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PATRIOT OFFICE763-275-0275
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The Patriot is the official newspaper for Clear Lake, Clearwater, Orrock, Palmer & Santiago Townships, City of Becker, Becker Township and Becker School District #726, City of Big Lake and Big Lake School District #727. The Patriot is also the legal newspaper for the Sherburne County financials.

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Wednesday 11am Legals & Notices, Wednesday 10am Display & Classified Ads.

WEBSITECheck out each week's content at our website:
www.patriotnewsmn.com**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

The Patriot welcomes letters to the editor. Call 763-275-0275 or email Bill at reporter.bill@patriotnewsmn.com. Addresses and phone numbers are required for verification purposes. **The deadline for all letters is 11am Wednesday. Limit letters to 200 words or less.** Letters will be printed at the discretion of the Editor and are subject to editing for grammar, libel and brevity. Two letters per writer per subject each year.

OBITUARIES:

Obituaries are \$75 prepaid. The Editor reserves the right to edit lengthy obituaries.

BUSINESS HOURS:• Mon. - Wed. 8am to 5pm,
• Thurs. 8am to 3pm
• Friday CLOSED**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

\$100 annually, \$50 for six months, \$25 for three months or \$9a month.

SUBMITTED MATERIAL:

There will be a \$50 charge for all thank you, engagement, wedding and birth announcement pictures. The Patriot is not responsible for correctness of ads received by telephone.

Repke celebrates 40 years on CW Fire Dept.

By Penny Leuthard, Contributing Writer

Being a firefighter requires hard work, dedication, and a desire to help the community. Clearwater Firefighter Jim Repke has been following these tenets for 40 years.

"My father was a Minneapolis Firefighter for years," said Repke. "So we all grew up wanting to be firefighters."

After he moved to the Clearwater area he considered joining the fire department, but it was Kevin Heaton who convinced him to apply.

"The fire department has evolved so much over the years," said Repke. "When I first started we



CLEARWATER FIREFIGHTER Jim Repke. (Submitted Photo)

actually had structure fires, today medical is probably 85% of our calls. We might have had 40-60 calls a year, this year we've had over 250 calls already. And the new technology is amazing."

Although Repke has enjoyed being a firefighter all these years it hasn't all been fun.

"The death of a little five-year-old girl in an accident hit me hard and made me question being a firefighter," said Repke. "At the time I had a daughter the same age as her."

Thankfully there are calls that reaffirm his decision to be on the department, especially ones where they're able to save a life.

"There was a guy

pumping gas who had a heart attack," said Repke. "We were able to restart his heart. These are the type of calls that stand out and make everything worth it."

Although it might seem like calls must get repetitious, it's not the case.

"Each time a call comes in you never know what you're going to get," said Repke. "It's varied. We had a motorcycle accident that required a helicopter. In a case like that we firefighters have to find and prepare a spot for the helicopter to land."

Along with the calls Repke stresses there is a lot of work to being a

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Smoken' John wins Pulled Pork Cookoff

Submitted Article

The Big Eagle Lake Improvement Association (BELIA) successfully hosted its 7th Annual Smokin' Pulled Pork Cook-Off fundraiser at Lupulin Brewing last Saturday.

Despite challenging weather conditions, including high winds and two inches of rain, the 11 dedicated teams of pit-masters delivered exceptional culinary experiences. The association extends their gratitude to each team for their outstanding preparations and tireless efforts, providing everyone with delightful treats despite the lack of sleep.

The participating teams included Jeff Hegle (Backyard Smokers), Pat-

rick Hirsch (Bison BBQ), Dan Lundt (BBQ Boys), Joshua Bohnen (Bohnen BBQ), Michael Grossmann (Smoke It like You Love It), Matt Falck (Lucky Brisket BBQ), David Thompsen (Meat Madness), John Davis (Smoken' John), Eric Watson (Low N' Slow Bros), Todd Orgon (Pig Pen BBQ), and Ryan Schaff (Pig and a Pint). Congratulations to the winners:

First Place: John Davis and 'Smoken' John'; **Second Place:** Eric Watson and Low N' Slow Bros.; **Tied for Third Place:** Dan Lundt and BBQ Boys, and Matt Falck with Lucky Brisket BBQ; **People's Choice:** Jeff Hegle and Backyard Smokers.

BELIA also expresses

**THE FIRST PLACE TEAM, SMOKEN' JOHN** was presented a certificate and a prize envelope. (Submitted Photo).

their appreciation to George and Raquel Wallen for donating three Vikings vs. Philadelphia Eagles tickets for our raffle. With

three hundred tickets sold, congratulations goes to JR McGuire for winning the raffle.

BELIA's heartfelt

CL City Council discusses CLFD open house, 2026 budget

By Katie Cantin, Contributing Writer

During the recent Clear Lake City Council meeting, the council and members of the fire department had a discussion about hosting an open house event.

The council had received advice from their attorney that it could be dicey to spend city funds on giveaways, such as a bike raffle for the kids. There was some back and forth discussion on whether that meant nothing could be given away, including items such as stickers, coloring books, and food. However, the council reached an unofficial consensus that items given to all attendees would be fine, but larger items given to a select few would have to come from donations. They planned to bring the topic back at the next meeting with an official public expenditure policy.

Next, the fire department representatives asked for an update on their budget for next year. Council Member Stefany Janish said that she had met with Bud Stimmler, representative of Clear Lake Township, regarding the budget proposal. She reported that Stimmler asked for several changes, including a two to three year lease so the rates wouldn't increase and that capital expenditure items, including saving for new

**MATT LUNSER OF THE CLFD** explained his concerns about the fire department's agreement with Clear Lake Township. (Patriot Photo by Katherine Cantin.)

fire trucks and protective equipment, be removed from the budget entirely, and that funding for those items be requested when they were needed. Both members of the council and representatives of the CLFD were upset by the requested terms. Matt Lunser of the CLFD said terms such as these were why the fire department recently has had so many budget issues. He reported that inflation has drastically increased the prices of trucks and protective equipment, which left the department scrambling to find the money to

replace their gear. Council members and CLFD representatives intended to visit with Clear Lake Township representatives again to find a solution.

In regular business, Chief Ron Koren reported 19 calls for service for the month, and the council approved job descriptions for the department.

Building Inspector Request

The city's building inspector, Nancy Scott, requested that the council hold a special meeting with their attorney present so she could voice complaints she had about the council. The council recently decided to hire a new building inspection firm for their needs.

The council seemed generally unimpressed with the request, saying that she had already voiced her complaints. Mayor Tim Goenner believed they should hear her out, however. In the end, the council decided to invite Scott and their attorney to a to-be-determined upcoming regular meeting, where Scott would have a place in the agenda to say her piece with the attorney present.

In Other Business, the Council:

- Heard the sheriff's report for the month;
- Approved opening

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Evolution continues at FFB

**FARM FRIENDS BARN ORGANIZER JEAN JOHNSON** is pictured between the granary building and the new storage shed that will be used to store tools for the community gardens. Behind Johnson is the area that will be used for the gardens in 2026. (Patriot Photo by Mark Kolbinger.)*By Mark Kolbinger, Contributing Writer*

The Farm Friends Barn organization in Becker continues to evolve, with an array of community-oriented educational offerings focused on agriculture taking center stage.

The latest addition to the property is a granary building that was secured from the former Morehouse Farm site on Elk Lake, which is now being developed into a regional park.

