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SPECIAL SECTION: Fall home improvement offers tips for indoor and outdoor design **SEE INSIDE**



From left: Tyler Celotta, Dayuis Turvold Celotta, Sawyer Celotta and Daniel Celotta pose for a family photo during Sawyer's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Tyler and Daniel are also Eagle Scouts.

Circle Pines family celebrates 3 Eagle Scouts

BY LOGAN GION
STAFF WRITER

When one thinks of birds in Lino Lakes, they usually think of the blue heron. Members of the Celotta family, though, have eagles on their minds.

Sawyer Celotta is the newest Eagle Scout from Troop 692, a troop chartered by the Lino Lakes American Legion. Eagle Scout is the highest rank in Scouts BSA, and one only 6% of Scouts achieve. Sawyer's older brother, Tyler Celotta, and his father, Daniel Celotta, are also Eagle Scouts.

"I wanted to be an Eagle Scout when I was younger, but then, as I kept going, I stopped wanting to because it was a lot of work," Sawyer recalled. After pausing a moment, he added, "But then I just didn't stop."

Tyler had a similar attitude when he was in Scouts. "I never thought I could get Eagle," he said. "I feel like the way to motivate a kid into doing Eagle is to not give them a list of all the things that they need to complete right at the very beginning."

For Tyler, achieving the rank of First Class felt doable, but the

leadership requirements seemed out of reach.

"We had some very strong leaders ... so when they phased out of the troop, there was a large negative space that had to get filled," Tyler recalled. "It was like, 'Oh, I can fulfill this role.' It was less of a grind, more of supporting the troop."

Sawyer's path was different. After achieving Life Scout, Sawyer's sport, school and church commitments made a leadership commitment difficult. The troop's

SEE **EAGLE SCOUT FAMILY**, PAGE 9

Private school, residential development proposed

BY MADELINE DOLBY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

LINO LAKES — A private school and residential development have been proposed by TCLD Land Holdings LLC to be built in the southeast quadrant of Main Street and Sunset Avenue. The development is being called Robinson South.

The planned unit development (PUD) concept plan was presented to the Lino Lakes City Council at a recent work session. The development contains approximately 153 gross acres and would consist of a mix of 389 housing units and the K-12 private school.

"We're (at) step one of our development review process," City Planner Katie Larsen explained. "At the concept plan level there is no formal action by council. This is high-level review comments."

According to Larsen, the development would consist of single-family homes and townhomes. There would be 130 single-family 55-foot-wide lots, 178 single-family 65-foot-wide lots, eight single-family 80-foot-wide lots and 73 row townhomes. Larsen added the school is proposed in the northwest quadrant of the development. The applicant is currently working with Avail Academy.

SEE **ROBINSON SOUTH**, PAGE 2

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ROBINSON SOUTH: Housing and school mixed development proposed to Lino Lakes

FROM PAGE 1

The preliminary range of housing units allowed for the entire site is 364 to 545. Larsen said the proposed 389 housing units falls within this density range. The development’s overall net density is 3.56 units per acre. She added it is important to note that the 16-acre private school is not included in these density calculations since it is not a residential use.

The development will provide open space with trails, ditches and stormwater ponds. The total open space equals around 29%. The private townhome area has 52% open space. According to the staff report, the proposed development area contains four different land use categories: low-density residential, medium-density residential, high-density residential and planned residential/ commercial.

Per the city’s 2040 comprehensive plan, the site is in Planning District 2. Planning District 2 states “the Robinson Farm and Main Street site is planned to accommodate an 80/20 percent mix of residential and commercial. While allowed in all areas, commercial development will be required in at least one quadrant. To ensure implementation the city may choose to rezone land to a compatible neighborhood commercial zoning district upon completion of a corridor plan. A Master Plan for the Main Street Corridor between Sunset Avenue and Fourth Avenue should be completed.”

Larsen added the Robinson South development is within the Main Street Master Plan study area and will be reviewed against the master plan’s preferred scenario. When compared to the preferred development scenario,

Robinson South was generally consistent.

Main Street will be the principal arterial street while Fourth Avenue will be the major collector street. Robinson Drive is a minor collector street. Trails will be provided along minor collector streets. A trail near the townhomes will connect with the existing trail section that connects Robinson Drive and Century Farm North park.

Larsen added if the development moves forward, preliminary plans will detail compliance with the major road section requirements.

Both the Centennial School District and the Forest Lake School District have inquired about the K-12 school.

Council Member Chris Lyden asked if the city should be concerned about a charter school because “a comprehensive review by the Star Tribune found

that only 13 out of 203 charter schools in Minnesota have consistently exceeded state averages in math and reading.”

Larsen said it is important to understand that the school is allowed, with certain conditions. The school will require a site and building plan review and conditional use permit as part of the PUD preliminary plat process or separate land use application.

“At the end of the day, it’s an institutional use that’s allowed within that district by conditional use permit,” Community Development Director Michael Grochala added, “We have to view them on their merits based on what those zoning ordinances provide for.”

The council took no formal action. It was discussion only.

Lino Lakes City Council reviews preliminary 2027 budget, tax levy

BY MADELINE DOLBY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Lino Lakes Finance Director Tracy Thoma presented the preliminary 2027 budget and tax levy to the City Council at a recent work session.

As of now, the preliminary 2027 tax levy is expected to be \$18,881,218, an increase of \$811,553, or 4.49%, from the 2026 tax levy.

Areas where the budget was reduced include health and workers’ compensation insurance, legal services, fire professional services, fire uniforms, street salt and sand, and government buildings professional services. The Lino Lakes Police Department has pulled its requests for additional training and the purchase of Avon gas masks. The police department will now purchase furniture for its wellness room over a two-year time span as well as fitness equipment.

The estimated market value of a home in Lino Lakes in 2027 is \$405,582.

According to Thoma, comparing the 2026 tax rate with the city’s proposed rate results in a projected \$35 annual increase in taxes on a home at the median estimated market value, or about \$2.92 per month.

“All \$35 is attributed to the increase in estimated market value,” Thoma explained. “Zero dollars is attributed to the proposed tax rate due to the decrease from the 2026 rate.”

By state statute, the tax levy set in September is not allowed to increase when the final budget and levy is set in December. However, the levy amount may decrease.

The council did not take formal action. It was discussion only. The preliminary budget will be approved at a future City Council meeting.

OBITUARY

Vernon Ferdinand Reinert

July 15, 1931 – August 29, 2026, Lino Lakes, MN.

Vernon (Vern) was born in Pine Grove, WI on a farm outside of Green Bay, WI. He attended High School in Bowler, WI, but in his senior year his family moved to Gresham, WI, where he met the love of his life, Donna.

Donna and Vern were eventually married but before that he was called to serve. He worked on a dairy farm for a year or two after High School before signing up to serve in the Coast Guard. This decision changed his life, allowing him to go to college after his service and eventually earn his master’s degree.

Vern taught school as a professor at the University of Wisconsin River Falls before moving to Wausau, WI, where he worked for the state of WI as a soil and water specialist. In Wausau, he ran for office and was elected to the city council as well as the County Board where he served as Board Chair.

In 1975 Vern and Donna and their family moved to



Lino Lakes when he accepted a position as executive director of the soil and water department for Minnesota. Vern worked for the state for many years before starting a real estate company that he ran until his retirement in 1995. For the last 30 years Vern and Donna enjoyed their retirement spending winters in Arizona, and summers at their home in Lino Lakes and their cabin on the Rainy River.

Vern also served on the Lino Lakes City Council and eventually became Mayor. Over those years he was instrumental in guiding the city in a direction that helped the city grow into a very desirable community where people want to live and raise a family.

Vern was a great dad, traveling with his family and five children to all parts of the country with a fold down camper towed behind the station wagon. Vern also enjoyed taking his sons hunting and fishing and the family enjoyed snowmobiling.

Vern was preceded in death by his wife Donna of 71 years, Son-in-Law Jake, and Grandson Lucas. Vern is survived by his children, Cheryl Lamers (Arnie), Steve Reinert (Geri), Jeff Reinert (Lisa), John Reinert, and Lisa Delgado (David), as well as his 14 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren. He will be missed by all.

Funeral: September 17th at St Joseph of the Lakes Catholic Church in Lino Lakes. 10am – Visitation, 11am – Service and Mass, 12pm – Luncheon – All are welcome.

Obituaries celebrate and honor unique lives.



