Friends

Mary Ellen Dewey

IF YOU have a favorite recipe you would like to share, send it to Mary Ellen at recipe@pinecountycourier.com. ENJOY!!

MINIATURE CHEESECAKES

- 1 box Sunshine vanilla wafers
- 30 mini paper cups
- 2 pkgs. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, room temperature
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- 1 can (21 oz.) can cherry pie filling

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Have ready, vanilla wafers to fit miniature paper liner cups. Cream together cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla until smooth and creamy. Place paper cups in miniature muffin tins. Add 1 vanilla water, or crushed wafer, to fit bottom. Fill each, almost to the top, with cream cheese mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Cool. Top with cherry pie filling. Yield: about 30 miniature cheesecakes.

THE ULTIMATE SLOW COOKER QUESO

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1/2 of a small onion
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 jalapeño pepper
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tomato
- 3 c. shredded cheese, such as Monterey Jack, Colby Jack, Mexican Chilhuahua, or a shredded Mexican blend
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese
- 1/2 c. milk plus additional milk if needed
- 2 Tbsp. cilantro for serving

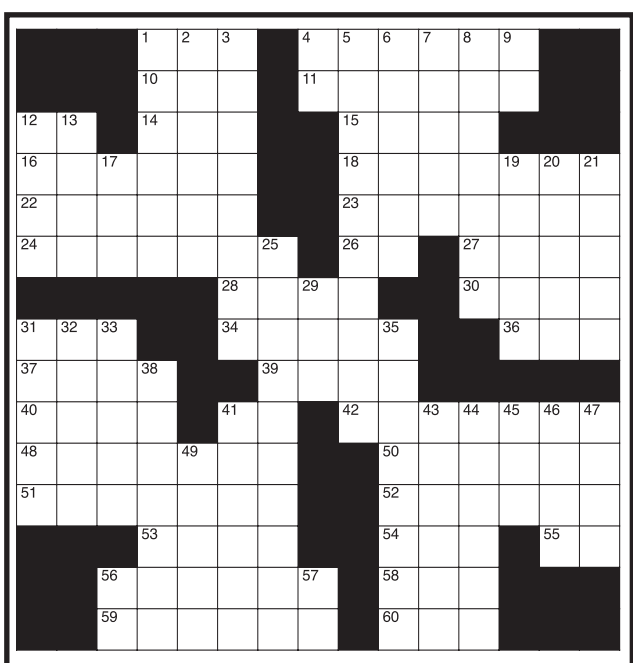
Brown the vegetables in a medium skillet on the stove top over medium heat, then scrape them into the slow cooker. Add the shredded cheese, cream cheese, and milk and stir to combine all the ingredients. Close the cooker and cook on low for 1-1/2 hours. Stir well, and add 1 or more tablespoonfuls of milk, if needed. Top with cilantro, if desired, and serve. The queso can be kept warm in the slow cooker using the warm function for at least 3 hours.

LEMONY BACON-ARTICHOKE DIP

- 5 thick-sliced bacon strips, chopped
- 1 can (14 oz.) water-packed quartered artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 pkgs. (8 oz. each) cream cheese
- 1/3 c. sour cream
- 1/2 tsp. onion salt
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- Pita bread wedges, toasted

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp, stirring occasionally. Remove with slotted spoon; drain on paper towels. Discard drippings, reserving 2 teaspoons in pan. Add artichoke hearts and garlic to drippings: cook and stir 1 minute. In a lsrge bowl, beat cream cheese, sour cream, onion salt, salt and pepper until smooth. Beat in lemon juice. Fold in artichoke mixture and half the bacon. Transfer to a greased 2-quart baking dish, Sprinkle with remaining bacon; top with Parmesan cheese. Bake uncovered, until golden brown, 25-30 minutes. Serve with pita wedges. Makes 3 cups-12 servings.