The granary is undergoing some remodeling and will house a soils demonstration, where visitors can learn about drainage, root structure and other aspects and effects of different types of soil materials.

Project organizer Jean Johnson reported that the RD Offut Family Founda-

tion has provided a \$2,500 grant towards the establishment of the display.

Johnson added that bids are being reviewed for a new building at the site, which will serve as the headquarters for the entire effort. The indoor space will be heated, with restroom facilities and a meeting space that can be rented by community groups. Classroom areas will be included to help the Farm Friends volunteers further their educational programming. The new construction will allow the current barn to be used for its intended purpose and not have to function as a multi-purpose space.

Johnson explained that the fundraising for the

**EVOLUTION
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- Runnings (All Zips)
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EDITORIALS-OPINIONS-OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post Office Update

It's hard to go anywhere in town without someone asking for an update on the Post Office and what the future plans are for this important community service. To be sure, this has been one of my top priorities over the first eight months of my time in office, with nearly 50 email strands dedicated to the subject.

Last week, I was part of two different Business Retention and Expansion visits and at both sites, the need for a local Post Office was conveyed very strongly by both sets of ownership.

We want businesses to know that they are being heard and we agree that it is vital to retain this function within our City.

Here are a few important items to consider.

- We have successfully engaged our Federal partners, with Senators Klobuchar and Smith, as well as Congressman Emmer all giving the issue a great deal of time and effort. It is a great example of a bipartisan approach to serving constituents and I thank all three of these elected officials and their staff for the continued assistance.

- I also thank the media, from *The Patriot* to Channel 5 KSTP TV, for their assistance in spreading the word on the importance of maintaining services in Becker. If you saw the TV segment, you know that long-time Becker resident Janet Voigt was the star of the show and I am grateful for her participation and wisdom.

- A special recognition for the Rademacher family, owners of Bill's Family Foods and Bill's Superette, for their ongoing persistence and dedication to trying to find a workable solution. They have gone to great personal expense, in both time and money, and have prepared several different options for the USPS to consider. They



By Mark Kolbinger
Contributing Writer

have shown grace, patience and a tremendous commitment to the Becker community, all while going well above and beyond in their efforts. If you see Grant or one of his boys, please tell them "thank you" for their ongoing commitment.

- Within the last several weeks, we did extend an offer to the USPS leadership to locate temporary Post Office Boxes here within the community. We have not heard back yet on this proposal, but are committed to doing everything we can to ensure that our community sees a continuation of services.

We are also committed to ensuring that our delivery personnel are brought back to Becker, where they can better serve the residents of the City and Township. I know this entire fiasco has been difficult for the local Post Office employees, who are in just as much limbo (and probably more) as the rest of us. We want you to know we value you and appreciate the work you do for us. We will keep fighting for you.

In the coming weeks and months, or for as long as it takes, I remain committed to finding a common sense solution that keeps our post office here in Becker. While I cannot make promises about timelines, decisions or end results, I can make one promise: as soon as we know more, we will share the facts with the community.

OBITUARIES

Brittney L. Raymond, 37 Clear Lake, MN April 24, 1988 – August 18, 2025

Brittney Raymond passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, August 18, 2025, surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous 19-month long battle with CNS Lymphoma. She was just 37 years old.

Brittney was born April 24, 1988 in Buffalo, MN to Julie (Hageman) Smith. She was raised in Annandale, where she graduated from high school in 2006. From a young age, she had a passion for caring for others, which led her to become a Licensed Practical Nurse – a role that was truly her calling. Brittney most recently worked at St. Cloud Orthopedics, where her compassion and dedication touched many lives.

In 2011, Brittney met the love of her life, Jake, and together they built a beautiful life full of love, laughter, and family. She was a devoted and deeply loving mother to Brayden (13), Brooklyn (7), and Jordyn (4), and her bonus daughter, Cecelia (13). Her children were her world, and she was an extraordinary mom-present, fun, nurturing, and fiercely protective.

Brittney had a vibrant spirit and a heart of gold. She loved music, the outdoors, camping, swimming, bonfires, and simply being with her loved ones. Her kind, outgoing, and bubbly personality lit up every room she walked into. Known for her sense of humor and a bit of mischief, Brittany had a way of convincing people to join in on just about anything. She always had a positive outlook and was able to see the good side of things, even in the most difficult moments.

Her strength and courage during her cancer journey were

nothing short of inspiring. She faced every challenge with grace, determination, and unwavering love for her family. Brittney leaves behind a legacy of compassion, joy, and resilience that will live on in all who knew her.

Brittney is survived by her mother, Julie (Hageman) Smith of Clearwater; her partner of 14 years, Jake of Clear Lake; her beloved children, Brayden, Brooklyn and Jordyn, and Cecelia; her siblings, Chelsey Raymond (Jeremy Stewart) of Annandale and Zach (Sam) Raymond of South Haven; nieces and nephews, Skylar, Lusi, Kinsley, Bentley, Emery, Lukas, Alayna and Brynlee; she is also survived by many aunts, uncles, cousins, dear friends, and co-workers who loved and supported her deeply. She is preceded in death by her Grandma Shirley, Grandpa Kenny; Aunt Sheila; and great-grandma's, Velma and Ruby.

Brittney will be missed beyond words. Heaven has gained the most beautiful angel.

The family would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the St. Cloud Hospital Oncology Unit- especially Dr. Ufearo and Julianna- the ICU staff, and Moments Hospice, especially Sarah and Chelsey, for their compassionate care and support.

Per Brittney's wishes, a Celebration of Life will be planned for a later date.

Obituary and Guest Book available online: www.williamsdingmann.com.

Annamay (Pickar) Koering, 98 Brainerd, MN June 12, 1927 – August 23, 2025

Annamay (Pickar) Koering, age 98, of Brainerd, MN, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on August 23, 2025. She was born to Leo and Marian (Dechaine) Pickar on June 12, 1927 in Brainerd.

On June 25, 1947, she married the love of her life, John "Jack" Koering, at St. Francis Church in Brainerd. Together they raised their four daughters: Barb (Bill) Matalamaki, Aitkin, MN; Pat (Bob) Hinds, St. Cloud, MN; Sharon (Craig) Schlegel, Plant City, FL; and Lorna (Harlan) Gorter, Staples, MN. She was a proud grandmother to ten and great-grandmother to fourteen. She is also survived by her sisters, Donna Plante and Dorothy Plante, who remained a cherished part of her life.

In her younger years, she fondly recalled working at Harold's Supper Club, but her grandchildren will forever treasure memories made on the family farm near Crow Wing State Park and in the family's orange grove in Plant City, FL. Following Jack's passing after their farming years, she embraced her independence and spent many seasons traveling between Lakeland, FL and Brainerd.

She was well known for her expertise in the kitchen—especially her unforgettable orange and lemon meringue pies

and her amazing homemade waffles. She also enjoyed playing cards, from whist to a competitive game of Hand & Foot, and she rarely turned down the chance to play Rummikub with family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Jack; her parents, Leo and Marian Pickar; siblings James "Jim" Pickar and Richard "Bud" Pickar; and her much-loved grandson, Josh Tuomi. Special thanks go to her great-granddaughters, Samantha and Sophie Humphrey, Becker, MN, for the loving care they gave her in her final days.