To Submit an Obit

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ONGOING EVENTS

SILVER SKATERS OPEN SKATING
When: 12:30-2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays
Where: Centennial Sports Arena, 4810 103rd Lane NE, Circle Pines
Details: Grab some friends or neighbors and enjoy some dedicated time in the community rink. Skating is a great way to exercise, socialize and have fun. A small fee will be charged at the door.
Contact: 763-792-6100

CIRCLE LEX LIONS CLUB FARMERS MARKET
When: 2:30-6:30 p.m. Wednesdays
Where: Lexington Municipal Liquor Store, 9271 Lake Drive
Details: A variety of vendors will be set up in the parking lot selling produce, plants, breads, syrups, crafts and more.
Contact: 612-272-3386 or kgregory244@gmail.com

EASY OIL PAINTING
When: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19
Where: Centennial High School, Room 111, 4757 North Road, Circle Pines
Details: Don't think of yourself as an artist? Our Bob-Ross-style trained instructor will lead you through instruction to create your own work of art. This class will demonstrate how easy and fun working with oil paint can be. All materials are provided to create a 16x20 canvas masterpiece ready to frame for display at home. Enroll at isd12.arux.app/search/

all-programs by searching "easy oil."
Contact: 763-792-6100

CURRENT EVENTS

LUNCH & LEARN: STATE OF THE CENTENNIAL AREA
When: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17
Where: Centennial Library, 100 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines
Details: The Centennial Area Chamber is supporting this lunch in which attendees will hear directly from local city leaders, police and fire chiefs, the superintendent and MnDOT as they share important updates and plans for our community. Register online at centennialarea-chamber.com under the events calendar. Admission will be charged.
Contact: 763-786-9672 or president@centennialareachamber.com

MOVIE IN THE PARK: FINDING NEMO
When: 6:30-9:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19
Where: Aquatore Park, 9191 Lincoln St. NE, Blaine
Details: Bring the family, grab a blanket or some lawn chairs and settle in for a movie night under the stars. We will have kids activities starting at 6:30 p.m., with the movie getting underway around 7:30 p.m.
Contact: 763-784-6700 or communications@blainemn.gov

BUILD A BED
When: 8:45 a.m.-noon Saturday, Sept. 19
Where: St. Joseph of the

Lakes Catholic Church, 171 Elm St. Lino Lakes
Details: We're partnering with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring no child sleeps on the floor. All skill levels are welcome for building beds. The work is light, sanding, drilling, staining and assembly of parts of the beds with screws, nuts and bolts. Each position will have training. Advanced signup is required.
Contact: 408-858-4007 or mystjoes.me/news---events

SNAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL
When: 4:30-5:15 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22
Where: Centennial Library, 100 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines
Details: Discover the fascinating reptiles and amphibians that call Minnesota and Wisconsin home

in this engaging, hands-on program. Guests will observe a tiger salamander eating, bust common turtle myths and meet a variety of native and exotic reptiles.
Contact: 763-324-1540 or aclref@anokacountymn.gov

WIG WORKSHOP — BARBIE
When: 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22
Where: Centennial Library, 100 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines
Details: Crochet themed wigs for kids going through cancer treatment. No prior experience needed. This workshop's theme is Barbie. Please RSVP in advance.
Contact: 612-865-0560 or whimsicalwigsmn@gmail.com



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE: OREGON TRAIL
When: 12-2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19
Where: Centennial Library, 100 Civic Heights Circle, Circle Pines
Details: Whether you played "Oregon Trail" back in the day or are brand new to the game, come join us at the library for some fun. You'll start by picking up instructions at Independence and gather your supplies, but how you make your way to Oregon will be up to you or your team. Make your way around the library, participate in fun activities and learn a little bit pioneer history.
Contact: 763-324-1540 or aclref@anokacountymn.gov

PUBLIC NOTICES - PUBLIC NOTICES

CITY OF CIRCLE PINES, MINNESOTA PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an aeration system is in use on Golden Lake in the City of Circle Pines.
The possibility of open water or thin ice exists on Golden Lake throughout the winter.
Chandra Peterson, Assistant City Administrator for Operations
Dated: August 31, 2026
Published two times in the Quad Community Press on September 8 and 15, 2026.

STATE OF MINNESOTA, COUNTY OF ANOKA DISTRICT COURT, TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT PROBATE DIVISION
COURT FILE NO. 02-PR-26-543
NOTICE OF INFORMAL APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS (WITHOUT A WILL)
In Re: Estate of CARL LEE MCCARTHY, Decedent
Notice is given that an application for informal appointment of personal representative has been filed with the Registrar. No will has been presented for probate. The application has been granted.
Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Marisa K. Johnson, whose address is 17440 Severson NW, Evansville MN 56326, as

personal representative of the Estate of Decedent. Any heir or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative or may object to the appointment of the personal representative. Unless objections are filed with the Court (pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 524.3-607) and the Court otherwise orders, the personal representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute the real estate.
Any objections to the probate of the Will or appointment of the personal representative must be filed with this Court and will be heard by the Court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing.
Notice is also given that, subject to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four (4) months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.
Pamela Kreier, Registrar
H. Ann Basta, Court Administrator
Date: August 31, 2026
ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
PEMBERTON LAW, P.L.L.P.
Nicholas J. Heydt, # 0327864
203 22nd Ave W, Alexandria, MN 56308
Telephone: 320-759-3143
Facsimile: 320-759-3144
e-mail: n.heydt@pemplaw.com
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835354

Support local youth

This year, we are contracting with nearly 100 youth carriers to deliver the paper throughout local neighborhoods. Our carrier program is as strong as it has ever been in recent years. In Hugo alone, we have started six new carrier routes resulting in tremendous growth with more than 90 new subscribers to The Citizen last month. Our goal is to have 1,000 subscribers in Hugo by fall of 2027.



Publisher's View

Carter Johnson

We all know our youth are being pulled in so many directions, from year-round sports and training to the digital world and impacts of social media. I am encouraged by this next generation when I see them walk through the front door to ask for a job. We explain that delivering the paper is an opportunity to run their own business. We give them some guidelines and tools, and it's up to them how they want to carry out the work. It is a unique opportunity for a young kid to get experience in customer service and

time management. Many famous people started out delivering newspapers as their first job and have publicly credited the experience with giving them a start to their future successes, such as Wayne Gretzky, Gene Simmons, Walt Disney and Warren Buffet. Astronaut Josh Cassada was once a Press Publications newspaper carrier, as was Daron Close, owner of Acqua and Mizu, along with many other local business people.

This would not be possible without the support of our readers. From your words of kindness to your tips and paid subscriptions, you are coaching and supporting the next generation of community and business leaders. We pass along 100% of tips on a youth route, and we help our carriers with supplies like bags and rubber bands at an extremely reasonable rate so they can earn as much as possible. I love talking to our carriers when they come in to pick up their papers and supplies and hearing about their goals and what they're saving up for. They are banking their paychecks for bikes and scooters or for camp fees, and the best part is they are learning the value of working for something they want.

We have fought hard to keep the carrier distribution system alive with youth and adult carriers, in addition to United States Postal Service delivery. Since 2010, various consultants have advised us to shut down our carrier program because of the time and staff support it takes to manage it, but we have stayed the course. I continue to believe that giving this opportunity to local youth is part of our service to the community.

If you are a long time reader, you know we ask you for your support in the form of a subscription twice a year. Why subscribe to a newspaper that you can get for free? With a 30% overall paid subscription rate, we become sustainable. We need your support to reach that benchmark.

We continue to see an increase of readers who are subscribing for online access to the paper, and we thank you. If you prefer to read community news online, a subscription gives you full access to the same weekly content that is in the paper along with our e-edition. Without a subscription, you are limited to just a few stories.

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Carter Johnson is publisher of Press Publications.



Back-to-school traffic: safety alert

As Minnesota students head back to school, drivers can expect heavier traffic and more activity around school zones throughout the state. From the Twin Cities metro to Greater Minnesota communities, the back-to-school commute creates one of the busiest



and most unpredictable traffic environments of the year. Drivers should be prepared for:

- Heavier traffic around schools and neighborhoods
- Increased pedestrian activity, especially

during morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal times

- School buses making frequent stops
- E-bike and e-scooter riders traveling to and from schools

School safety starts with drivers

AAA urges Minnesota drivers to slow down, eliminate distractions, and remain alert in school zones and residential neighborhoods. Children may cross unexpectedly, rush toward a bus stop, or emerge from between parked vehicles.

Drivers should:

- Obey posted school zone

speed limits

- Put phones away and eliminate distractions
- Watch for crossing guards and pedestrians
- Allow extra travel time to avoid rushing

Students are reminded to:

- Cross at marked crosswalks whenever possible
- Stay alert and avoid using phones when walking near traffic and crossing streets
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing a roadway
- Use designated crosswalks and bus loading areas
- Follow school safety rules for bicycles, e-bikes, and scooters

School bus safety remains critical

School buses are among the safest ways for students to travel, but the moments when children enter and exit the bus can be especially dangerous. In effect this April, Minnesota law now requires drivers to stop 20 feet from a school bus when they see red lights flashing, whether the stop arm is out or not.

Drivers should:

- Stop for school buses displaying flashing red lights, whether the stop arm is extended or not
- Remain stopped until children have safely cleared the roadway
- Watch carefully for students crossing near the bus

E-bikes and e-scooters require extra awareness

As e-bike and e-scooter use continues to grow across communities, more students are expected to use these devices for transportation to and from school. That makes it increasingly important for riders and motorists to understand how to safely share the road.

AAA encourages families to review safety information before students begin riding to school.

As students prepare to ride, remind e-riders to:

- Know Minnesota and local community laws regarding e-bikes and e-scooters, including age requirements, helmet recommendations, and where they may be operated
- Wear a properly fitted helmet appropriate for the device being used
- Obey traffic signals, signs, and speed limits
- Use extra caution at intersections, crosswalks, and school zones

Whether traveling by bus, walking, biking, riding an e-bike, or driving, everyone plays a role in keeping Minnesota students safe. As a new school year begins, AAA encourages all road users to stay alert, be patient, and make safety their top priority.