CLUES ACROSS

1. One point east of due south
4. City in Maine
10. Inquire too closely
11. Make dirty
12. Small Greek island
14. Bitterly regret
15. Millisecond
16. __ the ante
18. Without value
22. Eurasian ryegrass
23. Authentic
24. Having a mournful quality
26. Not out
27. Salvador __, Spanish artist
28. Cargo (abbr.)
30. This (Spanish)
31. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
34. Slang for trucks with trailers
36. Helps you hear
37. Steer a boat
39. British School
40. Genus of olive
41. Computer term (abbr.)
42. Horse gear
48. Give off
50. A type of salt
51. Exposing human vice or folly to ridicule
52. One who watches birds
53. Sailboat
54. A major division of geological time
55. Sodium
56. American state
58. Soak in water
59. Thin decorative covering of fine wood
60. Affirmative

CLUES DOWN

1. One of the four seasons
2. Its sultan is famous
3. A lens for correcting defective vision in one eye
4. College degree
5. Soldiers need it
6. Japanese car manufacturer
7. A way to address
8. Obstruct
9. Atomic number 45
12. Ill-mannered
13. Opaque gem
17. Indicates before
19. Remove
20. Populous Argentine city
21. More cunning
25. Rich dessert
29. Payment (abbr.)
31. Footwear
32. Famed Alabama city
33. Sheep's cry
35. Arrogance
38. Clergical vestment
41. Serving no practical purpose
43. An evening party
44. Print errors
45. Not good
46. Egyptian Sun god
47. Industrial German city
49. Scottish island
56. Early multimedia
57. Atomic number 18

Difficult decisions are necessary sometimes



A word from the Publisher
Jeff Andres

About 10 years ago, I had to make a very important but stressful decision. I was working for another newspaper company at that time and was managing 13 papers in six offices. One of those offices was in a small town and had been the home to the local newspaper for over 50 years. The name of the newspaper was emblazoned on the top of the building in big white letters - still is today.

The activity that was going on inside that building was nothing like it had been over the course of the many years that the paper was produced there, not even close. There were two reporters who would work mostly outside of the office gathering their stories through interviews or attending meetings and taking photos. These reporters wrote some of their stories in the office at their computers but really only spent time in the office on a Tuesday putting the pages of the paper together on their computer. We also had an office person who took care of classifieds, subscriptions and recording sales at stores while waiting on walk-in customers and answering phones.

Newspaper advertising revenue had taken a dip at the time but subscriptions were still steady. Because subscription revenue at most newspapers doesn't begin to come close to covering the costs associated with producing a newspaper, I had to find other ways of remaining a viable business. When I took a step back and started looking at things objectively, I realized that the hours the building was being used and the amount of walk-in traffic was very low. I also realized, as we have seen lately with the number of people working from home, that phones could be answered anywhere and computers could log into servers from anywhere. Our industry changed for the better! But could I actually close a building though and what would be the reaction to doing this with employees and with the community we served.

The decision came down to keeping a brick and mortar building open or saving the overhead expense of that and re-investing that into the product. I will take the product any time. I wrote a column much like this explaining why I was doing what I was doing. I assured customers that there were plenty of options for connecting with us in the future but walking into that office

SEE **DECISIONS,** PAGE **6**



Volunteers are important



About the Town
Gene Johnson

DURING THE PANDEMIC, volunteers have become more important than ever. They have bridged the gap for transportation, groceries, medical care, child care and overcoming loneliness.

Food shelves and food banks have been used more by families in need and volunteers have been there to sort, bag and assist in many ways.

Loss of work days due to illness, child care, and schools going to remote learning have seriously affected incomes.

Government subsidies have been cut back and the increase in inflation directly affects household incomes. The affect is greater for those with low incomes as food, fuel and medical costs take a larger chunk.

Be sure to thank those who volunteer and give yourself a pat on the back if you are one.

EVERY FALL AND winter pesky rodents like mice and rats like to find a warm place to reside for the winter. Little red squirrels can also be trouble. Traps and bait are varied by types and sizes. We have found peanut butter and cheese are good bait.

Last week I heard a new trapping idea from a longtime friend who lives in Dellwood, Minnesota. He uses a five-gallon pail with a quarter inch of cooking oil in the bottom. The rodents climb in, get oiled, can't get out and die.

NATIONAL NEWS HAS brought attention to the record low 30-degree temperatures in Florida. One of the warnings posted is about the iguanas falling out of the trees. Don't laugh. Living winters in Fort Myers, this is a reality. When temperatures drop into the 40s, the bodies of the cold-blooded iguanas slow down and become immobile. However, most of them survive this and as the day warms up, so do the iguanas.

GREEN IGUANAS ARE not native to Florida but were accidentally introduced as stowaways in cargo ships. They are considered an invasive species. They come from Central and South American countries close to the equator.

Our favorite cruising in the Caribbean is the Exuma islands, southeast of Nassau. A large group of iguanas live on the small island of Bitter Guana Cay. They are studied by science students who anchor near the island and come ashore by tender. We dinghy in from anchor and feed the iguanas fresh vegetables. They also live on several other islands in the Exumas. The world population has dwindled to 5,000.