Her family takes comfort knowing that her legacy of love, laughter, and togetherness will live on in the generations she nurtured.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Brainerd, MN, on September 4, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation beginning one hour prior. The family invites guests to join in celebrating her life by wearing bright colors, florals, or a bit of sparkle in her honor. Her ashes will be laid to rest with her husband, Jack, in a private burial at MN State Veterans Cemetery near Camp Ripley. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Alzheimer's Association.

Janice F. Pearson, 86 Clearwater, MN January 5, 1939 - August 16, 2025

Funeral Services celebrating the life of Janice F. Pearson, age 86, were held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 23, 2025 at Clearwater United Methodist Church in Clearwater. Pastor Alison Hendley officiated. Burial was in Acacia Cemetery in Clearwater.

Visitation was held one hour prior to services on Saturday at the church.

Janice was born on January 5, 1939 in St. Paul to Howard and Ellen (Fehr) Scholdt. She graduated from St. Paul Johnson High School. Janice married Gerald Pearson on July 18, 1959. Together they raised their two daughters, Lorelei and Lisa, in Cambridge. Gerald passed away in July 2003. In September 2006 she married Jim Vaughn of Wichita KS.

She worked multiple jobs throughout her life retiring in 1996.

She enjoyed winters in Texas, painting, crocheting, swimming, golf, dancing, and especially her dogs - all rescues. She had a special place in her heart for dogs of all kinds, especially those abandoned, and loved her rescue pups dearly.

Janice is survived by husband, Jim Vaughn; her daughters Lorelei (Tom) Nieto, Lisa Gilyard; grandchildren Brita (Zach), Lars (Bella), Alex and Anders; great-grandchildren Finn, Elsie, Alma.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and husband, Gerald.

Memorials directed to Tri-County Humane Society St. Cloud, and Clearwater United Methodist Church.



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TO THE EDITOR:

This is the 4th summer my husband and I have spent at TCCOM otherwise known as the Travelers Country Club on the Mississippi. We are located along the Mississippi approximately 2.5 miles from Clearwater and Clear Lake and 6.5 miles from Becker on County Road 8. It is a classic golf community/resort with amenities such as a large swimming pool, tennis and pickle ball courts, an activity building with regularly scheduled activities as well as river access for kayaking and fishing. Each member owns their own park model home or stationary RV situated on one of 299 lots spread over one-hundred acres of grounds. Currently close to 30 units are for sale and a public Open House is set for Sunday, September 7 from noon to 3:00 p.m. for tours of the units for sale and the entire community. We are frequently told by locals that they lived in the area all their lives but did not know this resort existed as it is not visible from Co. Rd 8. We love it because it is a great place to spend summers and our friends and relatives love it too. If you are considering where to spend time with your family during the summer, this is a great place and it is more affordable than a lake cabin. We encourage you to check it out. We would love to have you join us. Please attend our Open House or contact the TCCOM office at 320-743-3133.

**Melanie Dunlap
Clear Lake, MN**

TO THE EDITOR:

In Minnesota, the State Fair and the publication of academic scores of public-school students mark the end of summer. While some celebrate the highest graduation rate in the state's history, others ask if those diplomas are "participation diplomas," akin to trophies presented to all participants at numerous school events. The data from the MN Department of Education revealed that 84.2% of the class of 2024 graduated. Unfortunately, that group also had the lowest math and reading proficiency scores. Would the data be so celebratory if the 2013 DFL-controlled legislature had not removed the high school exit exam that required specific reading and math scores to earn a diploma? Are these graduates ready to enroll in advanced 2- or 4-year programs or to enter the work world? Commissioner Jett applauds their access to a world-class education. Do these young people possess the skills to compete professionally? Many consider the reading score in 3rd grade as the benchmark indicator of a student's potential for academic success. Catrin Wigfall, Policy Fellow at Center of the American Experiment, prepared a table from the MDE data that ranks all districts and the reading scores of their 3rd graders (except those with too few students to list and maintain privacy) in 2024. Find your school district (<https://www.americanexperiment.org/third-grade-reading-how-does-your-district-measure-up/>) and consider personal commitment to help MN's students "earn" their diploma. Ignorance is not bliss!

**Dr. Phyllis E. VanBuren
Clearwater, MN**

TO THE EDITOR:

As we wrap up another back-to-school season, we at The Compassion Connection want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to our community and surrounding communities. For the past 10 years, you have stood with us in supporting children and teens in foster care — not only during busy seasons like back-to-school, but all throughout the year. Whether it's donating school supplies,

hosting drives, sponsoring events, purchasing needed items, or volunteering your time, your kindness has been a steady reminder that these kids are seen, valued, and loved. This year's back-to-school efforts were a shining example of what happens when a community comes together. Because of your generosity, we were able to send foster youth into the new school year prepared, confident, and with the dignity they deserve. To every business, organization, church, and individual who has partnered with us — thank you! Your continued support over the past decade has allowed us to keep our resource closet open, fill urgent needs, and provide hope for kids and families walking through difficult seasons. It truly takes a village, and we are grateful to live in one that shows up again and again.

With heartfelt thanks,
**Kevin &
Amy Drehmel, Founders
Compassion Connection
Becker, MN**

TO THE EDITOR:

We want to publicly commend Wright County Sheriff Deringer for demonstrating exceptional leadership in community dialogue. Sheriff Deringer recently met with diverse stakeholders—including clergy, Wright County Indivisible, and immigrant community members—to discuss concerns about potential ICE activities. As an outcome, the Sheriff committed to meet with the group to develop a protocol that ensures collaboration with ICE remains within legal and constitutional boundaries while prioritizing the safety and welfare of all Wright County citizens. He also agreed to speak at the next Wright County Indivisible meeting on September 8 at the Monticello VFW. This proactive approach represents exactly the transparent, community-centered law enforcement our county needs. By bringing together diverse voices, Sheriff Deringer ensures that the Sheriff's Office reflects our community's values while maintaining the highest legal standards. This process provides crucial reassurance that the Sheriff's Office will be guided by the highest law enforcement standards, with transparency and strict adherence to the Constitution and the law. We applaud Sheriff Deringer for choosing dialogue over silence and transparency over uncertainty. This thoughtful leadership makes Wright County better for all residents. We encourage other community members to engage in this important process and thank the Sheriff for creating space for these vital conversations.

**Rose Thelen
Clearwater, MN**

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to express my support for Mayor Tim Goenner and the positive impact he has had on our community. He has dedicated his time and energy to serving Clear Lake, always working to move the city forward. His efforts—whether through community events, supporting local initiatives, or addressing concerns—have made a difference for many of us. While the City Council recently voted to censure Mayor Goenner, it is important to remember that disagreements are part of leadership. What matters most is working together in the best interest of Clear Lake, with respect for one another. Our city deserves collaboration, transparency, and decisions made with integrity. The council, too, should be held to that standard—serving respectfully in the best interest of the city. I encourage citizens of Clear Lake to attend council meetings and see firsthand how decisions are made. Our community works best when we are engaged, informed, and present.