AAA-Auto Club Group

QUAD COMMUNITY PRESS | ELECTION LETTER GUIDELINES

- Election season is considered to be when filing first begins until the day of the election.
- Limited to 350 words. Paid letters running longer will be charged \$10 per 30 words after that.
- Letters are free unless endorsing a candidate, party or question on the ballot. Endorsement letters will have a \$50 fee. Please call 651-407-1200 to arrange payment by credit card or mail a check payable to Press Publications to 4779 Bloom Ave, White Bear Lake, MN, 55110. Endorsement letters are labeled, "paid letter."
- Letters for or against a

- candidate will qualify as paid letters.
- Submissions must include a full name, address and phone number for verification.
- Letter-writers must live, work or have another connection to Press Publications coverage area.
- Letters are meant to express opinions. If letter-writers include facts, they must attribute those facts to a reputable source.
- Due to space limitations, letters that don't address local issues are not guaranteed publication.
- Repeat unpaid letters by the same writer about the

- same subject matter will not be published. Repeat paid endorsement letters will be published as space permits.
- Four weeks (or issues) must pass between publication of unpaid letters from the same writer. Exceptions may be made for rebuttal letters at the editor's discretion.
- Submissions containing libelous or derogatory statements will not be published.
- Letters by campaign managers or candidates designed to champion the candidate's position on a specific issue will be accepted as paid letters.

- Letters reprinted as part of letter-writing campaigns are paid letters.
- All letters are subject to editing.
- We reserve the right to not publish any letter.
- The deadline to submit a letter is 5 p.m. Wednesday the week prior to publication.
- The last batch of letters to be printed before the Nov. 3 election will be printed in the Oct. 20 issue and must be received by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct.14.
- To submit a letter, email news@presspubs.com or mail/deliver it to Press Publications.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Importance of upcoming ‘Sugarcane’ screening

Sept. 30 is the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding School survivors. It is a time to honor the lives of Native children taken from their families, remember those who never returned home and recognize the impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School System that was in North America from the 1800’s through the mid-20th century. This system was designed to erase Native languages, cultures and identities. Many children endured neglect, abuse and cultural erasure. Thousands never made it back to their families. This day serves as a call for truth-telling, healing and justice for survivors and their descendants. A quote by Dena Ned, a member of the Chickasaw nation of Oklahoma states: “The National Day of Remembrance is more than commemorating a tragic history — it is about fostering understanding, justice and healing. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that future generations inherit a legacy of healing, not harm.”

Consider wearing an orange shirt on this day. Orange Shirt Day began in 2013 in British Columbia, inspired by the story of a Northern Secwépemc girl whose new orange shirt was taken from her on her first day at St. Joseph’s Mission Residential School. The shirt symbolized love, excitement and belonging, and its removal represented the systemic stripping away of identity, culture and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children.

In honor of this day, Our Saviors Lutheran Church at 9185 Lexington Avenue in Circle Pines is hosting a viewing of the Sugarcane Documentary at 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 29. This award-winning film follows an investigation of a Canadian residential school that ignites a reckoning in the lives of survivors and descendants. The forced separation, assimilation and abuse that many children experienced at these segregated boarding schools was brought to light. It illuminates the beauty of a community breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and finding the strength to persevere.

The screening is free, and Indigenous snacks will be served. Please RSVP before Sept. 28 by emailing reneedietz2@gmail.com or call Our Savior’s at 763-784-1971.

Renee Dietz
Circle Pines

PAID LETTER
Why I’m choosing Democrats this November

I honestly believe if the majority of people would resist the tribal instinct of focusing on which team a person is on and tune out the angry voices on radio, television and social media and simply check out what Democrats have proposed and stand for, they would agree with most of it and support it.

I think most people want government to work not only as intended but as it previously had much of the time prior to the Trump era.

Angry voices are simply trying to amass clicks or views and have zero constructive proposals. They

exist only to instill anger and treat anyone that disagrees as the enemy. There have been several great letters by state Sen. Heather Gustafson in the Quad Press over the last few years. I support legislation introduced by Heather, not because she’s on my team but because I’m old enough to have witnessed government work in the past. I believe there is still a place for common sense legislation that benefits the majority instead of the few.

Bills that fund a statewide inspector general, that benefit farmers, education and essential infrastructure, are exactly what I want to see at a time when these priorities are being slashed at the federal level. I would urge voters to investigate further many of the other bills and proposals Sen. Gustafson and Democrats support. Banning AI-driven pricing based on your personal data and holding insurance companies accountable are all things you will not see introduced by Republicans.

I’m also encouraged by the campaigns of Jim DeMay, who is running for state House District 36A, and Doug Chapin, who is running to defeat Tom Emmer, the Trump rubber stamp in the 6th District. I think you would be impressed with both their backgrounds if you take the time to research them.

Regarding government here in Minnesota, I would rather fight over what to do with the huge surplus that we seem to have when Democrats are in power rather than suffer the consequences of the huge deficits that frequently occur with Republican leadership.

Steven Howard
Lino Lakes

COPS&COURTS

POLICE REPORTS

The Centennial Lakes Police Department reported the following selected incidents:

- Officers were dispatched Sept. 2 to a personal injury rollover crash at the intersection of S. Highway Drive and Griggs Avenue in Lexington. Both drivers initially refused treatment, but one later requested to be seen by ambulance.
- On Sept. 2 in the 9300 block of Dunlap Avenue in Lexington, an officer found a bike and placed it in the department’s property cage for safekeeping.
- On Sept. 2 at the intersection of East Road and Pointcross Drive in Circle Pines, an officer responded to a complaint of a dog at large.
- On Sept. 2 at the intersection of Lake Drive and Griggs Avenue in Lexington, officers responded to a personal injury accident involving four cars.
- On Sept. 3 at the intersection of Lovell Road and Hamline Avenue in Lexington, officers observed a vehicle traveling at a high speed. They initiated a traffic stop and made contact with the driver, who was found to be in possession of alcohol and THC products while underage. The driver was cited for speed.
- On Sept. 4 on West Golden Lake Road in Circle Pines, an officer received found property, which they placed in the property cage at base.
- At 10:37 a.m. and 3:18 p.m. on Sept. 5 in the 4000 block of Lovell Road in Lexington, an officer noted ordi-

- nance violations.
- On Sept. 6 in the 3600 block of Centerwood Road in Lexington, officers followed up on a brush pile fire from earlier in the day.
- On Sept. 7 in the 3800 block of Patriot Lane in Lexington, officers responded to a report of vandalism.

The Lino Lakes Police Department reported the following selected incidents:

- On Aug. 31 in the 6400 block of Lakota Trail, an officer responded to a report of identity theft. The victim requested the matter be documented but did not need additional assistance as the case was being investigated by a federal law enforcement agency.
- On Aug. 31 at the intersection of Birch Street and Centerville Road, an officer documented a motor vehicle crash incident and provided assistance.
- On Sept. 1 in the 7500 block of Fourth Avenue, an officer responded to a juvenile facility for an assault report. The male was charged with fifth-degree assault.
- On Sept. 1 in the 2000 block of Norway Lane, an officer responded to a report of a duck with a fishing hook stuck in its mouth. The officer assisted in capturing the duck, removed the hook and released it back to a pond.
- On Sept. 1 between Main Street and the southbound Interstate 35E ramp, an officer documented a motor vehicle crash incident and provided assistance.

- On Sept. 2 in the 8000 block of Lake Drive, an officer responded to a road rage incident. The identity of the other driver is unknown.
- On Sept. 2 at the intersection of Centerville Road and Ash Street, an officer documented a motor vehicle crash incident and provided assistance.
- On Sept. 2 in the 6300 block of 20th Avenue, officers responded to a home to arrest a male on an outstanding warrant. The male was arrested and booked at jail.
- On Sept. 2 in the 600 block of Apollo Drive, an officer responded to a traffic complaint. The vehicle was found unoccupied and the incident was documented in a police report.
- On Sept. 3 at the intersection of Lake Drive and Hodgson Road, officers responded to a two-vehicle motor vehicle crash. One driver sustained minor injuries, and one vehicle was towed from the scene.
- On Sept. 3 in the 6400 block of Deewood Lane, an officer responded to a report of a snapping turtle in a backyard. The snapping turtle was released into a nearby pond.
- On Sept. 3 in the 700 block of Main Street, an officer responded to a complaint involving a loose dog. The owner was contacted and made aware of the city ordinance that regulates animals at large.
- On Sept. 4 in the 2200 block of Main Street, while on patrol, an officer stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation. The driver was arrested for third-degree DWI and booked at jail.
- On Sept. 5 in the 400 block of Ash

- Street, an officer stopped a vehicle because the adult male registered owner did not have a driver’s license and had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. The adult male was arrested and booked at jail.
- On Sept. 5 in the 700 block of Main Street, an officer stopped a vehicle for several traffic violations. The adult female driver was cited for speeding and possession of an open package of marijuana.
- On Sept. 5 in the 200 block of Lilac Street, an officer documented a motor vehicle crash incident and provided assistance.
- On Sept. 5 in the 800 block of Oak Lane, an officer responded to a suspicious activity report regarding a possible air tag being placed in the caller’s vehicle. The officer documented the information for the caller.
- On Sept. 6 in the 700 block of Apollo Drive, an officer responded to a theft report at a local business. The officer identified three juveniles who will be charged with theft.

PUBLIC SAFETY BRIEF

Shooting near gun shop leaves 1 injured

Blaine Police Department responded to a shooting just after 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, outside Bill’s Gun Shop & Range on 88th Ave. NE. As of press deadline, Blaine Police has not responded to requests for details.