DON'T FORGET VALENTINE'S Day on February 14. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France and Australia. In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popular around the 17th century. By the middle of the 18th century, it was common for friends and lovers of all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By 1900 printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's

SEE **JOHNSON,** PAGE **6**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR GUIDELINES

The *Askov American* encourages readers to share their viewpoints of community issues by writing letters to the editor. Publishing decisions are made on questions of free speech, good taste, public interest and public sensitivity.

The *Askov American* reserves the right to edit for accuracy, clarity, libel, and civility and reserves the right not to publish a letter. Personal complaints or attacks, plagiarized material, religious treatises or submissions from organized letter-writing campaigns will not be published.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS

Letters must be submitted by 3 p.m. Mondays to askovamerican@scicable.com or via mail to P.O. Box 275, Askov, MN 55704

- Letters to the editor must be 400 words or less.
- Each letter writer may have one letter published every 30 days, or four print cycles (exceptions made for rebuttals).
- Anonymous letters will not be published. Letter signatures must include the writer's first and last name, community of residence and phone number. Phone numbers will not be published.
- Only letters originating from writers who live, work or have some other relevance to the *Askov American* circulation area will be published.
- An identification line may be added to the writer's letter identifying his or her occupation or title as it applies to the topic of the letter.
- Special rules apply during election season.

ASKOV AMERICAN

"The most important thing a community newspaper does is recognize the value of the lives of ordinary people."

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OFFICE HOURS:
Mon., Wed., Thursday
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Tuesday and Friday Closed.

BRUNO/KERRICK NEWS



Bruno/ Kerrick News
Sylvia Schweiger

Jeanette Swenson and Sylvia Schweiger were among the many that attended the Diamond Dance 2022 Winter Showcase held at the East Central School on Saturday, February 5. Jeanette's granddaughters, Brooke and Ciara Cekalla, were two of the dancers in the recital. All the dancers did a great job!!..It was fun to watch.

Al and Sandy Hoiland's granddaughter came to visit on Friday and Sunday. Kali treated Al and Sandy to lunch at the Bear's Den.

Condolences are extended to the Glenn "Buzz" Mortensen family and friends. Glenn, age 91, passed away on Friday, February 4. Services for Glenn will be held in the spring of 2022. Arrangements by Methven Funeral and Cremation in Sandstone.

If you have any news to share, please feel free to contact me at either my email address :storebo1@frontier.com or call me at 320-838-3554.

WILLOW RIVER NEWS



Willow River News
Kathi Bennett

Presidents Day is coming up. In listening to people in the community talk about the current political situation, I try to respond back to them, do not give up hope that this country can pull ourselves out of this. Maybe it is the optimist in me. But I am reminded by history that when we are up against a wall we seem to get focused on correct action and bring ourselves out of it. I think back to the revolutionary war, the civil war, and WWII. The ordinary men (and women) became heroes. They looked at what they wanted their country to be instead of what they were up against. They didn't listen to fear tactics to dissuade what they thought was right. George Washington didn't succumb to pressure or fear. He inspired the people to persevere. He said, "Let us therefore animate and encourage each other, and show the whole world that a Freeman, contending for liberty on his own ground, is superior to any slavish mercenary on earth." Abraham Lincoln also had many inspirational moments and led a nation through a civil war. He said, "Adhere to your purpose and you will soon feel as well as you ever did. On the contrary, if you falter, and give up, you will lose the power of keeping any resolution, and will regret it all your life."

There will be a Snowmobile Safety Class Field Day on Saturday, March 5, 2022 at 9 a.m. at Finlayson Elementary School. This class is for kids age 11 to 15 years old. The class size is limited so you must pre-register by March 1. Completion of the on-line DNR class is required before. See the DNR website for more information and bring all your DNR paperwork with you to the class. A parent or guardian must be present. Also, snowmobile and helmet are required to take the class. To register please contact George at 320-233-6381. This class is sponsored by the Finlayson-Giese Sportsman's Club.

The business hours for city hall are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday and Friday. City hall is open even though there is no car in front. We are closed on Wednesdays.

At the school: There is an Administrative Assistant position open at the elementary office at the Willow River school. Also, needed are bus drivers, substitute van and bus drivers, substitute teachers and paras, elementary and high school music, choir, and band teachers, special education teacher, long term substitute business education teacher. For more information please call the school at 218-372-3131. February 21 there is no school due to President's Day. Spring Conferences will be February 22 and February 24 from 3 to 6 p.m.

