

EDITORIALS - OPINIONS - NEWS

Simpler times

My wife Rita and I did a little Christmas shopping last weekend.

We try not to go overboard when it comes to buying gifts. Including brothers, sisters, cousins and adult children, there are plenty of people we could be spending lots of money on.

Lately, we've been sending gift cards to the adults and focusing on finding appropriate gifts for the youngest generation - the grandkids. A few are pre-teen. Two are teenagers. Last year we had a new addition, Jordan, who is now almost two.

Last week was the first time I had walked through the toy section of a store in a long time. We were looking for something for Jordan, but I didn't expect to see all the new electronic, mechanical (and expensive) gadgets young kids are playing with these days.

I saw a big selection of battery-operated action figures, cars and talking books. There were mini-toy computers with colorful keyboards where kids could spell out words and the picture would come up on the screen. It seemed like a good percentage of toys had either electronics, moving parts or an audio component.

Things were much less complicated when I was growing up. I can remember some of the Christmas gifts I received when I was very young. There weren't any electronics and very few mechanical toys back then. Most gifts for kids were much simpler.

One of my favorites was

a set of Lincoln Logs. Me and my brother would spend what seemed like hours building forts and having battles using



By Ken Francis
Contributing Writer

another gift - plastic soldiers. We didn't need figures that moved. We used our imagination to create whatever we felt like doing. And we built houses, cars and forts using Tinkertoys and Erector sets. That was before Legos.

My parents liked to get us jigsaw puzzles. Not only did we learn how to identify different shapes and images, it also kept us quiet, which mom and dad really enjoyed.

We also got a selection of board games, like Chinese Checkers, Stratego, Mouse-trap and as we got older, Monopoly and Scrabble.

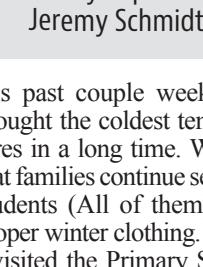
Every Christmas I looked forward to getting a Venus Paradise color-by-number set. Some of my brothers and sisters would also get one, and we spent more quiet time working on our masterpieces.

My older brother was into cars, and I remember him getting Matchbox trucks, cars and other vehicles. None of them were powered by batteries, but he still had lots of fun playing with them.

If I had to buy gifts for young kids these days, I'd probably get some of the things I played with as a child so they could use their imagination to have fun.

Batteries not included.

Second Trimester



By Supt.
Jeremy Schmidt

this past couple weeks has brought the coldest temperatures in a long time. We ask that families continue sending students (All of them) with proper winter clothing. When I visited the Primary School recess I was encouraged by how well our students were prepared. If you need assistance with winter clothes, please reach out to your child's school as we have a number of resources available to help out.

The winter season is also a very busy time for activities throughout the district. We invite the community to join us for a wide range of events from winter concerts, Community Ed programs, robotics, gymnastics, dance, wrestling, basketball and much more. Our students are extremely talented and love to show off their skills to our community and region. Please take a look at our website and specifically our activities calendar for dates and times.

As we approach winter break, I want to extend my gratitude to our families, staff, and community. I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday season and happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming all students back in January with a renewed focus and excitement for the second half of the year.

CHRISTMAS
from page 1

so don't forget to pick up a shovel — we have them from

\$19 to \$63!

Palmer House (Located 6 miles north of Clear Lake on Co. Rd. 6) 4181 - 105th Ave., Clear Lake, MN

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Palmer House has great gift ideas including T-shirts for \$20, laced-up hockey hoodies for \$55, hats for \$25 and flannel shirts for \$55. They also have gift certificates in any denomination for the last minute stocking stuffer.

Eddie's Auto 8495 Main Ave., Clear Lake, MN

320-743-9993

Don't forget your (or that special someone's) vehicle this winter! Why not pick up a gift certificate in any amount to place in one's Christmas card or slide into someone's stocking this Holiday season!

Clearwater Legion 505 Pine St., Clearwater, MN

320-558-6627

While you are out and about, swing by the Clearwater Legion and pick up a gift certificate in any amount requested or get your hands on a cool T-shirt or sweatshirt and show your support for your area Legion!