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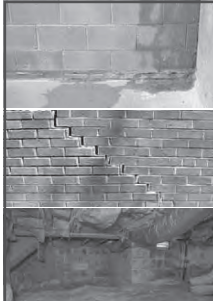
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VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 32 (ELECT 1)

Chris Ford (DFL)

City Residence: Blaine
Occupation: High school paraprofessional educator
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Blaine City Council Member
- Union President of my local International Association of Fire Fighters
- Fire Captain for 13 years in Rochester, Minnesota.



community and don't listen to the issues that matter. I know that I can be a fierce and passionate advocate for our community — a leader who is dedicated to the community I serve. I want to promote common-sense legislation that is focused on bringing down costs, increasing public safety and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Minnesota prospers when we invest in the basics: fully funding K-12 schools so every district can compete, expanding housing supply so working families can afford to stay here, and protecting clean water and infrastructure for the next generation. We need to lower costs — child care, healthcare, housing, groceries — while keeping taxes competitive for small businesses and workers alike. That means responsible budgeting, strong labor protections and public safety funding that supports communities and first responders. Growth isn't one big fix; it's steady, disciplined investment in people, paired with a government that works efficiently and honestly for every Minnesotan.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Cost of living and public safety staffing. Rising healthcare and childcare costs are squeezing families, and school districts are stretched thin — I'd fight for the state to fully fund our schools in a stable and ongoing way so districts don't have to turn to property tax levies that make it harder for families to get by, and for seniors to stay in their homes. Additionally, I'd work to lower health insurance costs through smarter state purchasing and insurance reform. On public safety, as a former firefighter/paramedic and union president, I've experienced the recruitment and retention crisis facing fire, EMS and police departments. I'd back state funding tied to competitive wages and mental health support, so communities aren't left waiting longer for help.

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. I want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature because my community deserves a leader who is dedicated to serving the working people who are just barely getting by. Life has become too unaffordable for so many Minnesotans. Healthcare costs are climbing, gas prices are out of control and young people can't afford to buy homes anymore. I know that I am feeling this squeeze too. Politicians have become disconnected from our

Michael Kreun (R)

City of residence: I have lived in Blaine for the last 24 years with my wife, Laura, where we have raised our three children
Occupation: Lawyer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Minnesota State Senator, District 32 (2023-present)
- Spring Lake Park (ISD 16) School Board Member (2018-2022)
- Coon Creek Watershed Board of Managers (2017-2022)



I am continuing to lead efforts to reduce car tab fees and property taxes, eliminate the tax on Social Security, strengthen public safety and support excellent schools. I believe public service requires professionalism, civility, collaboration, and a relentless focus on solving problems and delivering for the people we represent.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Over the next five years, Minnesota can prosper by becoming a state where families can afford to live, businesses can grow and people have confidence in their government. We must respect taxpayers by exercising fiscal discipline, living within our means and lowering the burdens crushing the middle class. That means controlling spending, reducing income and sales taxes; property taxes and car tab fees; and focusing on core responsibilities like maintaining infrastructure, keeping communities safe and expecting excellence in our schools. We must be competitive by reducing regulations; speeding up permitting; and creating an environment where businesses can invest, expand and create good-paying jobs. We should make it easier to start a business and create opportunities for our children and grandchildren to build their futures here. Finally, we must restore trust by combating fraud, auditing programs that exceed their budgets and ensuring taxpayer dollars reach those who truly need them.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Minnesota's two biggest challenges are pervasive fraud in social services programs and the high cost of government. First, we must restore accountability and integrity to programs designed to help those in need. I was a leading author of legislation establishing an independent Office of Inspector General to combat fraud, ensuring it has the independence and law enforcement capabilities necessary to be effective. I also authored legislation requiring audits and legislative accountability when programs exceed their budgets, helping prevent unchecked growth and identify potential fraud. Second, the high cost of government is making life less affordable for Minnesotans. Government must exercise fiscal discipline, prioritize essential services over wants and respect taxpayers. I will continue fighting to lower car tab fees, cap property tax growth, and eliminate the tax on Social Security benefits — while ensuring government lives within its means.

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. Minnesotans expect their government to protect taxpayer dollars, prevent fraud and make life more affordable. That is not happening in Minnesota. I am running for reelection to address these challenges and deliver results. During my first term, I established a strong record of accomplishment and demonstrated a commitment to collaboration and bipartisanship. I am leading the effort in the Minnesota legislature to fight fraud. I authored legislation creating an independent Office of Inspector General to combat fraud, and I authored legislation protecting children from the harmful and addictive features of social media — legislation that passed the Senate unanimously and became law.

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heather Gustafson (DFL)

City of residence: Vadnais Heights
Occupation: Minnesota State Senator, District 36
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Chair, Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission
- Vice Chair, Senate Education Finance Committee
- Vice Chair, Senate State and Local Government Committee



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?

A. I spent many years as a high school teacher, and as the mother of four daughters, I saw the same pressures in my classroom as I did at my kitchen table. I see what happens when families fall behind on rent, when a school budget gets stretched too thin, or when a kid shows up hungry because breakfast wasn't an option at home. Those aren't abstract policy problems to me. I ran for office because I wanted to bring that problem-solving mindset to the legislature: listen first, find the people willing to work across the aisle, and get something done instead of just talking about it. That's how I passed the school meals program and created Minnesota's first independent watchdog for government fraud, with Republican co-authors. I want to keep doing that work so families can thrive, not just survive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?

A. Minnesota prospers when people trust that resources are being used honestly and families can actually get ahead, not just get by. That starts with practical, bipartisan solutions to tackle the cost of living directly, from housing to child care to health care, so working families in our district aren't doing the math every time they're at the grocery store. Most people in our district, no matter their party, just want a legislature that solves problems instead of fighting culture wars. That's why I authored bipartisan legislation creating a Minnesota Entrepreneurship Task Force, to bring entrepreneurs,

workers, and educators together to strengthen what's working in our business climate and fix what isn't. I've built my record on working with Republicans and Democrats for exactly that kind of work, because the next four years shouldn't be about scoring points. They should be about proving state government can still deliver for people.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. First, I've made government accountability a priority. I authored the legislation creating Minnesota's Office of Inspector General, an independent watchdog with authority to investigate fraud across state agencies, which passed with bipartisan support. I now chair the Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission, and I'll keep pushing to give that office everything it needs to catch bad actors before they drain public resources. Second, the cost of living has families in our district stretched thin. I've focused on meaningful relief: school meals, which save families real money every month, and consumer protections like click-to-cancel laws that stop companies from quietly draining people's wallets with recurring subscriptions. Going forward, I'll pursue an affordability agenda rooted in what families actually deal with day to day: groceries, child care, health care costs, and holding corporations accountable when they take advantage of people, so families here can actually get ahead.

Quick Links:

View the elections home at mnvotes.gov

Register to vote or update your registration at mnvotes.gov/register

Request an absentee ballot at mnvotes.gov/absentee

View a sample ballot at mnvotes.gov/myballot

Find your polling place at mnvotes.gov/pollfinder

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heidi Heino (R)

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Associate director of partnership development and small-business owner

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Member, Minnesota Task Force on Priority Admissions to State-Operated Treatment Programs
- President, Fellowship of Extraordinary Women, Twin Cities Chapter
- Volunteer, Eagle Brook Church One-on-One Care Team for eight years



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I have spent my career in the private sector, negotiating contracts and solving complex problems for my company and our clients. That experience shapes how I look at government. When I see a problem, I want to understand what is causing it and find a practical way to fix it.
Like many others, I have no pension. I have to plan, save, and take responsibility for my family’s future. Every additional dollar taken in taxes is money a family cannot use

for its needs today or save for tomorrow.
I am running because Minnesota government needs more people with private-sector experience who will ask hard questions, follow the money, and challenge the way things have always been done. Too often, government measures success by how much it spends instead of whether it solved the problem. I want to help restore accountability and make Minnesota a place where families can thrive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota can prosper by making it easier for families and businesses to stay and grow here. First, state government must slow spending growth and review programs for results before increasing their budgets. Savings should be used to reduce taxes and avoid shifting state costs onto local property taxpayers.
Second, Minnesota should shorten permitting timelines, eliminate duplicative regulations, and give small businesses one place to navigate state requirements. The state should streamline permitting without dictating local housing decisions. Cities should have a say in how their communities grow.
Third, we must protect the foundations employers and families rely on: safe communities, dependable roads, access to health care, and schools that teach reading, writing, math, and critical thinking. Minnesota has talented people, strong

communities, and innovative businesses. The next five years should focus on removing barriers, protecting taxpayer dollars, and making it possible for people to build their future here.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The first challenge is fraud and the loss of public trust. Billions of taxpayer dollars have been placed at risk because state programs lacked adequate oversight. Once fraud is discovered, the money is often already gone. I would support stronger front-end verification, tiered oversight based on risk, better coordination among agencies, and meaningful consequences for those who misuse public funds. Fraud prevention must begin before the first payment is issued.
The second challenge is affordability. Families are being squeezed by property taxes, energy costs, housing expenses, and the rising cost of everyday necessities. If elected, I would work to restrain government spending, oppose unfunded mandates that increase local property taxes, reduce barriers to housing development, and lower the tax and regulatory burden so Minnesota can retain businesses and workers. Government cannot eliminate every financial pressure, but it should stop making those pressures worse.

MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 32B (ELECT 1)

Matt Norris (DFL)

City of residence: Blaine

Occupation: Attorney

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Member of the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (governing body of the National Sports Center)
- Member of the Blaine Festival Committee
- Volunteer attorney with the Children’s Law Center



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. My campaign is about “building bridges and getting results” because I think voters want leaders who can bring together people from different backgrounds to get things done. I have been able to deliver significant results: securing \$103 million for the Highway 65 redesign, authoring increased funding for our schools and law enforcement, and leading on two landmark anti-fraud bills. And I did it while having the majority of my

bills supported by both Democrats and Republicans. While I’m proud of the results I’ve delivered, there’s still more work to do to make Minnesota the best possible state, which is why I’m running for reelection. I’m committed to listening to you, the voters of Blaine and Lexington, to respond to the issues most important to you.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. First, Minnesota must deliver on its quality-of-life promise: good schools, safe neighborhoods, clean lakes and rivers, and more. These are the factors that attract people to our state and keep them here. Second, we should use our existing strengths to supercharge economic growth. Examples include investing in the next generation of medical device technology and leading on the development of sustainable aviation fuel. Third, we should create a strong environment for startup businesses so we can develop the next round of great Minnesota companies that will help our state prosper well into the future.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. First, we need to make life more affordable for Minnesotans. I’m especially focused on “the three cares”: child care, health care and senior care. All three are such big budget items for families. If we can bring down the cost of these expenses, it leaves more room for gas, groceries and more. I’m also focused on lowering property taxes. Home property taxes have gotten out of control, and I’ve got a specific plan to reduce them. Second, we need to make sure state government is accountable and produces real results. The fraud we have seen against Minnesota’s public programs is unacceptable. I will build on the anti-fraud bills I’ve passed to conduct a top-to-bottom audit of state government. I will also author a bill requiring the state to measure the results of any new spending to make sure your tax dollars are spent wisely.

Leslie Larson (R)

City of residence: Blaine

Occupation: Small business owner, substitute teacher and Blaine City Councilwoman

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Blaine City Councilwoman
- Former foster care provider and adoptive mother
- Mary Ann Young Center board member



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I will bring a mom’s common sense, a businesswoman’s accountability and a councilwoman’s experience to the legislature. I’m ready to serve with integrity and fight for safe communities, strong schools, economic opportunity and a government that earns your trust.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota’s lawmakers need to take fraud seriously and hold accountable those who steal from Minnesota taxpayers. Our tax dollars continue to pour into programs with minimal guardrails, creating opportunities for misuse and draining our economy. Our programs must have stronger oversight and tighter guardrails. It is also very important that we reverse the exodus of businesses and educated young people in Minnesota. Lowering taxes, reducing regulations and making Minnesota more competitive in the workplace will be necessary in the next five years.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Minnesota’s education system needs serious improvement. The Department of Education is fully funded, yet too little of that investment is reaching the classroom level. As a substitute teacher, I witness the overuse of technology and funding shortcuts in our schools that comes at the expense of quality education. With insight

into the classroom as well as being a mother of five school-aged children, I have a necessary perspective to assist in education policy.
Another challenge is affordability. Minnesota is one of the highest taxed states in the nation. As a city councilwoman, I voted against raising taxes in Blaine the last two years in a row. Financial pressure on families and small business must be addressed at the state level. I will continue to focus on responsible spending and tax policies that help families keep their hard-earned money.

How to vote early

By mail
To vote by mail, apply to have an absentee ballot mailed to you. You do not need to be registered to apply.
For your ballot to count, remember this important information:
• Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully.

• You will need a witness when you vote and complete your ballot. The witness can be either a registered Minnesota voter or a notary.
• Return the ballot and forms right away after you finish. Your ballot will not count if it is received after Election Day.

In person
All voters have at least one location where they can vote early in person with an absentee ballot. Depending on where you live, there may be additional locations.
• You can vote in person at your county election office.
• In addition, you may be able to vote at your city office. Contact the clerk for more information.

For most elections, absentee voting locations must be open during their normal business hours starting 46 days before the election. In addition, locations offering absentee ballots for federal, state or county elections must be open:
• The last Saturday before Election Day (10 a.m. — 3 p.m.)

• The day before Election Day until 5 p.m.
• Some local jurisdictions may provide additional absentee voting days or hours beyond the above required days and times. Call your jurisdiction for more information.

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 36A (ELECT 1)

Jim DeMay (DFL)
City of residence: North Oaks
Occupation: Recently retired, former Public Affairs Director — CSL Seqirus, former adjunct professor at Hamline University in Public Administration
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Mounds View School Board, Treasurer, 2019-present
- Shoreview Rotary Club
- St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church, past Board Chair



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I believe the government needs to provide the right opportunities to keep Minnesota a great place to live, work and, most importantly, raise a family. I am running for state house to make that a reality for all Minnesotans.

When I grew up, it was possible for the kid of a waitress and a small businessman to enjoy the middle class dream, but those opportunities just aren't there for people in the same way. I was able to succeed because of a great public education at Mounds View Schools, and I'm proud that my wife and I are now parents to two MVHS graduates.

I will fight to fully fund public education around the state, and you can count on me to fight for affordable health care and child care for working people like you.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota needs to invest in and create opportunities for workers in order for our economy to thrive. This includes creating career pathways for the trades and medical industry in high school. Additionally, community college and trade schools must be accessible to all at a low cost. Finally, we need to lower the cost of and make child care more accessible so parents can participate in the workforce while knowing their kids are safe.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Going to the doctor shouldn't break the bank. But for too many Minnesotans, skyrocketing costs are making them choose between health care and other essential expenses. If elected, I will push to fund tax credits to reduce premiums for Minnesotans and eliminate anti-competitive practices of PhRMA to lower the price of prescription drugs. I will also work to create pathways for "Medicare for All" for those without insurance through their employers, as well as promote preventive services and regular vaccinations and check-ups to reduce overall costs.

Separately, I will support fully funding the newly created Minnesota Office of Inspector General that creates an independent oversight body to stop waste, fraud and abuse. I will work to protect taxpayer dollars by promoting efficiency reviews and regular audits. I will also work to modernize state computer systems to catch fraud, promote efficiency and increase accountability measures for nonprofits.

Sebastian Stoss (R)
City of residence: Circle Pines
Occupation: Photographer/Videographer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Legislative aide at Minnesota Senate
- Citizen investigator
- Congressional staff member



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I want to serve as our next state representative because politics as usual has failed our state. We have seen unprecedented levels of fraud, affordability has gotten worse and Minnesota student grades keep falling. I have demonstrated action. Just look at my investigation into Ramsey County's property tax spending uncovering how over \$38 million went out the back door to unaudited outside nonprofits and NGOs. I didn't sit on the sidelines; I followed the money, demanded answers and got results. The county commissioners backed off and lowered this year's property tax increase by 15%.

That's what I've done as a private citizen — now I would like to continue this work as state representative.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. At the state level, we can eliminate fraud, impose more oversight and provide tax relief. We need mandatory background checks and more required financial audits to both stop fraud that has already occurred and prevent further fraud from happening. Additionally, I support expanding whistleblower rewards to 10–20% of recovered funds with protections from retaliation. These are just a handful of initial solutions that can help prevent fraud. With the money we save once this is done, we can afford to provide tax relief to all Minnesotans. Specifically, we will be able to afford to lower the currently out-of-control property taxes, income taxes and car tab fees.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The biggest challenge facing Minnesota currently is fraud. Fraud in Minnesota has become a national

embarrassment. Fraudsters have been able to steal from Minnesotans for years without any pushback from our government. This should anger every Minnesota taxpayer. To stop fraud, we need to increase oversight and transparency. For instance, counties are not currently legally required to audit organizations they give money to. This makes it easy for bad actors to get funding and missspend it. The second challenge facing Minnesota is how unaffordable living has become, especially due to out-of-control taxes. Property taxes in particular burden homeowners and prospective homeowners. People tell me they are getting priced out of their own homes and neighborhoods. To lower the tax burden and make Minnesota more affordable, we need private third-party assessors determining property valuations to ensure fairness, and we need to cap annual property taxes raises.

ANOKA COUNTY SHERIFF (ELECT 1)

CANDIDATE BRAD WISE DID NOT RESPOND

ANOKA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (ELECT 1)

Jeff Reinert
City of residence: Lino Lakes for over 50 years. I'm married to my wife, Lisa, for 37 years. We raised three daughters and have three grandbabies. I'm a business owner, currently an advisor in the biotech space and am Commander of Post 566 American Legion SAL in Lino Lakes.
Occupation: County commissioner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- I've served our area for 20-plus years in public office, including as mayor of Lino Lakes.
- Lead Centerville Lake treatment efforts, finding outside funding for \$980,000 of the \$1.1 million cost.
- Lead the effort to purchase and install fencing around the Lino Lakes juvenile detention center, protecting nearby neighborhoods from runaways.



Q. Why do you want to serve on the County Board?
A. Running for commissioner of the fourth largest county is like applying for a job, and experience matters. I have the background needed to make sound decisions for taxpayers and residents and I know how to get things done

If you don't have experience, you can't ask the right questions. If

you can't ask the right questions, you won't make good decisions and won't serve the public well — in fact, you may do it harm. Good oversight and measurement lead to good management. While this common-sense approach is often missing in government, it is essential for operating efficiently and responsibly. As a business owner and your elected representative for more than 20 years, I have developed these skills and used them to improve how Anoka County operates.

I'm running for reelection because I love this community and want to continue making a positive difference for the people I serve.