At St. Mary's/ St. Isidore's Church: Mark your calendars. Valentine Bingo and Supper will be hosted by council 4798 Knights of Columbus on Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022 at 4:00 pm at St. Isidore's Hall, Sturgeon Lake. The cost is $10 per board for 20 games at the door. Multiple boards can be purchased. Coverall game is the final and 21st game which will be sold separately at $1 per board. Dinner is available after the Bingo for $8. Outreach program: "Clothes for Kids." The three area schools have identified the need for clothing and outerwear in all sizes from small child to large adult. The collection boxes are in the social hall at Holy Angels and the back area of St. Mary's. Please keep in mind that clothing should be new or gently used. Confessions: If you are interested in going to confession during the week, you may let Fr. Francis know and he will be happy to hear your confession after daily Mass or by appointment.

Hockey schedule or ripe bags, both a challenge



Ask Tante

Dear Tante Ingeborg,

There's a lot of stuff going on right now with the pandemics and all, but the thing that's really getting to me is the kids' hockey schedule. Otto and I gave a lot of thought to family planning and carefully spaced our kids two years apart. But we did not consider that four years down the road the three of them would be playing at different levels in hockey. I should be grateful that we're able to hand down a lot of equipment and I am, but trying to manage the schedules is making my hair fall out. Fortunately there are two drivers. We never see each other but that makes for a happier marriage. How do other families handle this challenge?

Signed , Trish the Tournament Mom

Dear Trish,

The real problem with hockey is trying to keep the bags from smelling up the the garage where sensible people keep them. One of my friends kept her kid's bag in her van and suffered serious migraines from October through February. All you need for scheduling is a large calendar on the refrigerator door. Write each kid's games and practices in a different color. Decide who will drive where. Cancel all social activities, doctors appointments and events which are not hockey related. Make sure you keep your cell phone with you at all times. Then rejoice because in no time at all those forwards, goalies and defensemen will be able to drive themselves and you can focus on orthodontist appointments. Good luck with the tournaments and remember, Tante Ingeborg cares….. but not so much

DO YOU REMEMBER?

McGrath church destroyed by fire

100 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 7 , 1922

- Walter Johnson, northeast of Askov , returned home last week from the Plaisted and Emerson camp east of Bruno. Plaisted and Emerson employ between 30 and 35 men at their camp and haul their pulpwood and logs to Belden.

- Rev, S.D. Rodholm and family of Askov have now moved into the new splendid and spacious parsonage.

75 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 6, 1947

- Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Torrell of Duquette are the happy parents of a baby girl. She has been named Anita Louise.

- Mr. and Mrs. Mike Grebb purchased the Albert Petersen Café in Bruno since Mr. and Mrs. Petersen is leasing the Brieland Café in Askov now.

- Mr. and Mrs. Einar Schatvet celebrate their silver wedding anniversary at their home with family and friends .

- Blaze destroys the Grace Lutheran Church in McGrath. The adjoining parsonage was saved by efforts of the volunteer firemen.

50 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 10 , 1971

- Mrs. Ellen Jorgensen of Askov observes her 80th birthday with a gathering of family and friends at her home.

- D.T.S.N. Rick Storebo returned to Fort Meyer Va. after visiting family. He is now employed at the Pentagon.

- Barbara Ann Chmielewski and Thomas Lee Walker were united in marriage on December 18, 1971 at St. Isdore's Catholic Church in Sturgeon Lake.

- February is heart month, so with the heart fund Minnesota's goal is $860,000 with Pine County's goal being $2,430.

25 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 6 , 1997

- The Askov American wins newspaper award at the state convention held on January 31 and February 1st. The award was given for a story Dave Heiller did on the Cold War.

- Troy and Jenny Westendorf of Nickerson are the parents of their first child, a girl born January 19. She has been named Samantha Bea. Grandparents are Les and Phyllis Ashmore and Rueben and Carol Westendorf.

- Jim and Missy Cederstom of Duluth are proud parents of a baby boy born January 31. He will be known as James Michael. Mike and Ruthie Jorgensen of Askov are the maternal grandparents.

10 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 2 , 2012

- Vision Pro opens an office in Sandstone at the Essentia Health Hospital.

- Nathan Johnson, 34, of Pine City announces his candidacy for Representative in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

- Rocky Bloom, grandson of Walter Bloom, was awarded a Silver Star for valorous achievement on November 14, 2010.