Simpler times



By Ken Francis
Contributing Writer

TO THE EDITOR:

The New York Times reports that our billionaire President said "Affordability doesn't mean anything to anybody". It's a "fake narrative", a "con job". Trump plans to withhold SNAP payments unless states divulge private personal information about recipients. As personal bankruptcies from health care debt rise the AP reports chances of retaining health insurance subsidies are "dwindling". Affordable housing is non-existent, shelters are overflowing, food banks and food assistance organizations are overwhelmed with the "fake narrative con job". The tragic fact is, it's not the President's job to fund government programs. The responsibility for spending, taxing and tariffs lies squarely in the House of Representatives which is controlled by Tom-sit on his thumbs-Emmer, and his republican cronies. Our "representative" ignores the needs of CD6 to grovel at the feet of the billionaire dance hall president, trading away the most important duty of the people's House of Representatives-the

Connie Rutledge
Big Lake, Mn

TO THE EDITOR:

Why are our Property Taxes continuing to increase? A lot of the reason(s) are due to unfunded State Mandates, but instead of you reading what I have to say, listen to the Sherburne County Administrator. In October, Mr. Bruce Messelt spoke before the Big Lake Township Board of Commissioners, providing a "Sherburne County General Update" and it was extremely informative. He gave the same update to the Orrock Township on 11/19/25, who recorded it and placed it on their YouTube channel, where it can be watched at the following address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t-qD3W7M>

TO THE EDITOR:

Who Really Buys the Farm? Farmers aren't struggling because they forgot how to farm. They're struggling because policy shifts and higher costs hit faster than they can adapt. Tariffs choked off export markets. USAID, once a reliable \$2 billion-a-year buyer of U.S. crops, vanished.

Prices of inputs rose. Many crop farmers now lose \$100-

Walz Fraud Fiasco

Last week was a busy week for Congress and Minnesota.

After three years of Minnesota Republicans sounding the alarm on the rampant fraud that has occurred on Tim Walz's watch, the national media finally started paying attention. Now, the Trump administration is working to hold our failed governor accountable, and we here in Congress are doing the same.

Tim Walz's Fraud Fiasco

Under Tim Walz, Minnesota taxpayers have been robbed of more than a billion dollars and counting. Walz and his administration sat idly by while fraudsters lined their pockets and allegedly bankrolled Al-Shabaab terrorists.

The New York Times called the fraud "staggering in its scale and brazenness." The Washington Post, Fox News, and others have all reported on Minnesota's out-of-control fraud.

Thankfully, President Trump and his administration have stepped up where Tim Walz has failed. U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent launched an investigation into reports that these fraudsters may have been diverting Minnesota taxpayer dollars to Al-Shabaab terrorists. The House Oversight Committee, led by Chairman James Comer, also launched an investigation into the widespread fraud that has happened on Tim Walz's watch, as well as any potential retaliation against whistleblowers who sought to protect taxpayer dollars. And right before Thanksgiving, the Minnesota Republican delegation sent a letter to U.S. Attorney Daniel Rosen, asking that he fully investigate this issue as well.

Our message is clear:

Minnesotans deserve answers and accountability. And we will not rest until they get both.

Supporting Veterans and Their Families

On Wednesday, I participated in a Veteran Stakeholder Roundtable alongside House Republican leadership, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Mike Bost, and members from Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to discuss how Congress can better meet the needs of those who bravely served our country.

We were also honored to be joined by one of MN-06's very own — my good friend and former Veterans Service Officer for Sherburne County, Bruce Price.

Our veterans and their families deserve nothing but the very best. Ensuring they

Power of the Purse.

We deserve better. Trump will be a lame duck next year. In 2026 the Power of the Ballot will have intelligent thoughtful citizens ridding Congress of the Emmer lazies and putting responsive representatives to work for us. Emmer get off your knees and serve your constituents.

Connie Rutledge
Big Lake, Mn

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Prices of inputs rose. Many crop farmers now lose \$100-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LU&t=1081s. Mr. Messelt' remarks start at the 16 minute mark and go on for another 24 minutes. He talks about Northstar, Data Centers, Nuclear Power, Road Projects, Budget, SNAP, Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA), Marijuana, Tobacco, Post Offices, Weather Sirens, St. Cloud Airport. . . every person, and not just those that pay property taxes directly, need to listen to this update so as to become informed and learn what is going on now and what is coming in the future.