Q. What can the county do in the next five years to help the area prosper?
A. The overall goal should be to grow the county's tax base and household incomes while keeping Anoka County an affordable, safe and desirable place to live.

We do this by supporting the cities and townships in our county. Although zoning property to attract residential and/or commercial development is in the hands of each city, the county plays a role in assisting cities to help navigate what is needed for development. As an example, our area has many hydrology and wetland issues as it relates to development, so helping cities work with the Anoka County Conservation District, the DNR and the Rice Creek Watershed District is a big asset. I often meet with economic development directors from various cities in my district to bring the right parties together

at the table to discuss issues and get things done.

Q. What are two challenges that the county faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A.

- New Jail: Challenges come from some people in the county wanting to build an oversized and overpriced jail. Even a study done by the State of Minnesota concluded we need only 70% of what the county wants to build. If we downsize the plan, litigation can be settled, we can build a jail the right size and save Anoka County taxpayers not only the cost of the overbuild, but also the ongoing cost of running an oversized jail.
- FLOCK Drones: FLOCK cameras currently read license plates and are developing facial recognition capabilities. The company proposed a drone network covering Anoka County. Most county board members opposed the proposal, yet the sheriff signed a one-year contract set to begin in January. I believe a decision of this magnitude deserves public input and board oversight, and I will bring it back for discussion and transparency.

EAGLE SCOUT FAMILY: Father and sons have all achieved the rank

FROM PAGE 1

website, however, needed organizing and refreshing. Therefore, Sawyer was able to lead his Scout troop by becoming its webmaster.

The brothers' Eagle Scout projects also took different shapes. Tyler's project involved designing Little Free Libraries, then overseeing volunteers to build and place the libraries throughout the Centennial area.

"I worked in three different cities, so that was not particularly fun trying to get them all to agree," Tyler noted. "They all have their own desires and regulations around maintenance."

Sawyer led a team of volunteers who built

benches, installed a fire pit and laid rock for an outdoor area at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Circle Pines.

Dan, meanwhile, completed his Eagle Scout project back in 1991.

"Mine was a boardwalk," he remembered. "We had a marshy area in a state park in Maryland ... People couldn't hike on the trail because it was too muddy." Years later, Dan and his wife, Dayius, visited the same park, and he was able to show her the work, which was still in good condition.

"I'm hopeful that Tyler's and Sawyer's projects will stick around long enough that they can show their kids or



Sawyer's Eagle Scout Project involved building an outdoor area at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Circle Pines.

their friends later in life," Dan said.

Overall, Dan believes that Scouting not only teaches members skills, but it also gives members confidence in those skills.

"Both boys, separate from Scouts, went on camping trips with their friends — no parents, get in a car with several other boys, drive to Montana. My wife and I and the other parents had a lot of confidence that they had the skills to do this," Dan said. "Sleeping outside in the



Tyler's project involved making Little Free Libraries.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Scouting ranks:

- Scout
- Tenderfoot
- Second Class
- First Class
- Star
- Life
- Eagle

CITY BRIEF

Anoka County – Blaine Airport plans fall projects

The Anoka County – Blaine Airport is moving forward on a number of projects this fall, according to a presentation that Airport Manager Philip Tiedman prepared for the Sept. 2 Airport Advisory Commission meeting.

The airport will replace its gate con-

troller this month. Construction on the project is taking place sooner than originally anticipated because of damage to Gate B. In October, the airport plans to improve its electrical vault building. Outdated equipment will be replaced, including new airfield regulators, radios and tower connections. Sometime this fall, the airport will also improve its southeast side fence.

The airport is also proposing construction to replace edge lighting and precision approach path indicators. Tiedman noted that the lighting will improve safety and efficiency. The anticipated timeline for this project runs from November 2026 to July 2027.

Recently, Anoka County – Blaine Airport has also completed drainage ditch clearing with help from the Rice Creek

Watershed District.

The airport has also replaced its automated weather observing system (AWOS). At the Sept. 8 Circle Pines City Council Meeting, Council Member Steve McChesney explained that an AWOS "helps alert pilots to wind speed, temperature, visibility (and) cloud ceiling."

Logan Gion



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Press



Cougars shut out Rosemount, Osseo for 2-0 start

BY BRUCE STRAND
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

Under new head coach Michael Diggins, the Centennial Cougars started the season blanking Rosemount 20-0 at home Sept. 4 and Osseo 63-0 there Thursday.

Diggins, a Cougar alum, was previously defensive coordinator under his father, Mike Diggins, who stepped down as head coach but stayed on as running backs coach.

“We have a lot of work to do, and are a long way from where we want to be,” Diggins said. “We have a great test against the No. 2 team in the state on Friday, Champlin Park.”

Against Rosemount, Nolan Larson intercepted a pass on the third play, setting the defensive tone. Leading tacklers were Noah Morrell with eight; Samson Skudlarek, six; and Tristan Melquist and Finn Undersander, five each. Skudlarek had a sack and two

other tackles-for-loss. Owen Carter had a sack and three quarterback hurries.

Edwin Ekah carried 22 times for 91 yards; Tobie Serna, nine for 46 yards; and quarterback Jack Wiste, 10 times for 30 yards. Ekah and Wiste ran for touchdown. Keegan Prigge kicked two field goals and two extra points. Wesley Kukkonen completed a 40-yard half-back pass to Caden Kimman.

Against a young Osseo team, the Cougars were up 56-0 at halftime; the game was halted after three quarters. Ekah carried five times for 136 yards. Eleven players rolled up 411 yards on 32 rushes.

Nine players had touchdowns. Scoring on runs were Ekah from 27 yards; Wiste, 12 yards; Serna, seven yards; Jaxon Lauzon, 24 yards; Carter Radziwill, one yard; Connor Cheath, 28 yards; and Luke Le 10 yards. Kukkonen scored on a 30-yard interception return, and Carter Hemming scored on a 46-yard pass from Wiste. Prigge booted eight extra points.



JON NAMYST | CONTRIBUTED

Michael Diggins, in his head coach debut, led his team onto the field against Rosemount.

SPORTS BRIEFS

TENNIS

Centennial (4-5) beat Anoka 7-0 on Thursday after losing to Totino-Grace 5-2 on Tuesday. The lineup against Anoka was Ashlin Kilmer, Medha Andiappan, Radha Andiappan and Hanna Weinhold at 1-2-3-4 singles, and Ella Nelson/Hannah Lofgren, Ellen Huseeth/Amelya Nelson and Cailyn Setterholm/Kendall Innes and 1-2-3 doubles. Winning against T-G were Kilmer and Lofgren/Nelson. The Eagles pulled out close 3-setters at 3-singles and 2 and 3 doubles.

GIRLS SOCCER

Cougars (2-2-1) beat Spring Lake Park 7-1 on Tuesday and Anoka 3-0 on Thursday in conference games. Against SLP, Dara Akpan delivered four goals, and Bri Stuckey, Lydia Parker and Khloe Reker delivered one goal each. Mia Sutch, in goal, stopped seven of eight shots. Akpan tallied all three goals against Anoka. Parker had one assist.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Centennial girls placed fifth of 10 teams in Anoka's Steve Hoag Invitational on Thursday. Emma Delf finished 10th; Alexandra Sindt, 15th; Madison Chrusciel, 31st; Audrey Julson, 32nd; and Brooke Hayes, 36th among 70 runners. The Cougar boys placed 10th of 13 teams. Connor Louks placed 40th; Evan Lautenschlager, 53rd; and Connor Vig, 56th of 91 runners. Winning teams were St. Michael-Albertville girls and Andover boys.

BOYS SOCCER

The Centennial boys (2-2-1) lost to Spring Lake Park 2-1 on Tuesday and to Anoka 3-0 on Thursday.

VOLLEYBALL

Centennial (2-2) beat Duluth East 25-23, 25-14, 25-20 on Wednesday and beat Anoka 25-16, 25-18, 25-20 on Friday.



BRUCE STRAND | CONTRIBUTED

Ashlin Kilmer heads the Cougar tennis lineup.

Bruce Strand

LINO LAKES CITY COUNCIL SNIPPETS

• City Planner Katie Larsen has presented a planned unit development (PUD) concept plan to the council for a development that would feature 389 mixed housing units and a private school. The development, proposed by TCLD Land Holdings LLC, would be located in the southeast quadrant of Main Street and Sunset Avenue (see full story in this week's issue).

• An amendment has been proposed by Charles Cudd Co. for the Wilkinson Waters development. The development, located in the northwest quadrant of Ash Street/ County Road J and Centerville Road/ CSAH 21, contains four parcels totaling approximately 76 gross acres. The development consists of a mix of 340 units residential housing types and commercial development. The applicant is requesting an amendment to the PUD preliminary plan/ preliminary plat to construct 13-single family lots west of Wilkinson Way instead of the approved 20 townhome lots. This would decrease the

total number of housing units from 340 to 333.

• Community Development Director Michael Grochala provided the council with an update regarding the I-35E Corridor Cooperation Agreement for the 24th Avenue/ Elmcrest Corridor transportation study. In November 2025, the city entered into a cooperation agreement with the cities of Columbus, Forest Lake and Hugo along with Anoka and Washington counties to collaborate on a transportation infrastructure assessment of the 24th Avenue/ Elmcrest corridor from Main Street in Lino Lakes to Trunk Highway 97 in Columbus. According to Grochala, the purpose of the study will be to develop a shared transportation vision for the corridor to include functional classification, minimum design requirements and future interchange locations. Two consulting firms, both Bolten and Menk and WSB submitted proposals for the project. Grochala said the partnership group selected

WSB to complete the study. The study's total cost is \$110,000. The cost is being allocated on a 50/50 basis between the Anoka County jurisdictions and the Washington County jurisdictions. Lino Lakes' share is \$13,500, which will be funded by the engineering and economic development professional services budgets. The study is estimated to be completed by early 2027. The council did not take formal action on this item. It was discussion only.