**Corrina Koenig
Clear Lake, MN**



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CHURCH SERVICES

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Sunday 8am Mass Catholic Services

DAILY EVENTS

Threshing, Corn Shelling, Log Sawing, Shingle Mill, Rock Crushing, Rope Making, Blacksmith Shop, Print Shop, Flour Mill, Miniature Land, Gravel Construction Area

PARADE

Friday 4pm - Featured Parade
Saturday 1:30pm, Sunday 2pm

SPECIAL EVENTS

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PUBLIC NOTICES

CITY OF BECKER
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 TO CONSIDER VACATING PORTIONS OF
 MULTIPLE DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENTS
 IN ENERGY PARK NINTH ADDITION, SHERBURNE
 COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 412.851, the City of Becker City Council duly called for a public hearing to consider vacating multiple portions of drainage and utility easements in Energy Park Ninth Addition.
 Notice is hereby given that a hearing will be held before the City Council of the City of Becker on the 2nd day of September 2025, in the City Hall City Council Chambers located at 12060 Sherburne Ave SE at approximately 5:00 pm to consider the vacation of multiple portions of drainage and utility easements in Energy Park Ninth Addition.
 A copy of the draft resolution, and image showing which easements are proposed to be vacated, is available upon request or can be viewed at the City of Becker City Hall Monday through Thursday, 7:00am – 4:30pm, and Friday, 7:00am – 12:00pm. Anyone interested in this issue is encouraged to attend and comment at the Public Hearing. If you are unable to attend, please provide written comment to Jacob Sanders at P.O. Box 250, Becker, MN 55308 or by e-mail to jacob.sanders@ci.becker.mn.us by 4:30 p.m. September 2nd, 2025.
 /s/ Jacob Sanders
 Community Development Director
 (Published in the *Patriot*: 8/23/25, 08/30/25.)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SCHOOL
 CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

The Minnesota Department of Education has given a positive review and comment to a proposed school construction project for Big Lake Schools. The project, described in the excerpt from the Department Commissioner below, will be subject to voter approval during a referendum on Tuesday, Nov. 4. Full information about the referendum can be found at biglakeschools.org.
 Big Lake Public School District, ISD #0727-01 is proposing a two-question referendum on November 4, 2025. The first ballot question would seek an increase of \$40 per pupil to the district's operating levy. The second ballot question would authorize \$6.23 million in bonding authority to finance a field house of approximately 65,000 square feet to be located between the middle and high school. Other proposed projects include field/track improvements, including artificial turf, and interior renovations at the middle and high school. Passage of the second ballot question is contingent upon passage of the first ballot question.
 The projects proposed would be scheduled for completion in calendar years 2026 thru 2028. Cost estimates by project component are as follows:

Project Cost Estimates		
Building Additions	Outdoor Athletic Improvements	
Fieldhouse (4 Courts & Track)	Demo Existing Track / Football Field	\$275,000
Weight & Fitness Rooms / Flex Space	Artificial Turf	\$675,000
Vestibule / Commons / Concessions	Drainage / Earthwork	\$1,700,000
Locker / Changing Rooms	Landscape	\$500,000
Storage Area	Track Surface	\$550,000
Elevated Walking Track		\$3,700,000
Offices		\$85,000
	Other Project Costs:	
	Interior Renovations - Middle & High School	\$1,600,000
	FF&E / Technology	\$345,000
	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$3,675,000
	Contingencies	\$2,360,000
	Bond Issuance	\$178,741
		\$8,158,741
Total - All Project Costs		\$36,408,741

The district last went to the voters in November 2024 with a three-question referendum. The first ballot question, a capital projects levy of roughly \$00,000 per year was approved by voters. The other two ballot questions, an operating levy increase of \$400 per pupil and a \$29 million bond referendum for a field house and special education facility addition were not approved by voters.
 The operational cost increase associated with the proposed fieldhouse is estimated to be around \$435,000 annually. However, passage of the \$6.23 million bond authorization is contingent upon passage of the proposed operating levy increase. The proposed projects appear to be in the long-term interest of the school district.
 If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.53, subdivision 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and is dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

Revised Comment Statement

Based on the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

Additional Information is Available

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.
 Willie L. Jett II
 Commissioner
 (Published in the *Patriot*: 08/30/25)

EVOLUTION
 from page 1

building will begin this fall, with a construction timeline slated for 2026.
 Also in 2026, the Farm Friends Barn site will be home to the Becker community gardens, with a 100 by 45 foot space already set aside for the popular parcels. Promotional materials are currently being put together and Johnson expects people to be able to secure their garden spot later this fall.
 One of the sheds built last spring by the Becker High School Industrial Tech classes was recently purchased and moved onsite to store the gardening equipment, and in September, the school's NHS chapter will be applying a coat of paint to help the structure blend in with the other buildings.
 "We really value our partnerships with the school," Johnson said.
 Several events are planned in the coming months, including a Barn Quilt Class on September 27, and then in October the Becker Schools' first graders will visit the site to harvest the gardens they planted last spring as Kindergartners.
 The Holiday Porch Pot class will take place on November 1, while the porch pot sale will happen on November 7-8. The ever popular Santa at the Barn event will again take place, with this year's visit scheduled for December 16, dependent of course on the availability of Rudolph and all of the other reindeer.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
 DISTRICT COURT
 COUNTY OF SHERBURNE
 TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
 PROBATE DIVISION
 Court File No. 7-PR-25-132
 In Re the Estate of Sharon Renee Ordek, Deceased.
 ORDER AND NOTICE
 OF HEARING ON PETITION
 FOR FORMAL PROBATE OF
 WILL AND APPOINTMENT
 OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
 IN UNSUPERVISED
 ADMINISTRATION AND NOTICE
 TO CREDITORS.

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:
 It is Ordered and Notice is hereby given that on the 5th of November, 2025 at 1:30 p.m., a hearing will be held in the above-named Court at 13880 Business Center Drive, Elk River, MN 55330, Minnesota, for the probate of an instrument purporting to be the will of the above-named deceased, dated October 19, 2012, and for appointment of Cynthia R. Wilson whose address is 15284 117th Street, Becker, Minnesota 55308, as personal representative of the estate of the above-named decedent in unsupervised administration, and that any objections thereto must be filed with the Court. That, if proper, and no objections are filed, a personal representative will be appointed to administer the estate, to collect all assets, pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, and sell real and personal property, and do all necessary acts for the estate. This is an administrative hearing and your appearance is not required.
 Notice is further given that ALL CREDITORS having claims against said estate are required to present the same to said personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months

CITY OF CLEARWATER
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 AMENDING ZONING ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 117
 FOR PORTABLE STORAGE UNITS

Notice is hereby given that the Clearwater Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, September 15, 2025, at City Hall, 605 County Road 75 NW at 7:00 PM or as soon thereafter as possible to consider an amendment to the city's zoning ordinance related to portable storage units.
 All persons wishing to speak on this item will be heard. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the meeting to City Hall, PO Box 9, Clearwater, MN 55320 or emailed to asmythe@clearwater-city.com.
 /s/ Annita M. Smythe
 City Administrator
 (Published in the *Patriot*: 08/30/25.)

CITY OF CLEARWATER
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 AMENDING ZONING ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 117
 FOR FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

Notice is hereby given that the Clearwater Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, September 15, 2025, at City Hall, 605 County Road 75 NW at 7:00 PM or as soon thereafter as possible to consider an amendment to the city's zoning ordinance related to financial guarantee.
 All persons wishing to speak on this item will be heard. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the meeting to City Hall, PO Box 9, Clearwater, MN 55320 or emailed to asmythe@clearwater-city.com.
 /s/ Annita M. Smythe
 City Administrator
 (Published in the *Patriot*: 08/30/25.)