Bret R. Collier
Big Lake, MN

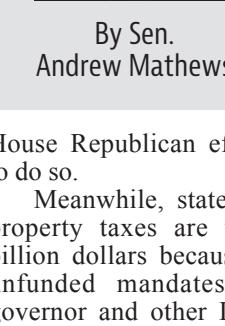
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Prices of inputs rose. Many crop farmers now lose \$100-

200 an acre, and bankruptcies have nearly doubled. Folks warn that without real help, we could lose a quarter of America's farms. AcreTrader doesn't buy scrub ground. It targets productive row-crop farms (corn, soy, Delta rice) with good yields. The land goes into an LLC, then gets sold in slices to investors. The farm family often stays on as tenants, while rent checks and long-term appreciation flow outward. J.D. Vance's venture-capital fund was an early backer, helping AcreTrader scale from a niche startup into a major player in the farmland-investment boom. His own Senate disclosures show a personal stake as well. That investment helps legitimize and accelerate a system where farmland becomes a financial product. And who can buy in? Only accredited investors with high incomes or over \$1 million in net worth. Any legal U.S. resident can participate no matter where they were born. When farmland leaves local hands, the wealth leaves with it.

Vanessa Davenport
Big Lake, MN



By Sen.
Andrew Mathews

House Republican efforts to do so.

Meanwhile, statewide property taxes are up a billion dollars because of unfunded mandates the governor and other Democrats pushed on counties and school districts. On top of that, this forecast also projects falling job growth in large part because of other unfunded mandates the governor and Democrats placed on businesses, such as paid leave. It all leaves Minnesotans with less money in their pocket.

This, Mekeland said, comes after Democrats — in full control of the Capitol — increased state spending by 40 percent, used up the state's \$18 billion surplus and raised taxes by \$10 billion in the last biennium.

We are looking at a weaker long-range economy in Minnesota, which is largely the result of poor management of our state under the former Democrat trifecta. With full control of the Capitol, Democrats went on an unprecedented spending spree, raised taxes by historic amounts and blew our \$18 billion surplus. All the while, they not only failed to get serious about cracking down on our state's serious fraud problem but also blocked

On Wednesday, the House passed the Small Business Regulatory Reduction Act. The estimated costs of federal rules and regulations exceed \$3 trillion every year.

A disproportionate share of this burden falls on small businesses. This legislation will reduce that burden by requiring the Small Business Administration (SBA) to ensure that new SBA rules cost small businesses zero dollars.

House Republicans will always stand with our nation's veterans. Yesterday's conversation was just one of many important steps we're taking to make sure the veteran community is heard and prioritized in the halls of Congress.

Supporting Small Businesses

We're working to advance our deregulatory agenda to help our small businesses thrive. The legislation we passed this week does just that.

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UPCOMING AUCTIONS	
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THURSDAY JANUARY 1ST @ 10:00 AM ANNUAL ANTIQUE & SIGN AUCTION	ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES, HOUSEHOLD, DÉCOR, FURNITURE, TOOLS & OUTDOOR, YARD & GARDEN & SHOP
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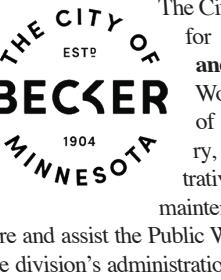
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tlements in the \$1000's. Get a free evaluation to see what your case is really worth. 100% Free Evaluation. Call Now: 1-833-879-1534. (mcn)

County Update County Administrator Bruce Messelt updated the board about a few items of distinction in Sherburne County, the first being the termination of Northstar Rail service which will end on the day of the final Minnesota Vikings home game, either Saturday, January 4 or 5. A two-year pilot program will begin on January 5. Metro Transit Bus Route 882 will provide service between Big Lake, Elk River, and downtown Minneapolis on weekdays. Metro Transit will operate this service under an agreement with MnDOT and will have three southbound trips in the morning and three northbound trips from downtown Minneapolis.

Messelt also spoke about data centers and nuclear power. He then finished his update talking about road construction on Hwy. 169. When completed, Messelt contended that Orrock residents will be able to go "from Chicago to the casino without hitting a stoplight."

Other News

The township board approved an exempt gambling premises permit to Ducks Unlimited Zimmerman #309 for their one-time bingo and raffle event to be held on January 10, 2026 at the Getaway Bar in Orrock.