- Miss Askov, Joyce Domogalla and Miss Sandstone, Emilee Franklin participated in the St. Paul Winter Carnival events this past weekend.

EAST CENTRAL SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

Thursday, February 10
Blue line: BBQ rib on a bun, au gratin potatoes, corn, applesauce, and milk
Silver line: Hamburger gravy, mashed potatoes, corn, applesauce, and milk

Friday, February 11
Blue line: Pizza, breadstick, apple, raw carrots and milk
Silver line: Chicken nuggets, chips, apple, raw carrots, and milk

Monday, February 14
Blue line: Taco hot dish, breadstick, cooked carrots, tropical fruit, and milk
Silver line: Chicken wrap, chips, cooked carrots, tropical fruit, and milk

Tuesday, February 15
Blue line: BBQ chicken sandwich, fries, broccoli fruit, and milk
Silver line: Sloppy joes, chips, broccoli, tropical fruit, and milk

Wednesday, February 16
Blue line: Pancakes (2), sausage (2), Mandarin oranges. Juice, and milk
Silver line: Ham/ cheese melt, chips, Mandarin oranges, green beans, and milk

ASKOV GUN SHOW
February 12-13, 2022
Pine County History Museum
6333 HC Andersen Alle, Askov, MN 55074
Sat. 9:00am-5:00pm
Sun. 9:00am-3:00pm
Admission $5.00
Second day free with hand stamp
Children 12 & under FREE – Must be accompanied by an adult
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Minnesota Land Trust, Osprey Wilds ELC permanently protect Grindstone Lake shoreline, woods

PRESS RELEASE
MINNESOTA LAND TRUST

It's a 54-year-old gift that keeps on giving. Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, located on Grindstone Lake in Sandstone, Minn., started its life as a 535-acre gift from Marguerite Schwyzer in 1968. On January 25, 2022, Osprey Wilds and the Minnesota Land Trust completed a conservation easement that now protects 460 acres of that land in perpetuity. Acquired with funding from the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Funds, this easement preserves shoreline, forests, prairies, wetlands and wildlife habitats, providing a stable venue for Osprey Wilds' visitors to discover nature and forge lasting commitments to the land.

"Minnesota's nature centers are essential institutions that give our youth the opportunity to experience the wonders of the outdoors and develop a life-long conservation ethic," explains Kris Larson, executive director of the Minnesota Land Trust. "We are so thrilled that organizations like Osprey Wilds have the foresight to protect their land base and ensure that this legacy will continue for generations."

With over 4,000 feet of shoreline on the deep, cool waters of Grindstone Lake - a DNR-recognized "lake of biological significance"- this easement now formally protects unique and at-risk Minnesota habitats for species like the mudpuppy and, according to Osprey Wilds executive director Bryan Wood, "serves as a buffer to climate change." Thriving old-growth forests beyond the shoreline hold the potential to shelter vulnerable and threatened native species like the red-shouldered hawk and the northern long-eared bat. The property's northern mixed cattail marshes present an exciting opportunity to preserve and restore an increasingly rare community of native Minnesota plants.

The conservation benefits extend beyond the Osprey Wilds easement itself: as a tributary to the Grindstone, Kettle, and St. Croix Rivers, keeping Grindstone Lake and its surrounding woods and wetlands clean will help keep these other vital waterways healthy as well. It's a win for all—the species who rely on these habitats will have safe places to live, and Minnesotans will have beautiful, restorative landscapes to enjoy.

This legacy's significance is clear to Wood, "Once in a great while, you have the opportunity to do something that reaches far beyond the evanescence of your own life, where your actions leave an impact for generations to come. The chance to permanently protect Osprey Wilds' property with a conservation easement through the Minnesota Land Trust is one of those rare occasions."

It's a natural fit with Osprey Wilds' educational mission, too. For over 50 years their youth and adult programs, educator trainings, and community events have helped cultivate a sense of stewardship in Minnesotans of all ages. Combined with the 416 acres of land Osprey Wilds acquired at the end of 2021 from the Blacklock Nature Sanctuary—most of which are protected with Minnesota Land Trust easements completed in 2013 and 2014—and their additional campus assets, the Grindstone Lake easement will help ensure that Osprey Wilds will have a space to foster connections between people and nature "that will last through the ages."

Says Wood: "We are extremely grateful for the ability to work with the Minnesota Land Trust on this consequential project to protect Osprey Wilds' campus and hope that our example inspires others to consider doing the same. Together, we can all help make the future of Minnesota's environment healthier and more resilient, and ensure that there are biological repositories for nature's processes to continue on."