CL CITY
 from page 1

an Amazon account for the city so departments could purchase needed materials;
 • Heard the public works report;
 • Set their Truth in Taxation meeting for December 1 at 6:30, with the regular meeting to follow;
 • Reminded the audience that the next council meeting would take place Tuesday, September 2, instead of their usual Monday (due to Labor Day).



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OBITUARIES

Marjorie A. Lange, 76
 Becker, MN
 February 24, 1949 – August 19, 2025

Funeral Services were 11:00 a.m. Friday, August 29, 2025 at Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Home in Becker for Marjorie A. Lange, age 76, who passed away Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at The Gardens of Foley. Pastor Courtney Young officiated and burial will be at South Santiago Lutheran Cemetery at a later date. Visitation was 4-7 Thursday, August 28, 2025 and one hour prior to service at the funeral home in Becker.

Marjorie was born February 24, 1949 in St. Cloud to Edward and Anastasia (Landowski) Lange. She lived most of her life in the Becker area. Marjorie worked for Honeywell for over 20 years and Home Depot for over 10

years. She liked her dogs and puppies, fishing, working in her yard and tending her flowers. Marjorie was always outgoing, friendly and her customers enjoyed visiting with her. Marjorie is survived by her brother, Jerry (Jayne) Lange of Clear Lake; nephews, Eric (Audrey) Lange of St. Paul Park and Alex (Becca) Lange of Foley; niece, Katie (Jon) LaBrecque of Red Wing; great nieces and nephews, Ziggy, Oz, Maggie, Eli, and Emmerson.

She is preceded in death by her parents; and sister, Frances Peterson.

Obituary, Guest Book, and video tribute available online: www.williamsdingmann.com.

REPKE
 from page 1

firefighter. Training is a constant, taking up approximately 10 hours each month. There's also continuing education which is required each year. That's after the two years of training new firefighters are required to take. It also doesn't pay much.
 "If you want to do it for the money you're in the wrong profession," said Repke. "But it's the most awesome job with the most awesome people."
 All the work and shared experiences create strong bonds between the firefighters.
 "We've built such a relationship together," Repke said. "It's a unique bond. It's like a second family."
 Fire Chief Mike Keller praised Repke's dedication. "Jim is well liked by our members and his continual service demonstrates how much he cares about our community," he said.
 Repke expressed thanks to the Lions, the Legion, and the community as a whole for their support. Along with their regular service, the fire department supports the community back in other ways as well.
 "We do around 20 community events a year like Heritage Days, National Night Out, Trunk or Treat, and other requests from the public," said Repke. "We block traffic for the charitable motorcycle runs."
 After 40 years on the department Repke is still answering calls, not quite ready to retire. He estimates he'll continue for another two years.
 "It's the most rewarding thing I've done," said Repke. "I love it so much. People call us in their darkest hour and we're there to help. It's a lifelong reward."
 The Clearwater Fire Dept. is always looking for firefighters. Anyone who would like to apply is encouraged to stop by city hall to pick up an application. The application is also available on the city's website at clearwatercity.com.

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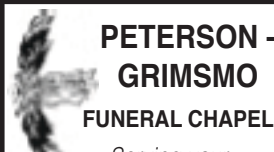
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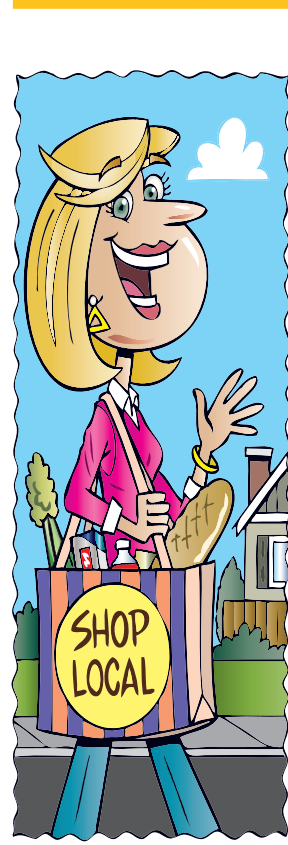
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BL Schools partners with food shelf

By Katie Cantin, Contributing Writer

During the July Big Lake School Board meeting, Supt. Tim Truebenbach gave an update on the district's partnership with the Big Lake Food Shelf.

The food shelf's lease at city hall will be coming up and they need a new place to relocate. The school district will provide a place for the food shelf, and in turn will work with the food shelf on programming for students to learn about civic engagement and volunteerism. The lease with the food shelf would begin in August of 2027.

Open Forum
Timothy Meyers spoke during open forum regarding the renewal of the operating levy in 2024. He said that the state gave school districts the ability to renew this levy without voter input, and the Big Lake School Board chose to do so at a cost of \$22.4 million. Meyers believed that the board should have asked for a vote on the matter or at the very least sent out a notice to taxpayers.

Facility Maintenance
The board reviewed and approved the 10 year long term facility maintenance plan (LTFM). This upcoming year, the district will focus mostly on making payments for previously completed work, such as the new roof and the HVAC system, as well as some pay-as-you-go projects, including the swimming pool project.

Board Chair Tonya Reasoner noted that it was important to make sure, as the plan does, to finish with a positive projected end balance.

Supt. Truebenbach noted that the plan doesn't really stay accurate for ten years, and after about two years things will likely change.

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Becker City discusses road safety issues

By Katie Cantin, Contributing Writer

(Reporter's note: this article covers both the August 6 and August 19 meetings of the Becker City Council.)

During their August 6 meeting, the Becker City Council discussed some topics on road safety, including crosswalk safety and ebike laws.

Crosswalks
Mayor Mark Kolbinger took some time during the meeting to acknowledge the recent tragedy where a minor using the crosswalk was killed by a car. The mayor promised the city was taking steps to increase enforcement of crosswalk rules and make them safer for pedestrians.

"We just want the citizens to know we hear your concerns," Kolbinger said.

In addition to increased patrols, the city is moving forward with a redesign of Edgewood St., where the incident occurred, which was already underway. During this process, the city intends to take special care to evaluate

ate the safety of the road and the trail.

E-Bikes
Chief Chris Lindbloom of the police department gave a brief lecture during the council meeting regarding the laws behind e-bikes. He said anyone using these bikes must be at least 15 years old. The police have contacted the parents of the riders who were under 15 to

explain this law. The city is looking to establish its own ordinance regarding e-bikes, which would further direct how these vehicles should be used.

Lindbloom also said they were considering adding some new stop signs to pedestrian trails to make sure the bikers are stopping for walkers on those paths.

GRRL Presentation

The Great River Regional Library (GRRL) gave their annual update to the city council. GRRL has 32 locations spanning six counties. There are 96,317 borrowers across the GRRL network, and 2,528 of those borrow from the Becker location. Last year, 56,424 items were circulated through the Becker location.

The Friends of the Library organization was able to secure a \$12,000 grant which paid for new furniture at the library.

The library offers more than just physical books. They have a service which can provide patrons with ebooks and audiobooks, as well as items for streaming. The library is part of a partnership with libraries across Minnesota to borrow books from other libraries if a patron happens to want an item not in the GRRL collection.

Last year, the library offered 141 programs throughout the year, including storytime readings, art programs, and many other fun activities. They also have outreach programs with other community groups.

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Hornet runners ready to start the season



THE 2025 BIG LAKE BOYS CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM (in no particular order) Trent Erickson, Gavin Flavin, Jordan Domka, Nicholas Erickson, Theo Johnson, Elijah Schaller, Jack Schmidt, Grant Volk, Max Baron, Eli Henning, Evan Hitter, Avery Jarvi, William Blakeney, Zach Gorman, Kale Lieser, Peter Mattison and Wyatt Winslow. (Photo by Ken Francis.)