A motion was approved for the Joint Community Meeting between the City of Big Lake, Big Lake Township, Sherburne County Board of Commissioners, and ISD 727 to meet in the Big Lake City Council Chambers on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Later, when discussion about Ann Lake resumed, Chair Anne Felber proposed creating a board with

PUBLIC NOTICES - OBITUARIES

2026

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS TO PUBLISH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS DELINQUENT TAX LIST AND OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF SHERBURNE COUNTY

Sealed bids for the publication of Sherburne County's financial statement, delinquent tax list, and the official proceedings of the Sherburne County Board, are to be submitted to the Sherburne County Auditor-Treasurer Office, Sherburne County Government Center, 13880 Business Center Drive NW, Suite 100, Elk River, Minnesota 55330-1692. Bids will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on December 18, 2025, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. From the said proposal received and accepted, the County Board of Commissioners will award the bids for the year 2026 at its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 6th at 9:00 a.m. or shortly thereafter. Bids will be received for the following:

1. Publication of financial statement as required by Minn. Stat. § 375.17.
2. Publication of official proceedings of the Sherburne County Board sessions as required by Minn. Stat. § 375.12.
3. Publication of notice and list of real estate taxes remaining delinquent in Sherburne County as required by Minn. Stat. §§ 279.08 and 279.09.
4. Publication of other public notices.

Bids shall be submitted in exact accordance with the Bidding Documents. The Bidding Documents may be obtained at the Sherburne County Auditor-Treasurer Office, Sherburne County Government Center, 13880 Business Center Drive NW, Suite 100, Elk River, Minnesota 55330.

All bids must be sealed and marked "Bid for Publication of the Sherburne County Financial Statement, Delinquent Real Estate Taxes, and the Official Proceedings of the Sherburne County Board."

The Sherburne County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids and to waive any informalities or irregularities in bidding.

By order of the County Board.

Dated at Elk River, Minnesota, this 18th day of November 2025.

/s/ Loraine Rupp, Auditor-Treasurer

Sherburne County

(Published in the *Patriot*: 11/29/25, 12/06/25, 12/13/25.)

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State

Certificate of Assumed Name

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAME: **diamond tax**
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: **707 Highway 10 Elk River MN 55330 USA**

NAMEHOLDER(S):

Name: **Stacy Hollenbeck**

Address: **707 Highway 10 Elk River MN 55330 USA**

If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: **Stacy Hollenbeck**

MAILING ADDRESS:

707 Highway 10 Elk River

Minnesota 55330

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: **stacy@diamondtax.net**

Work Item: **1604900900029**

Original File Number: **1604900900029**

STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FILED

12/03/2025 11:59 PM

/s/ Steve Simon

Secretary of State

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25, 12/20/25.)

STATE OF MINNESOTA DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF SHERBURNE

TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

PROBATE

Court File No.: **71-PR-25-174**

In re the Estate of **Sharon Elaine Ringwelski**, Decedent.

Notice and Order for Hearing on Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy, Determination of Heirship, and Appointment of Personal Representative and Notice to Creditors.

It is ordered and notice is given that on December 24, 2025 at 1:30 p.m., a hearing will be held at Sherburne County Courthouse via zoom hearing for the formal adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship of the Decedent, and for the appointment of:

Name: **Ryan Patrick Ringwelski**

Address: **101 10th Street East #342, St. Paul, MN 55101**

as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in: an un-supervised administration.

Any objections to the petition should be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing.

If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the personal representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.

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 months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

Dated: October 16, 2025

/s/ Katrese Ringham

Court Administrator

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25, 12/20/25.)

STATE OF MINNESOTA DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF SHERBURNE

TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

INFORMAL PROBATE

Court File No.: **71-PR-25-185**

In re the Estate of **Steven Charles Laske a/k/a Steven C. Laske a/k/a Steve Laske**, Decedent.