• City Finance Director Tracy Thoma presented the 2027 preliminary budget to the council. Currently, the preliminary 2027 tax budget is expected to be \$18,881,218, a \$811,553 (4.49%) increase from 2026. The estimated median market value for a home in Lino Lakes in 2027 is \$405,582. The council did not take formal action, it was discussion only (see full story in this week's issue).

Madeline Dolby



ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Edin Ekah
Centennial Football
Sept. 15, 2026

Edin Ekah is the top ball carrier for the Centennial football team that's outscored its first two opponents 83-0. The 5-foot-11, 161-pound junior rushed for 91 yards in 22 carries against Rosemount and 136 yards in just five totes against Osseo, with one touchdown in each game. He rushed for 549 yards and four touchdowns on a 9-2 team as a sophomore.



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VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

ANOKA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (ELECT 1)

Melissa “Mel” Lawlis

City of residence: Lino Lakes

Occupation: Over 27 years with Anoka County Human Services, serving families and vulnerable residents through program support, casework and community services. Extensive experience in fraud prevention and investigations, ensuring program integrity and protecting county resources. Recognized policy expert involved in developing, interpreting and implementing county and state guidelines. Experienced trainer, mentoring staff and strengthening department-wide consistency and compliance.

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centerville Lions Club (2020–present); President, 2024–2026, leading service projects, fundraising and community outreach.
- Homeowners association board member (2005–present); President for over 10 years, overseeing neighborhood governance and long-term planning.
- Centennial Youth Hockey Association Golf Tournament Chair, two years.

Q. Why do you want to serve on the County Board?

A. I'm running for County Commissioner because I care



about our community, and I believe I can make a difference. My husband and I have lived in District 3 for 22 years, where we raised our two boys. I've also worked for Anoka County for more than 27 years and have been very involved in our community. I bring real experience working in county government and an understanding of how the county works. I believe in asking questions, looking for better and more efficient ways to do things, and making sure we are responsible with taxpayer dollars. If elected, this will be my full-time job. I want to be involved in the communities, talking with people, listening to their concerns and making sure they feel heard. I will work hard; be accessible; and represent District 3 with integrity, professionalism and civility. I would truly be honored to earn your vote.

Q. What can the county do in the next five years to help the area prosper?

A. Over the next five years, I think the county needs to focus on responsible growth and making sure we are planning for the future. That means maintaining and improving our roads and infrastructure, supporting public safety, and making sure our communities continue to be places where people want to live, work and raise their families.

We also need to make it easier to do business with the county by looking at our processes, using technology where it makes sense and finding more efficient ways to provide services. I believe the county should work closely with our cities, townships, schools and local businesses so we aren't working in silos.

Most importantly, as we grow, we need to ask the questions, set priorities, plan ahead and make sure we are being responsible with taxpayer dollars.

Q. What are two challenges that the county faces and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Two challenges facing Anoka County are the increasing cost of providing county services and the future of the county jail. As costs rise, we need to take a hard look at how we spend taxpayer dollars. With my experience working for the county, I know there are opportunities to improve processes and find efficiencies. We need to ask, "Is this required?" "Is there a better way to do it?" "Is this the best use of taxpayer dollars?" We also need to pursue state and federal grants and work with legislators to address unfunded mandates that increase county costs.

The jail is another major challenge. We need a safe, functional facility, but we also need to make the right long-term decision for taxpayers. That means asking the tough questions, looking at all reasonable options, and working with our cities and communities to find a practical and responsible solution.

CENTERVILLE MAYOR (ELECT 1)

Nancy N. Golden

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Medical sales

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Elected Mayor of Centerville in 2024

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?

A. I am eager to serve on the Centerville City Council to actively seek out growth



opportunities that align with the needs and goals of our residents.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?

A. My vision is to help our city thrive over the next five years by prioritizing fiscal responsibility and strategic decisions.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?

A. With the challenge of limited state funding, making informed local-level choices becomes even more critical.

CENTERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 2)

Anita Rios

City of residence: Centerville

Occupation: Talent management consultant

List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centerville council member
- Centerville's Economic Development Authority
- Empowering Small Minnesota Communities Advisory Committee

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?

A. Centerville has been my home for 19 years. My husband, Cesar, and I raised our two daughters here, and we deeply value the small-town atmosphere that makes this community special. For the past two years, it has been my privilege to serve residents as a member of the City Council. I am running for re-election because I want to continue building on the progress we have made, including the Downtown Vision process and ongoing efforts to be responsible stewards of the city's water, sewer, roads and trails. I believe Centerville residents deserve accountable leadership and meaningful opportunities to help shape decisions about the city's future.



I currently work as a consultant after retiring from a 35-year career in public higher education.

Q. What can the city Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?

A. Implement the 2026 Downtown Vision Plan: I will support updates to the city's zoning codes that align with the recommendations in the 2026 Downtown Vision Plan. I will also advocate for a clear request-for-proposals (RFP) process that encourages developers to bring forward projects with the amenities residents want to see in Centerville's downtown area.

Increase opportunities for citizen engagement: I will continue promoting meaningful opportunities for residents to participate in planning and decision making. This includes town hall meetings, surveys, advisory groups and facilitated discussions so that everyone who wants to have a voice can be heard.

Balance fiscal responsibility with stewardship of city infrastructure: I will continue to support thoughtful, responsible decision making that keeps taxes as low as possible for Centerville residents while also addressing the city's essential public safety, infrastructure and maintenance needs.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?

A. Deferred city infrastructure maintenance: Centerville faces

several important-yet-costly infrastructure needs that must be addressed thoughtfully over time. These needs affect services residents rely on every day: safe drinking water, reliable sewer systems, well-maintained roads. Soon, the city will need to replace a failing well, inspect its sewer system and replace aging equipment. Careful prioritization and sequence of these projects while seeking outside funding whenever possible will protect essential services while keeping tax levies reasonable.

Economic development: To make the most of the Downtown Vision Plan, Centerville should take a proactive approach to attracting the right kinds of investment. Rather than waiting to see what proposals come forward, I will advocate for a clear business development policy that gives developers guidance and incentives to bring forward projects that reflect residents' priorities. This approach can help add desired amenities while preserving the small-town character that makes Centerville special.

CANDIDATE LINDA M. BROUSSARD DID NOT RESPOND



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VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

SPECIAL ELECTION FOR CENTERVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 1)

Kale Haluptzok
City of residence: Centerville
Occupation: Small Business Owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Parks & Recreation — Liaison
- Economic Development Authority — board member
- Coaching youth soccer and hockey

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?
A. I want to serve on the City Council because this community is home to me. I grew up here, and I've had the opportunity to see our area change and grow over the years. Now, I'm raising

my own family here, so I have an even greater personal interest in making sure our community remains a great place to live. I care about the people who live here, and I want to make sure their voices are heard. I want to be a council member who listens, is accessible and works with residents to find practical solutions to the issues we face.

I want to give back to the community that helped shape me and help create a safe, welcoming and strong community where my family, and future generations, can thrive.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. Over the next five years, the City Council can help Centerville prosper by supporting local businesses, maintaining our infrastructure and investing in the services residents rely on.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Two challenges I see in our city are preserving what makes Centerville special while also being open to thoughtful change, and making fiscally responsible decisions.

As our area grows, we need to protect Centerville's character and history while embracing new ideas and opportunities that benefit residents.

We also need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. I would focus on responsible spending, prioritizing essential services and making sure we get the most value from every dollar. I believe we can respect our city's past, thoughtfully plan for its future and make responsible decisions that keep our community strong.

LEXINGTON MAYOR (ELECT 1)

CANDIDATE MIKE MURPHY DID NOT RESPOND

LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE (ELECT 2)

Heidi Fust
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Environmental health, safety and maintenance manager for a Minnesota medical device manufacturer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Volunteer, Anoka County Disaster Response Team — Current
- External Board Member, Midwest Consortium for Hazardous Waste Worker Training — Current
- Webmaster, Minnesota Mineral Club — Past

Q. Why do you want to serve on the City Council?
A. I want to serve because I care about Lexington and the people who call it home. I believe local government works best when residents feel heard; information is understandable; and decisions are made with preparation, fairness and respect. My professional experience has taught me to listen carefully, solve practical problems, manage resources responsibly and bring people together around shared goals.

I am not running with a personal agenda or because I believe I already have every answer. I am running to learn,

ask thoughtful questions and contribute a safety-focused, problem-solving perspective. I would be honored to help make decisions that support dependable city services, responsible spending, well-maintained neighborhoods and a strong sense of community for both renters and homeowners.

Q. What can the City Council do in the next five years to help the city prosper?
A. Over the next five years, the City Council can help Lexington prosper by protecting essential services, maintaining infrastructure, budgeting carefully and communicating clearly about priorities and costs. Prosperity should also include a community where residents feel connected and local businesses are welcomed as partners.