By Ken Francis,
Contributing Writer

The Big Lake boys cross country team is looking strong in the early season.

Even though they lost their top runner Jack Leuer to graduation, the team has depth this season.

"Jack was one of the best runners we've ever had," says Coach Todd Trutna. "But I think there's a chance we can still go to state with the boys. That would be six years in a row. It would be nice to keep that streak going."

It looks like senior Gavin Flavin is the top runner so far with senior Trent Erickson right behind.

"They'll probably lead us," says Coach Trutna. "After that is a cluster of three runners: Eli Henning, Theo Johnson and Jack Schmidt."

They'll likely be the next three scorers. The team also has Max Baron and Jordan Domka coming off a pretty good track season.

It's a different story for the girls team, which is dominated by younger runners. The team lost its top senior, Campbell Slattery to graduation. This year, Brynn Scheer is the only

senior on the squad.

"She does a great job as captain of the girls," says Coach Trutna.

But after Scheer, the rest of the varsity team mostly ninth graders. There are no 11th or 10th graders.

"In previous years we couldn't get junior high girls to come out for the team," says Trutna. "Now we have six seventh graders and five eighth graders."

So the girls varsity team will be Scheer and a list of mostly ninth grade runners.

Some of those ninth graders have varsity experience. Hazel Goldseth and Elsie Jagusch both ran varsity as eighth graders and Aubrey Judge ran as a seventh grader last season. And Trutna says a new runner, Shay France is one to watch.

"She played soccer before," he says. "She's inexperienced but she could be our number one runner."

It looks like the girls team has a bright future. How they do this season is still a question.

The Hornets held a time trial Saturday to see how well all the runners do. They competed at Princeton Thursday, results next week.



THE 2025 BIG LAKE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM (in no particular order) Brynn Scheer, Bergan Erlandson, Shay France, Hazel Goldseth, Chloe Howe, Elsie Jagusch, Ainsley McGuire, Hahhah Talvitie, Aubriana Judge, Ella Herrmann, Macey Lingl-Stephani, Vivian Maxson, Graycen Mayer, Beati Lucien Pellas, Cora Rand, Sophia Sigafus and Rylie Soroko. (Photo by Ken Francis.)

Sen. Mathews praises win for religious liberty

Submitted Article

Senator Andrew Mathews (R-Princeton) released the following statement after the University of Northwestern and Crown College won their case, Loe v. Walz, which challenged a 2023 law aimed at removing faith-based universities from the state's Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program:

"A federal judge ruled over the weekend that the DFL trifecta's law targeting religious and Christian universities that offered PSEO classes was unconstitutional," said Sen. Mathews.

"Two years ago, I told my Democrat colleagues this law discriminated against religion, violated the First Amendment, and would be struck down. That's exactly what happened. This is another example of Governor Walz and the Democrats passing controversial laws only to have the courts overturn them."

"It's a clear win for religious liberty at a time when it's under attack every day, even from lawmakers. Passing unconstitutional laws might score political points, but it wastes court resources and threatens the freedoms of all Minnesotans."

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Hornet swim/dive team has new coaches

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

There are new coaches for the Big Lake Swim/Dive team for 2025-26.

Khanya Lemus and Angela Carik have been hired as Co-Head Coaches for the Big Lake High School Swim and Dive team for the upcoming year. Though raw from head coaching experience, they both bring several years of coaching knowledge and backgrounds as swimmers.

"We are really enjoying our coaching journey, and feel incredibly fortunate and proud to be a part of this amazing Big Lake High School Swim and Dive Team," the coaches jointly said. "It is a privilege to work with such dedicated athletes and to contribute to this wonderful program that embodies excellence, teamwork and school spirit."

The newcomer coaches are excited to have a sizable team this season with a total of 41 members on their roster. This includes 34 swimmers, five divers, and two dedicated team managers who help keep everything running smoothly.

While they have not yet named their team captains for



THE BIG LAKE 2025-26 SWIM/DIVE TEAM. (In alphabetical order): Aria Bauman, Jacqueline Busch, Kaitlyn Casavant, Emma Conklin, Harper Corrick, Grace Coyer, Emily Edlund, Zoey Fisher, Adelyn Fox, Piper Fridgen, Abigail Frdigen, Madelyne Fridgen, Alexis Gosewisch, Piper Hanson, Quinn Haugen, Grace Hockert, Zoe Johnson, Emmelia Kortenkamp, Aubrey Linder, Aimee Lu, Alexis Magda-Bowlby, Brooklyn May, Charlotte Overby, Naomi Peterson, Sophia Petrie, Vanessa Potter, Kayleigh Pregler, Alexis Quinn, Greta Schwartz, Evelyn Schwartz, Linda Stokes, Sierra Strommen, Makaela Thompson, Britta Vagle, Annika Vagle, Scarlet Wagner, Elise Warnke, Maia Wenderski, Kyla Wenderski, Emma Wood and Katelynn Wothe. (Submitted Photo).

the season, the coaches are very proud to recognize their outstanding group of seniors in, Emma Conklin, Adelyn Fox, Aimee Lu, Brooklyn May, Kayleigh Pregler, Greta Schwartz and Maia Wenderski.

"In addition, (we recognize) our two senior team managers, Alexis Gosewisch and Britta Vagle, who play a big role in supporting the team behind the scenes."

Lemus and Carik say this group of senior leaders has already made a big impact on their program through their dedication, positivity, and example.

"(They) are shaping the culture of our team and leaving a lasting legacy for future athletes to follow and us coaches couldn't be more proud of each of them."

The swim/dive team's schedule this season closely

mirrors last years. The athletes are especially looking forward to two key events — the JV Championships and their section meet, both of which offer exciting opportunities for Big Lake's athletes to not only have fun but also to showcase their growth and spirit.

Other coaches at the pool will be Assistant Coach Kaycee Taubert and Dive Coach Hannah Peterson.

The roster includes: Aria Bauman, Jacqueline Busch, Kaitlyn Casavant, Emma Conklin, Harper Corrick, Grace Coyer, Emily Edlund, Zoey Fisher, Adelyn Fox, Piper Fridgen, Abigail Frdigen, Madelyne Fridgen, Alexis Gosewisch, Piper Hanson, Quinn Haugen, Grace Hockert, Zoe Johnson, Emmelia Kortenkamp, Aubrey Linder, Aimee Lu, Alexis Magda-Bowlby, Brooklyn May, Charlotte Overby, Naomi Peterson, Sophia Petrie, Vanessa Potter, Kayleigh Pregler, Alexis Quinn, Greta Schwartz, Evelyn Schwartz, Linda Stokes, Sierra Strommen, Makaela Thompson, Britta Vagle, Annika Vagle, Scarlet Wagner, Elise Warnke, Maia Wenderski, Kyla Wenderski, Emma Wood and Katelynn Wothe.

ATTENTION: THE PATRIOT REACHED OUT TO EVERY HEAD COACH OF ALL THE FALL TEAMS FOR BOTH HIGH SCHOOLS BUT A FEW FAILED TO PROVIDE INFO AND/OR PHOTOS FOR THIS WEEK'S PREVIEW. HOPEFULLY, NEXT WEEK WE WILL HAVE THE MISSING TEAMS AND THEIR INFORMATION AS WELL AS RESULTS FROM WEEKLY COMPETITION. WE APPRECIATE YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER...