NOTICE OF INFORMAL PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:

Notice is hereby given that an application for informal probate of the above-named Decedent's Last Will dated May 9, 2013, has been filed with the Probate Registrar, and the application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Probate Registrar has informally appointed the following: Michelle Lynn Hansen, 816 W. Elm St., West Salem, WI, 54669, mhhansen@aol.com, 608-769-0840, as personal representative of the

TOWN OF BECKER

SHERBURNE COUNTY, MINNESOTA

RFP: BUILDING OFFICIAL/INSPECTION SERVICES

The Town of Becker is seeking professional service proposals from firms/individuals interested in performing building official/inspector duties for the Township, which has adopted the 1997 Fee Schedule.

The Township is interested in an independent contractor agreement for those services. The duties require skilled inspection work in securing compliance with State building, plumbing and mechanical codes, Fire Marshaling, and related regulations and standards. Work involves responsibility for plan review and inspection of structures in regards to conformity with the Township's zoning ordinance, code requirements, and technical standards. The inspection of new and existing septic system is also required.

Submittals to be received online via QuestCDN Quest Number

1997034 or to Lucinda Messman, Clerk, Becker Township, 12165 Hancock Street, PO Box 248, Becker, MN 55308 by 4:30 pm on

Friday, December 19, 2025.

/s/ Lucinda Messman

Becker Township Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25.)

TOWN OF BECKER SHERBURNE COUNTY, MINNESOTA ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS TWO YEAR GENERAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR SERVICE AGREEMENT

Bids will be received until

Tuesday, December 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Bids for a Two-Year General Maintenance Contract will be received by Becker Township until Tuesday, December 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

The Becker Town Board will meet at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 23, 2025, to consider said bids. You can attend via zoom for opening, review and award by the Town Board. Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86383968670> Meeting ID: 863 8396 8670 Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/koXQbfIqk> If you have any issues accessing the meeting, please call the town hall at 763-261-5301 and someone will be happy to assist you with meeting ID.

The said bids shall be for the furnishing of equipment, labor and materials for general maintenance of all township roads as more thoroughly described in the proposed Agreement. The agreement documents are available at the town website www.BeckerTwpSherburneCoMN.gov or www.QuestCDN.com Quest Number 9980162. To be considered a planholder for bids, register for a free 'Regular' membership by clicking 'Join'. You may download the digital documents for \$5.00 by entering the Quest Number 9980162 on the search page.

Downloading the documents and becoming a plan holder is recommended as plan holder's receive automatic notice of addenda and bid updates. Contact QuestCDN Customer Support at 952-233-1632 or Success@QuestCDN.com for assistance in membership registration and downloading digital documents. Quest Number 9980162

Bids may be submitted to the Town Hall in a sealed envelope with a statement thereon indicating submission is for General Maintenance Service Agreement for Quest number 9980162. Bids shall be addressed to: Lucinda Messman, Town Clerk, Town of Becker, 12165 Hancock Street, PO Box 248, Becker, Minnesota 55308.

Bids received by the Town Clerk after the time set for receiving bids shall be returned unopened. The Township Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids or any portion thereof for any or no reason.

By order of the Town Board of the Town of Becker.

/s/ Lucinda Messman,
Becker Township Clerk
(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25, 12/20/25.)

NOTICE OF FILING FOR TOWN OFFICES TO BE ELECTED BECKER TOWNSHIP

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a town election will be held in the Township of Becker, Sherburne County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 10th day of March 2026.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be Tuesday, the 30th day of December, 2025 and the last day will be Tuesday, the 13th day of January, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Filings may be made with Clerk Lucinda Messman at the Becker Township Hall, 763-261-5301 during regular hours or call for appointment. Town hall will be open until 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

The following terms will be expiring:

Supervisor, Seat #1 – for the term of three (3) years

Supervisor, Seat #2 – for the term of three (3) years

Filing fee is \$2.00.

/s/ Lucinda Messman,

Becker Township Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25.)

CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF FILING FOR TOWN OFFICES

Notice is hereby given that a Town Election will be held in the Township of Clear Lake, County of Sherburne, State of Minnesota, on Tuesday, March 10th, 2026, at the Clear Lake Township Hall at 7938 116th St SE, Clear Lake Mn 55319.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be December 30, 2025, and the last day will be Tuesday the 13th of January 2026, during regular office hours: Thursday 9:00 am until noon.

The office will also be open on Tuesday January 13th, 2026, from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm. You may call the Clerk's office for an appointment if needed. Filings close at 5:00 pm on January 13th, 2026.

Last day to withdraw is January 15th, 2026, by 5pm.