I would support exploring practical, voluntary partnerships, such as business sponsorships for seasonal streetlight decor or community activities, with fair rules and appropriate recognition. I would also like to build on the city newsletter with clearer updates, more community information and a fair way for local businesses to share Lexington-specific offers.

These ideas should begin modestly, be evaluated carefully and avoid placing unnecessary costs on taxpayers. Thoughtful growth should strengthen Lexington without losing the qualities that make it feel like home.

Q. What are two challenges in your city and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Two challenges I would focus on are strengthening communication and managing community needs responsibly.

First, residents should be able to understand what the city is considering, why decisions are being made and how to share concerns. I would support clearer updates, more accessible information and additional opportunities for resident input.

Second, Lexington must address needs such as infrastructure, traffic, neighborhood maintenance and community improvements without creating unnecessary taxpayer burden. I would ask for clear cost information, consider long-term maintenance, explore grants and voluntary partnerships when appropriate, and favor manageable improvements over expensive promises.

For traffic concerns, I would listen to residents, review available data, and work with city and county partners before recommending solutions. My approach would be to understand the problem first, then pursue practical options that fit Lexington's needs and resources.

CANDIDATE KIM JAY DEVRIES DID NOT RESPOND

CANDIDATE BRANDON WINGE DID NOT RESPOND

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL BOARD (ELECT 3)

Jessica Schwinn
City of residence: Centerville
Occupation: Educator
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Founded and run Centennial Area Mutual Aid Network
- Treasurer, Centennial ISD 12 School Board
- District Systems Accountability committee member

Q. What are your top three priorities for the school district?
A. One of my priorities is continuing to work on communication and transparency in the district. Being clear in communication and including all necessary information is the best way to build trust in the district. Another one of my priorities is working on making the district a welcoming, inclusive and safe space for all students. School should be a place that all students feel welcome, not a space they should have to worry about bullying or other unwelcoming behavior.

Lastly, lunch for students has become a major concern of parents. In both the middle school and high school, the timing and length of lunch is an issue. Some students at the middle school are eating lunch as early as 9:51 a.m. District wide, a number of students won't eat lunch or throw much of it away as they don't like the taste and/or appearance of what is being served.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Education funding in Minnesota has not kept pace with inflation. There is a big lack of funding for Centennial, especially compared to neighboring districts. To fill this gap, districts rely on taxpayers via operating levies. The metro average for districts with operating levies is more than \$1500 per student. Centennial's current levy is about \$996 per student. Nearby districts like White Bear Lake (\$1668 per student) and Mounds View (\$2204 per student) receive significantly more in operating levy per pupil. Unfortunately, this funding gap affects everything from class size and student support to what kind of electives and specialist classes can be offered to students. Until the Minnesota Legislature fixes the funding formula, Centennial will have to continue to make due with what we get and be good stewards while also planning for a rainy day.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. As a current school board member, I cannot weigh in on whether community members should vote yes or no on the referendum questions. I can say that the district began this process almost two years ago. The board urged the district to conduct this process in a transparent way with a high level of community involvement. Throughout the process, an input team of 60 community members, parents and staff met to give feedback so that priorities on the plan could be established and adjusted accordingly. A design team made up of district leaders and staff also met throughout the process to give feedback and refine plans. I am satisfied with the time and care that was taken to establish this long-range plan. The current school board voted unanimously to place these questions on the ballot in November.

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL BOARD (ELECT 3)

Joe Ackerman
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Chief engineer of critical operations U.S. Bank, St. Paul
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Volunteering for Centennial Elementary Parent Organization (CEPO) for 2.5 years
- Attend regular city council meetings and applying for board positions (unsuccessful)



- Heading up Lovell Road safety improvements in Anoka County (neighborhood collective)
- Q. What are your top three priorities for the school district?**
A.
- Improved school breakfast/lunch program — better quality food and common-sense reduction of waste.
 - Invest in facility infrastructure and engineering. Keeping up with facility standards with regard to safety, efficiency and modernization.
 - Call for more parent/community involvement. Encourage volunteering and school board meeting attendance.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Funding deficits, rising operating costs and aging facilities.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I hope to see them pass. When schools do better, the community does better. When schools are not invested in, the community suffers with students who do not get the support they need, teacher and staff burnout (added demands on them) and lower enrollment.

Gloria Murphy
City of residence: Lexington
Occupation: Senior patient access specialist in the medical technology industry, and small-business co-owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Centennial ISD 12 school board member
- Director of Centennial Area Education Foundation
- City of Lexington planning and zoning commissioner, and parks board member



and parents should feel confident sending them there each day. We also need to give teachers and staff the tools they need, direct resources toward classrooms, and be careful with every taxpayer dollar.
As both a school board member and Centennial mom, I want our decisions to be practical, thoughtful and focused on helping every child learn, grow and succeed.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Centennial's greatest challenge is meeting the needs of students and staff while the district and the families we serve are both facing rising costs. We must protect strong classroom instruction, reasonable class sizes, student services, transportation, technology and special education. We also need to close achievement gaps, keep students safe, care for aging facilities, and recruit and retain excellent staff. That means looking honestly at what is working, what needs improvement and whether our spending is actually helping students.
Parents and taxpayers deserve clear explanations of the choices before the board and the tradeoffs involved. The goal is simple: children should be known, challenged, supported

and prepared for life, and families should be able to trust that decisions are being made carefully and responsibly.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both Centennial Forward questions, but I do not view voter approval as a blank check. As a Centennial mom, I want every child to have excellent teachers, safe schools and opportunities to succeed. As a taxpayer, I know what families throughout our community are feeling. Everything costs more right now, and my family feels that pressure too. That is why every dollar must be justified, clearly explained and carefully managed.
Question 1 would provide \$375 per pupil annually to help maintain teachers, academic programs, services and class sizes. Question 2 would address safety, aging building systems, learning spaces and capacity needs.
I voted to place both questions on the ballot after years of planning and community input. If voters approve them, I will ask hard questions, demand clear budgets and make sure the district delivers what it promised. Our children deserve strong schools, and taxpayers deserve accountability.

Laura Gannon
City of residence: Circle Pines
Occupation: Senior principal product security engineer, and small-business owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- SD36 DFL outreach and inclusion officer (2023-2026)
- Volunteer door guard at Don Julio's following Operation Metro raid
- Girl Scout Troop Leader, Troop 27519



never designed for them. We need adequate paraprofessional support and flexible teaching practices. Third, honesty in education means trusting our teachers with evidence-based curriculum, accurate history and science taught as science. Our kids deserve the critical thinking skills to navigate a complicated world. All three require competitive teacher compensation and retaining the talented educators we already have.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. The major issue facing Centennial is chronic underfunding. We spend just \$995 per pupil in local operating levy funding compared to a metro average of \$1,519. That gap is not abstract — it is the reading interventionist we cannot afford, the special education para burning out by December and the aging infrastructure we patch instead of fix. Our middle school is at 125% capacity. Teachers are leaving the profession because they are underpaid and overworked, often carrying tens of thousands of dollars in graduate-degree debt. We cannot address mental health needs, modernize security or close achievement gaps without first closing this funding gap. Our

children's education should not be a geographical lottery.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both Centennial Forward referendum questions. Question 1, the \$375 per-pupil operating levy, is essential to maintain strong programming and retain the educators our students depend on. Question 2, the \$108.9 million facilities bond, will modernize aging buildings, strengthen safety and security, and address capacity challenges across every school. The school board approved both questions unanimously after years of community input and data analysis. Without this investment, we face more painful cuts that will be felt directly in classrooms. Strong schools do not happen by accident — they happen when communities choose to invest in them. Every child in Centennial deserves a school that was built for them, not just the ones in wealthier zip codes.

Tom Knisely
City of residence: Blaine
Occupation: Media relations coordinator, Three Rivers Park District
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Chair, Centennial School Board
- Director, Intermediate 916 School Board
- Past president, Centennial High School Baseball Boosters



Alternative Learning Center and one for the Pines to help our students whose personal struggles impact their learning. My hope moving forward is to hire a social worker for the middle school and high school as well. Maintaining strong programs is vital. One good example is the expansion of our new Career Pathways Program from manufacturing to also include computer science, health and sports medicine.

Q. What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
A. Equitable funding for property-poor school districts like Centennial and unfunded state mandates that drive up costs are major issues facing Centennial. Due to funding inequities, Centennial Schools receive less state funding than other districts of similar size. This forces Centennial to meet the growing needs of the district with less money than others receive. It's difficult, but through sound fiscal management and constant rightsizing, we've managed. Unfortunately, new unfunded mandates from the state are making this increasingly difficult. New costs for summer unemployment, paid family medical leave and funding cuts to mandated special education programs are projected to cost Centennial Schools an estimated \$2.7 million on an annual basis.

Q. What are your opinions on the two Centennial Forward referendum questions set for this year's ballot?
A. I support both questions. The operating levy will help maintain class sizes, services for students and strong academic programs. The levy will provide an extra \$375 per pupil annually. Even with this increase, our operating levy will still be below the average of north metro districts. The bond referendum is focused on urgent deferred maintenance (fixing the things that need to be fixed), school safety (new secure entrances and other safety enhancements), remodeling and additions that anticipate future growth and improve the day-to-day operations of our schools. The original plan came in at a cost of \$224 million. After dozens of public meetings and hundreds of public comments, plans were adjusted. The cost of the bond levy was cut in half and is now just \$109 million.
The cost of these two questions will cost the average homeowner roughly \$25 a month, the amount of a Carbone's pizza.

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