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BL 10UA team takes Monsta Tournament



THE BIG LAKE 10UA FAST PITCH SOFTBALL TEAM showed their delight as they posed for a photo following their championship win in the Monsta Nationals Gold Tournament in Bloomington last month. (Submitted Photo).

Submitted Article

The Big Lake Hornets 10UA fast pitch softball team won the Monsta Nationals Gold Tournament in Bloomington, July 24-27.

The victories were accomplished due to dominate pitching performances especially Adriana Ulvog. Adriana racked up 46 strike outs and six straight wins to vault her team to the win in the championship over Omega 10UA.

Ulvog, Brylynn Mevisen and Sophia Dombrowski were a force at the plate leaving pitchers helpless against their quality at bats.

Sunday's Games

Adriana Ulvog struck out 12 batters as Big Lake's starting pitcher on Sunday at Dred Scott Ballfield. Big Lake defeated the Storm 10UA 5-1.

Ulvog struck out 10 hitters in a game versus Soder-ville Law 10UA in which Big Lake won 7-4. Ulvog surrendered just two hits and four runs over four innings while

walking two.

Ulvog continued her dominance, striking out 15 Medford Black 10UA batters in the 5-0 win where she gave up zero hits and zero runs over five innings while walking four.

Saturday's Games

Big Lake defeated Eden Prairie 10UA Red 9-6 where Ulvog pitched three innings and gave up no hits and one run while striking out nine. She also had seven total bases with a triple, home run and a stolen base.



BIG LAKE'S Adriana Ulvog was dominant in the tournament racking up 46 strikeouts and six wins. (Submitted Photo).

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Big Lake boys soccer expecting a good season

By Ken Francis,
Contributing Writer

The Big Lake boys soccer team is hoping for a successful season. Second-year coach Michael Green feels last year went well for the Hornets.

"I came in knowing I had to build a culture - build a team," he says. "The focus was keeping the guys together and creating a fun program for them. We did decently. Our numbers have increase, so that tells me I did something right."

Although they lost six players to graduation, there are quite a few players returning who have experience on the varsity team. Their top scorer, Will Priest, is back and is likely to lead the offense this season.

But their top goalkeeper, Tyler Huver, graduated and was a big reason for the team's success in the past.



THE 2025 BIG LAKE BOYS SOCCER TEAM and coaches (in no particular order) Carlos Contreras Cabrera, Steven Puma Pineda, Guillermo Murillo Saucedo, Mason Phelps, Logan Phillips, Ryler Peterson, Kofi Gyamerah, Lucas Sales, Jacob Heinen, Lucas DuMont, Owen Lange, Aaron Mezatio Toukem, William Priest, Branson Gray, Caleb Olson, Aidan Johnson, Orlando Flores, Elijah Chastain, Adan Solano Vega, Christopher Obregon, Marcos Tirado Gomez and Isaac Sales. (Photo by Ken Francis.)

"That's a big loss. It's a position we might struggle at this season," says Coach Green. "We have a couple guys who volunteered to play goalkeeper, so we're going to coach them and get them prepared for the game."

Green says the team is

motivated but still working on getting fit to play against the competition. He believes they'll be ready.

"Our scrimmage (last Monday) against Little Falls was a good experience. We tried guys in different positions on varsity and JV," says Coach Green.

"We saw some good things. Now we need to keep them excited and motivated."

The Hornets opened the season against Legacy Christian Thursday, Hopkins Friday and Sauk Rapids-Rice Saturday, results next week. They play at Spectrum Tuesday.

Hornet girls soccer team has drive and talent to compete at high levels

By Ken Francis,
Contributing Writer

The Big Lake girls soccer team is expecting to do well in 2025 after competing well in 2024.

"Last season was definitely a good season," says second-year Head Coach Alissa Busch. "It was a learning curve, stepping into a more responsible role."

The Hornets will be a mix of younger and older athletes, with quite a few returning varsity players.

"We lost some seniors and we'll miss them dearly," says Coach Busch.



THE 2025 BIG LAKE GIRLS SOCCER TEAM and coaches (in no particular order): Addison Orth, Addilynn Hallstrom, Kynlie Fournier, Hadley Priest, Laci Eastey, Erica Ramberg, Jazzlynn Wall, Adeline Hitter, Paige Erickson, Rylie Barker, Caitlyn Jensen, Dayany Ramos-Aguilar, Meiren Castaneda Ruiz, Hannah Chastain, Emersen Ruhland, Paisleigh White, Abby Roloff and Lilliana Reinoso. (Photo by Ken Francis.)

"But we have lots of returning players and a lot of talent. We're very optimistic."

Some of the players to watch this season are seniors Adeline Hitter and Paige Erickson, and ninth-grader Kynlie Fournier, who emerged as a good playmaker and scoring threat last season.

Other players who will likely make an impact are midfielders Emerson Ruhland and Hadley Priest, and Laci Eastey and eighth-grader Rylie Barker on defense. Lily Reinoso is also back as the team's goalkeeper.

"We have a lot of girls

with good technical skill who are quick on and off the ball - and aggressive," says Coach Busch. "I feel the drive to win is greater this year. The girls are more confident in themselves, and have more focus and higher intensity."

The Hornets opened the season with a 3-1 win over Sauk Rapids last week. They had games scheduled against Albany, Mound Westonka and Hutchinson over the past week, results next week. They host Chisago Lakes Tuesday and Zimmerman Thursday at 7 p.m.

2025 FALL SPORTS PREVIEWS - BECKER & BIG LAKE



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Becker boys soccer looking to reload

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

The Becker boys soccer team will have some holes to fill this year, after graduating 10 seniors from last season's team.

"With losing 10 seniors, 6 of whom never left the field, and looking at the 38 goals from last year's senior class, there are many opportunities for guys to step up for us this season," said Head Coach Nick Crowley, who returns for his 8th season in charge of the program.

A year ago, the Bulldogs finished third in the Mississippi 8 Conference and ended up losing to Alexandria in the Sections. This year, the team's finish will depend on the growth of several key players.

"We will be expecting more from Mason Sundberg (junior), and seniors Cole Kalinowski and Landon Reynolds as our goal scoring threats," Crowley said. "We are hoping that seniors Bryce Paumen and Adler Herdina can step up defensively this

season."

Crowley also has a trio of players that he will look to to help set the tempo for the team this season in Brigham Ebert, Paxton Ament and Troy Nuest.

Providing leadership for the Bulldogs this year will be a pair of seniors - Kalinowski and Nuest, and two juniors - Ebert and Sawyer Klug.

As the team works on defining roles and operating in cohesion early in the season, Crowley set forth several goals that his charges will be working towards.

"We are hoping to compete for the top spots in the Mississippi8 Conference, host the first round of Sections, and keep a positive goal differential," Crowley said.

The Bulldogs were scheduled to open the season on August 21 as they hosted Apollo, followed by a home match against Spectrum the following day. Becker traveled to Monticello on August 25th to open Mississippi8 Conference play.

PCWC completes Club Championship Tournament

Submitted Article

The Pebble Creek Women's Club completed its year-end Club Championship tournament on August 16 and 17 at the Pebble Creek Golf Club.