Office to be filled at the Annual Meeting in March is for:

Supervisor A for a three-year term.

Filing fee is \$2.00.

Nancy Betzler

Clear Lake Township Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25.)

TOWNSHIP OF LYNDEN, NOTICE OF FILING FOR TOWN OFFICES TO BE ELECTED

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Lynden, Stearns County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, March 10, 2026. Qualified voters of Lynden Township who wish to be candidates for office in Lynden Township must file an Affidavit of Candidacy with the Township Clerk.

Filing for town office will be held for a two week period beginning December 30, 2025 and closing on January 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Affidavits of Candidacy are located on the web: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/election-administration-campaigns/> or by contacting the clerk. Offices to be filled are:

One (1) Supervisor / Three year term

One (1) Clerk / Two year term

The Clerk's office located at the Lynden Town Hall 21367 Co Rd 44 will be open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the last day of filing, January 13, 2026.

/s/ Jenny Schmidt

Lynden Township Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 12/13/25, 12/20/25.)

OBITUARIES

Doreen M. Peacock, 93

Clear Lake, MN

July 8, 1932 – December 4, 2025

Funeral Services will be

12:00 p.m. Saturday, December 13, 2025 at

AREA NEWS

**Clearwater
EDA hosts
Holiday
Open House**



HOLIDAY CHEER. Clearwater EDA hosted a Holiday Business Networking Open House at Clearwater Lions Park Pavilion Tuesday, December 9th from 8am to 9am. Pictured: Mary and Ken Abraham. (Patriot photo by Mary Nehring.)

By Mary Nehring,
Contributing Writer

The Clearwater EDA hosted a Holiday Business Open House network event Tues., Dec. 9 from 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. at the Clearwater Lions Park Pavilion.

Refreshments were generously provided, including fresh coffee and delicious cinnamon rolls and cookies, courtesy of Clearwater Travel Plaza.

Attendees enjoyed visiting with one another at the event, which was hosted by the City of Clearwater.

**Refuge
neighbors
being asked
to fill feeders**

Submitted Article

This year marks the 126th anniversary of the nationwide Christmas Bird Count, a survey of winter bird species conducted annually from December 14 to January 5.

This citizen science project is organized by the National Audubon Society and involves 10s of thousands of volunteers from Alaska to Antarctica, including a group of volunteers at your nearby Refuge.

On Thursday, December 18, Sherburne's volunteers will survey within a 7.5-mile radius from the intersection of Sherburne Co. Rd. 9 and Co. Rd. 5.

While additional volunteer counters are not needed, the Refuge could still use your help! If you live within fifteen miles of the count area, please clean and fill

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Events 11:30am-3:30pm Events 10:30am-4:00pm Events 11:30am-3:30pm

EVENTS

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Becker Lions host Lange Home Christmas Party

By Mary Nehring,
Contributing Writer

The Becker Lions treated Lange Board & Room Assisted Living members to their annual Christmas party at Jack and Jims Event Center in Duelm on Monday evening, Dec. 8.

Musicians Janet Schulte and Richard Currot provided guitar music and The Snake River Singers led a Christmas carol sing-along with Lange Home residents.



BECKER LIONS SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER. Santa coaxed up to Patti Cox. (Patriot Photo by Mary Nehring).

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Bulldog boys crush Crusaders

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

The Becker Bulldog boys basketball team hosted a veteran St. Cloud Cathedral team last Friday, with the Bulldogs cruising to a 79-60 lead.

"Our goal coming into the game was to enjoy the moment and the experience of the privilege to play High School Basketball and set the tone defensively," said Coach Cory Nuest.

"We win on Defense" has been one of this year's program standards, and the Bulldogs did precisely that, racing out to a 22-7 lead.

Isiah Boyer and Nathan Weiss set the tone early on offense, while the team played a connected brand of defense.

"They didn't have an answer for Isiah," Nuest added. "His decision-making was on point — attacking when he should attack,

finishing strong, hitting outside shots when they were there, and finding the open teammate when the defense collapsed. He was phenomenal."

The Crusaders didn't quit, as they trimmed the lead to 12 late in the first half before Nolan Burau (loose ball save) and Troy Nuest (steal and acrobatic layup) teamed up for an important part of a sequence that sparked a decisive 17-0 Becker run.