The Grindstone Lake permanent conservation easement was made possible thanks to the members of the Minnesota Land Trust and with funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 1 and St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 2 grants, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature and recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC).

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or other qualified agency that permanently limits certain uses of land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners continue to own and enjoy the land, pay property taxes, and control land access. Once created, the conservation easement is binding on all future owners of the property. More information can be found atwww.mnland.org.

THE MINNESOTA Land Trust is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and restore Minnesota's most vital natural lands in order to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences and scenic beauty for generations to come. The organization has completed 630 conservation projects statewide, permanently protecting over 70,000 acres of natural and scenic land and over a million feet of fragile shoreline.

Eagles downed by Jags

COACH DARREN FOGT
DARREN.FOGT@EASTCENTRAL.K12.MN.US

The East Central Eagles had only one game last week. It was a tough one against the Hinckley-Finlayson Jaguars on Thursday, Feb. 3. The Eagles struggled to make most of their shots.

The Eagles struggled to shoot 3-pointers as well. They were one for 22. It was a tough one. At the end of the day the boys kept fighting, but their cold shooting was too much to overcome. The Eagles lost 60-41.

Nathan Zielinski and Jacob Dixon each had 11, Carlin and McDonald 4, Hunter Colton 9, and Nic Depaulis 2. Jacob Dixon led the team with 13 rebounds.

Friday, Feb. 11, the Eagles (6-12) will go to Braham (5-14). On Monday, Feb. 14, the Eagles will host Swanville (7-6). Game times are 5:45/7:15.

DECISIONS: Changes at Askov American

FROM PAGE 4

was no longer one of them. There was a lot we need to do in order to make this change but careful planning ahead of time helped get this done.

When all was said and done, I was the last person to walk out that door. Before I did that, I took one last stroll around that office and stood at the door imagining all that had taken place within those walls over those many, many years.

Recently, I find myself facing the same question again- building or product? The Askov American office walk-in traffic is so low that there are multiple days in a row where no one walks through the doors. When the pandemic started, we reduced the hours the office was staffed to three days a week. But with COVID hurting many of the businesses in the area who we rely on for advertising revenue and experiencing employee shortages ourselves, we find it necessary to make a change in order to continue to provide you with local, personal customer service.

Starting this week, the Askov office will be permanently closed. All services for the American will now be done in the Pine County Courier office at 414 Main St in Sandstone. The phone for Askov will be answered in the Sandstone office, probably by the same person you spoke with in Askov. If you are wanting to look at back issues of the American, that can be done in the Sandstone office. Although you won't be able to walk into the Askov office to complete your business with us, we are still just a phone call or email away. You can help keep the American strong by subscribing, advertising and giving us news tips by contacting us at 320-384-6188.

We are also in the planning stages of making some exciting changes to news coverage to the area in the very near future. More will come with this soon!

As the office gets cleaned out and it comes time to lock up for the last time, I will be the one to do that. I will again try to imagine all of what had happened over the years between those four walls.

JEFF ANDRES is the Publisher for Northstar Media and Kanabec Publications. He can be reached at 651-407-1258 or jeff@northstarmedia.net.

JOHNSON: Remember Valentine's Day

FROM PAGE 4

feelings were discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings. Candy, flowers and dining out dominate Valentine gifts today. Remember the color of the roses you give has meaning, too. The following is a list of the color meanings of roses:

Red - love and passion
Orange - energy and desire
Yellow - friendship and joy
Green - growth and abundance
Blue - mystery and uniqueness
Lavender - wonder and enchantment
Pink - elegance and sweetness
Peach - sincerity and gratitude
Black - change and courage
White - young love and innocence
Ivory - grace and charm
Mixed colored bouquets - multiple rose meanings

NFL FOOTBALL WILL not be the same without Tom Brady. He is retiring after 22 seasons and seven Super Bowls. A disciplined and committed player who ends a remarkable career on top.