Boyer then drilled a buzzer-beater to send the Bulldogs into halftime up 49-22.

The second half was a complete team effort, as Weiss continued his strong play on both ends of the court, while Nuest and Boyer played scrappy defense against the Crusader back court. Nuest also had praise for the Bulldogs' ball-screen coverage.

Senior Bryce Paumen had an important contribu-

tion, hitting three consecutive post shots to help the Bulldogs push the lead back to 20 points. Also noted for their contributions were Saul Kreft, Burau and Owen Reinking.

"They are doing so many of the things that win games — talking on defense, bringing intensity, rebounding, screening, spacing, and cutting," Nuest said. "They're a huge part of our success."

Stat line: Weiss 21 pts, eight rebounds, four assists; Paumen 18 pts, 11 rebounds, four assists; Nuest 16 pts, four assists, four rebounds, five steals; Boyer 22 pts, four assists, six rebounds; Kreft three rebounds; Burau five rebounds, two blocks.

Becker's Tuesday evening game was postponed until Thursday due to inclement weather. Complete details in next week's Patriot.

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Senior Bryce Paumen had an important contribu-

Becker girls fall to Eagles

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

Last Thursday's girls basketball game between the Becker and Totino-Grace had interesting early season seeding implications, as both the Bulldogs and Eagles have their sights set on making a run in the Section Tournament in March.

In the end, the Eagles came out on top with a 66-61 victory over the young Becker squad.

The Eagles started out with the hot hand, going seven-for-seven from three point land to race to an 18 point lead.

Becker wasn't as hot when it came to shooting percentage, and that was the

difference in the game despite the Bulldogs eventually cutting the Totino lead to just two points in the waning minutes of the contest.

"We made a valiant comeback, but a slow start cost us in the end," Coach Dan Baird said after the game. "Our poor shooting three-for-20 (15%) really cost us. If we were able to see another one or two go in, I feel this could have been our game."

Andie Changamire was the offensive leader in the game, scoring 19 points to go along with six rebounds. Sister Adele was also outstanding, notching a double double with 13 points and 10 boards.

Becker captured a 40-32 rebounding advantage, some-

thing Baird credited with keeping the Bulldogs in the game. The Bulldogs were also the aggressors in the game, earning 31 free throws (making 18), while the Eagles were 10 of 12.

"Totino is now the front runner in Section 5AAA to earn the number one seed come playoff time," Baird said. "It was nice to see that we're right there when it comes to competing for a state birth at the end of the season. Our effort was outstanding, especially during the comeback."

Stat line: Ady Petty four points, Alyse Denne eight points, Juliana Stach nine points and Tess Brown with eight points.

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Becker dance team ready for the season

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

On Fri., Nov. 14, the Becker Dance team had its annual home show, "The Great Becker Dance Together." This event is partnered with a food-shelf drive each year, and this year, athletes and fans were able to contribute over \$300 in cash through raffle ticket sales as well as donate several boxes of non-perishable food items. During this time, the dance team performs a guy/girl dance as the show's finale. This is a great way to get the guys and the community involved in the dance.

"I really love that all of them get to be involved in giving back to our community," said Head Coach Nadia Fischer-Danzeisen. "(A community) who gives so much to us."

The head coaches this year, along with their years coaching here at Becker, include: Varsity Jazz/Kick Head Coach - Nadia Fischer-Danzeisen (12 years); JV Jazz/Kick Head Coach - Ava Holm (two years); B-squad Jazz Head Coach and Varsity Kick Assistant, Mel VanHofwegen (six years); Varsity Jazz/Kick Assistant - Rhi Edwards-Li-



THE BECKER 2025-26 DANCE TEAM. The girls gathered after competing at Rocori schools, where varsity jazz and kick took second place. (Submitted Photo).

last year.

This is a very competitive year for the Becker dance team, with only a couple of spots open to go to state and over 500 teams competing for the spot. Last year's highlights included conference Jazz champions for the sixth straight year, conference Kick runner-up, second place in both jazz and kick at the 4AA Section tournament, 10th place in jazz at state, and eighth place in kick at state.

Five seniors graduated from last year's squad.

At their recent home invite, Becker beat Sauk Rapids in both jazz and kick; however, at their first conference meet, they fell to St. Francis in both jazz and kick.