GENE JOHNSON is the Publisher Emeritus, Press Publications, White Bear Lake, MN and owner of Northstar Media. He can be reached at ppinfo@presspubs.com.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICES

PINE LAKE TOWNSHIP
Notice is hereby given that the Pine Lake Town Board will hold a Special Meeting on February 23, 2022 at 6:00PM to consider having Pine County take over administration of the Town's Zoning.
Meeting will be held at the Town Hall located at: 1999 State Highway 18, Finlayson, MN 55735. Any questions may be directed to: Supervisor Mark Carlson 320-233-7455.
Clerk Stephanie Lee
Published in the Askov American on February 10, 2022

MINUTES

MINUTES OF
PINE COUNTY BOARD MEETING
SPECIAL MEETING –
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
STRATEGIC PLANNING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022,
9:00 A.M.
BOARD ROOM, 635
NORTHRIDGE DRIVE NW, PINE CITY, MINNESOTA

Commissioner Hallan called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Josh Mohr, Terry Lovgren, and Matt Ludwig. Also present was County Administrator David Minke and County Attorney Reese Frederickson. Due to an out-of-town commitment, Commissioner J.J. Waldhalm joined the meeting via interactive technology, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.02. Commissioner Waldhalm was seen and heard at the meeting via electronic means, at a location open and accessible to the public, and participated from 904 Calle Cruz Roja, Barrio Obrerro, Arecibo PR. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

1. **Review Progress on 2021 Goals**
Commissioners reviewed 2021 priorities/goals and accomplishments.
• Economic Development
• Broadband Access
• County Attorney Office workload
• Wetland Bank Development
• Sales Tax for Transportation
• Sheriff's Office Staffing
• Solid Waste/Dumping
• Outdoor Recreation/Trails
• Re-establish Local Government Officials meetings (when possible)
• 2022 Levy / Service Levels
• Pandemic Response/Lessons Learned/Organizational & Community Resilience

2. **Department Presentations**
The following department representatives provided an overview of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Priorities for their departments:
Probation Terry Fawcett
Human Resources Jackie Koivisto
Information Technology Ryan Findell
Health and Human Services Becky Foss
Chair Hallan called a recess for lunch at 11:57 a.m.
The board reconvened at 12:27 p.m.
County Sheriff Jeff Nelson
County Sheriff/Jail Rod Williamson
County Attorney Reese Frederickson
Auditor/Treasurer Kelly Schroeder
Highway/Public Works Mark LeBrun
Chair Hallan called a recess at 2:55 p.m.
The board reconvened at 3:07 p.m.

3. **Brainstorm Strategic Issues for 2022**
The commissioners identified the following issues for consideration:
• Broadband Access
• Community Health / Youth / 4-H / Blue Zones
• 2023 Levy
• Mental Health
• Land/sell while value is high
• County Attorney Office Workload
•Legislative Priorities—Legislative presence
• SSIS/other programs
• Probation funding
• Highway funding
• Group Homes / transitional housing (need for)

4. **Rank Strategic Issues/Develop Goal Statements**
The proposed strategic issues for 2022 will be reviewed and refined at a future meeting.

5. **COVID-19 Update / Discussion**
OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) for COVID-19 vaccine, testing and masking was discussed.

6. **Adjourn**
With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.
Stephen M. Hallan, Chair
Pine County Board of Commissioners
David J. Minke, County Administrator
Clerk to the Pine County Board of Commissioners
Published in the Askov American February 10, 2022

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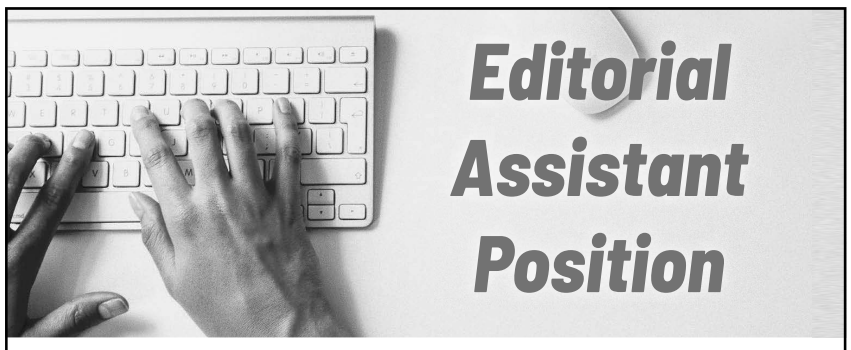
MOOSE LAKE STAR GAZETTE

Editor/Reporter/Photographer

We are seeking a talented individual for a full-time editor position.

The person should be a good writer and curious about what is happening around the Moose Lake, Barnum, Sturgeon Lake and Willow River area. The individual should have previous writing experience, preferably in a newspaper setting. You will put together the MLSG each week by writing stories, taking photos, editing/formatting press releases, designing pages and directing a team of stringers. Other duties including maintaining the newspaper's website and social media sites, as well as maintaining relationships with contacts within the community.