Democrats drive Minnesota into deficit with overspending, fraud, and tax hikes

Submitted Article

The state budget forecast presented recently (Dec. 4) revealed a sustained deficit due to runaway spending, unchecked fraud, and slow economic growth hampered by billions in new taxes on Minnesotans.

Senator Andrew Mathews (R-Princeton) issued the following statement:

"Minnesota families are doing everything they can to balance their budgets. The state should do the same," said Sen. Mathews. "After \$10 billion in tax hikes, Minnesotans shouldn't be looking at a deficit created by overspending and fraud. It's time to get spending under control, stop the fraud, and prioritize Minnesota families."

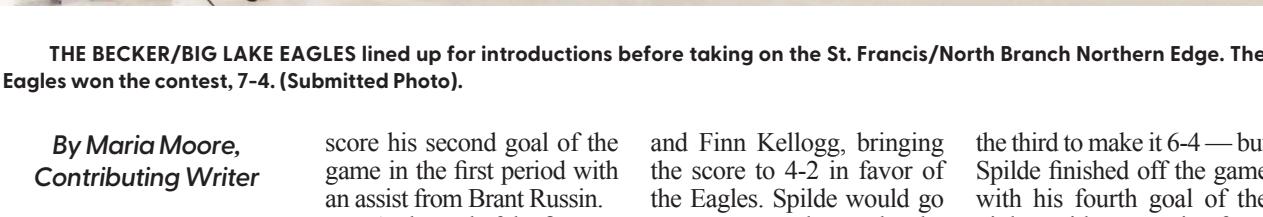
The overall forecast reveals the state's spending is outpacing revenue, despite \$10 billion in new taxes. According to Minnesota Management and Budget, the budget for fiscal year 2026-2027 includes a \$2.465 billion surplus, even while spending outpaces revenues. However, looking to 2028-

2029, the deficit balloons to \$5.4 billion as spending is projected to outpace revenues. Only by not spending the surplus would the 2029 deficit projection reduce to \$2.960 billion.

Slow economic growth is a major factor in revenue losses. This underscores concerns raised from a Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Business Benchmarks Report released two weeks ago, ranking Minnesota 38th with 1% GDP per capita annual growth, 40th for labor force growth, and 41st in net domestic migration. Between 2019 and 2024, key economic statistics slowed to nearly stagnant or negative levels, reversing previous trends, and impacting the state's overall economic climate.

Additionally, increased spending on health care pressures revenues. This is notable as Minnesota has seen significant fraud in health care services. Efforts to reduce fraud and verify eligibility will be necessary to ensure these funds are available for those who actually need it.

Becker/Big Lake Eagles Beat Northern Edge 7-4



THE BECKER/BIG LAKE EAGLES lined up for introductions before taking on the St. Francis/North Branch Northern Edge. The

Eagles won the contest, 7-4. (Submitted Photo).

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

A Monday night conference hockey game took place with the Becker/Big Lake Eagles skating against the St. Francis/North Branch Northern Edge.

The first goal of the night

for the Eagles was scored by Tate Spilde with a highlight

"Michigan-style" goal and a Tanner Felton assist.

Spilde would go on to

score his second goal of the game in the first period with an assist from Brant Russin.

At the end of the first period, the Eagles powered on to a 3-0 lead after Owen Zahler scored a goal on a power-play goal with assists from Spilde and Ethan Grafritz.

The Northern Edge would make a comeback in the second period with two goals, making the score 3-2.

With a nice breakaway goal, Lucas Hancock scored with assists from Grafritz

and Finn Kellogg, bringing the score to 4-2 in favor of the Eagles. Spilde would go on to score another goal at the beginning of the third period with an assist from Felton to make it 5-2.

The Northern Edge retaliated with a goal of their own, but Captain Carter Tatge would then score a beautiful one-timer for the Eagles with assists from Kellogg and Gavon Jacobson to go up 6-3.

Northern Edge tightened the gap with another score in

the third to make it 6-4 — but Spilde finished off the game with his fourth goal of the night, with an assist from Hancock, cementing the final score at 7-4.

Goaltender Elliott Grafritz received his second victory of the season.

Currently, the Eagles are 3-2 overall and 1-1 in conference play. Their next games are against the Princeton Tigers and the Prairie Centre North Stars.

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