Please send resume and writing clips to:
Publisher, 930 Cleveland St S, Cambridge, MN 55008
or email to jeff@northstarmedia.net



Editorial Assistant Position

We have a full time editorial assistant position open in our Pine City office. This person will work with the Pine City Pioneer editor to produce, design and write stories to be used in the Pioneer weekly newspaper. They will also format legal notices, obituaries and other news. Must be very detail oriented and good with computers.

Proficiency in InDesign and Photoshop is desired.

Please send resume to Jeff Andres, Group Publisher, 930 Cleveland St S, Cambridge, MN 55008 or email jeff@northstarmedia.net.

SELL IT FAST IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!



NOW HIRING In-House Sales Person

NorthStar Media is seeking a motivated person to fill an open position as **In-House Sales Person.** Monday - Friday, 40-hour work weeks. Duties include sales for all of the classified pages and maintaining church directories for the following papers: Pine City Pioneer, Hinckley News, Askov American, Pine County Courier, Moose Lake Star Gazette and The Evergreen Shopper. Additionally, you will assist the front office staff with various daily operations tasks. You must be able to multi task using multiple software programs, communicate via email and phone and in person, and have strong organizational skills.

If interested, please contact Jeff Andres, Publisher.
651-407-1258 or Jeff @northstarmedia.net

NorthStar Printers • Publishers



Writers WANTED!

The Hinckley News is looking for a Full Time Writer or Contract Writer (per story) to cover Sandstone, Askov and Hinckley areas.

Call Jen @ 320-384-6188 or Email editor@hinckleynews.com for more information.

HINCKLEY NEWS
115 E. Main St., Hinckley, MN
320-384-6188

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East Central School looking at roof replacement project



Supt. Update
Andy Almos

Dear East Central Community,

East Central Schools has moved into the second half of the school year. Our staff are focused on filling learning gaps that may have come about as a result of teaching during a pandemic. We are finding these gaps do exist for some students, but other effects of the pandemic are showing up are well. Structure, routine, and stamina for being at school all day, are areas we've had to reteach students. This will take time but we are committed to getting things back in order. The effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, but overall the school year is going very well. We remain committed to prioritizing in person learning because students need to be in school with our highly trained staff to achieve socially and academically. Staff shortages are plaguing nearly every profession these days. If you hold a bachelor's degree and are interested in being a substitute teacher your help is needed. Substitute teacher pay was recently raised to $170 per day. This has led to an increase in our number of subs, but we could use more. Often we are seeing school districts shift learning models because of staff shortages. So far, we have been able to maintain but anyone interested in subbing should contact the school district. Subbing opportunities are also available for paraprofessionals and kitchen staff.

Long range facility maintenance is an area of focus for us as we look ahead to protecting the school building our taxpayers gave us. It is hard to believe our school campus is approaching 20 years old. As our building ages a comprehensive plan is necessary to keep it looking new and keeping pace with educational trends. An important project that has been at the top of our list is the replacement of the building's roof. The life expectancy of our roof, when the building was constructed, was said to be 20 years. Over the life of the roof a great deal of routine maintenance has been done to keep it in decent shape. Yet, there comes a time when replacement is the best course of action and that time is nearly upon us. The school board has been planning and discussing this project for the past seven years. We will continue to work through this decision in the months ahead.

Winter weather continues to have us watching the forecast as a matter of routine. As a reminder, we are not planning to have "snow days" this year. If school needs to be canceled, we would shift to eLearning days. This allows us to keep learning going and avoid altering the school calendar to make up school days. We intend to see how this goes and evaluate its effectiveness at the end of the school year and beyond. Our goal is to have school, in person, has long as it is safe to do so.

Take care everyone.

ANDREW M. Almos is superintendent at East Central Schools. He can be reached at aalmos@eastcentral.k12.mn.us.

Annual ice fishing contest donates to veterans

BY JAMIE LUND
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Grab your ice fishing pole, get comfy and land the big one.

The Moose Lake Brewery will sponsor their fifth annual ice fishing contest 2-4 p.m on Saturday, Feb 12.

The Sturgeon Lake Area Lions Club will once again donate the proceeds of their raffle ticket sales to the Wounded Warriors United organization. Last year they donated $4,000, including $500 from the brewery. This year they hope to raise $10,000, said Shawn Wigg, one of the brewery owners.

Tickets are $20 and currently for sale at Federated Co-Op Gas Station, Lakeside Lawn and Snow, Lampert Lumber as well as Moose Lake Brewing Company.