"We had a wonderful Club Championship with many of our Women's Club members playing across several flights," said Jesse O'Neill, Pebble Creek Women's Club President. "The Pebble Creek Women's Club is made up of a great group of women who build friendships, work to expand the game of golf and who support our local community through our Pebble Creek Cares program. We send our congratulations to all of Club Championship participants and winners."

The overall low gross winner and 2025 Women's Club Champion is Layla Mathews. In the first flight, the top net winners were Sandra Lemke (first) and Joan Frie (second). In the second flight, the top net finishers were Carolyn Barriball (first) and Sonya Cox (second - tie) and Robin Dingmann (second - tie). In the third flight, top net finishers were Stacey Vetsch (first), Amy Stanger (second) and Wendy Guiney (third).

"We are so fortunate to have such a first-class golf course for our women's



2025 CLUB CHAMPION Layla Mathews. (Submitted Photo).

league", said Amy Stanger, Club Championship tournament co-chair. "The course was in great shape even after a lot of rain, and the tournament ran smoothly thanks to the entire Pebble Creek team! We'd like to thank Jason Scharfencamp, Pebble Creek Golf Superintendent and Ian Holmes, Pebble Creek Golf Services Manager for helping us hold another great event this year."

For more information on the Pebble Creek Women's Club, contact Jesse O'Neil, Pebble Creek Women's Club President at PebbleCreekWomensClub@gmail.com.



FIRST FLIGHT NET WINNERS (left to right) Sandra Lemke (1st Low Net) and Joan Frie (2nd Low Net). (Submitted Photo).

Yee-Haw! Chamber golf outing beats all!

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

Last week, 76 golfers on 19 teams gathered at Pebble Creek in Becker to play in the annual Becker Chmaber Golf Tournament.

This year's theme was "Wild West" and so participants were encouraged to wear western attire for the nine hole tournament held on the Classic 9 Blue Course.

The first place team was the Giddy Up Girls — made up of Jen Fingarson, Layla Mathews, Stacey Vetsch and Sidney Dunderi.

The longest drive contest for the women went to Layla Mathews, who also was the winner of the closet to the pin for the ladies.

The longest drive for the "dudes" went to Blake Brown.

Closest to the pin for the men went to Kent Graning.

The last place team was the Patriot with the team consisting of Chris Meyer, Devan Haas, Carol Hanson and Bill Morgan. It was the second year in a row they achieved this feat.

A meal and silent auction followed the golf outing in the banquet room and prizes were handed out to those most fortunate.

A big shout out to all of the chamber's sponsors especially their Platinum sponsors — Sherburne State Bank, Williams Dingmann Funeral Home, TJ Potter Trucking and EMR.

11th Annual GRFIA Scramble hosts 116 golfers!

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

Monday was a dreary day weather-wise — not much sun, stifling heat — but that didn't deter the spirits of the 116 golfers who hit the championship course at Pebble Creek for the 11th annual GRFIA Scramble Golf Tournament!

Tee time was at 11 a.m. this year, a mere two hours earlier than previous years which gave organizers a better coordination of festivities and events that culminated with a delicious dinner and prize giveaways in the early evening hours.

Team Awards
Capturing first place with an incredible -17 score 55 was Victory Insurance, whose team consisted of KC Foster, Caleb Foster, Keaton Shinn and Nate Cox.

Second place, with a -16 score, went to D&L Construction whose players were, Jamie Letcher, Patrick Duffy, Jermaine Sculte and Matt Funk.

In third place with a -13 score was the foursome of Pelloco Machine — Randy Pelletier, Matt Hanson, Amanda Rischmiller and Ryan Rischmiller.

Individual Awards
For men's longest drive, Scott Meager took the prize. For closest to the pin for women the award went to Joann Klym. Closest to pin for the men went to Adam Sivula.

Longest putt for the women went to Tonya Danielson and longest putt for men was won by Jamie Letcher.

Key sponsors
The hole-in-one sponsor was Beaudry Oil & Propane; the dinner sponsor was Ramsey Lake Builders and the drink cart sponsor was Absolute Sourcing. "Great River Faith



THE GIDDY UP GIRLS captured first place in the Becker Chamber Wild West Golf Tournament. The team consisted of Jen Fingarson, Sydney Dunderi, Layla Mathews and Stacey Vetsch. (Submitted Photo).



THE PATRIOT TEAM garnered last place for the second year in a row. The team consisted of Chris Meyer, Bill Morgan, Carol Hanson and Devan Haas. (Submitted Photo).



THE VICTORY INSURANCE TEAM consisting of: KC Foster, Caleb Foster, Keaton Shinn and Nate Cox took the first place prize at the scramble. (Submitted Photo).



THE SHERBURNE STATE BANK TEAM OF Tanya Danielson, Allen Snegosky, Jerred Merchant and Candice Hanson getting ready to tee off to start the tournament. (Submitted Photo).

Counties for 21 years. Their annual Rake the Town Event is coming and they are looking for families and groups to help them rake lawns for those who are unable to do so anymore.

If one is interested and would like to hear more about ways to serve one's community with GRFIA, call 763-263-4277 or visit their website at: www.grfia.org.



LAYLA MATHEWS won both the longest drive for women and closest to the pin contests. (Submitted Photo).



KENT GRANING won closest to the pin for the mens group. (Submitted Photo).



FRED GRANING smiled as he got ready for golf with his Fred Flintstone Golf Shirt. Fred is one of GRFIA's amazing volunteers as well as a golf participant. (Submitted Photo).

2025 FALL SPORTS PREVIEWS - BECKER & BIG LAKE

Bulldog tennis high on potential



THE BECKER GIRLS TENNIS TEAM is off to a great start this year and features a deep and talented lineup. (Submitted Photo)

**By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer**

It's shaping up to be an interesting year for the Becker girls tennis team, as they have a full slate of returning letter winners, but yet lost a great deal of talent to graduation from a year ago. There is also the addition of a third class in the MSHSL tennis sanctioning,

meaning there are more opportunities for teams to reach the state tournament.

As Head Coach Nate Bucher enters his 12th season as the varsity coach, the expectations are high for the Bulldogs, who a year ago lost in the Section semifinals in a close match against Brainerd.

"We have a good returning group but after

losing many seniors in the previous year, we are young at the positions being played," Bucher says. "Our potential is very high, and we are working each day to get better!"

Chloe Spear and Ava Duncombe will serve as team captains, and they will join Gracie Conzemius, Arica Stach, Tess Brown, Faith Bass, Taylor Lisson,

Sammie Leaders, Myla Priebe and Lauren Biegler as Bulldogs with varsity level experience.

"It may go without saying, but we feel that we have the abilities to compete for a section title once again, especially with the addition of the third class," Bucher says. "We feel that we have a competitive chance even at the state tournament level, playing schools that are more similar in our size."

The M8 Conference title is also a possibility this year, as Bucher and his players have their sights set on this possibility.

"It has been a couple years where we had some close losses in the M8 and we again feel we have a great opportunity to bring another conference title to Becker Tennis," Bucher says. "The team started out with an overnight trip to Park Rapids for the first day of competition and won the three matches of our day, bringing home a traveling trophy for the "South" teams represented against the "North" teams. We are always in pursuit. Each day, with focus and intention! Lets Go Dogs!"

Bulldog volleyball has skill, experience



THE BECKER BULLDOG VOLLEYBALL TEAM will have a wealth of experience on the court, with numerous returning letterwinners ready for action. (Submitted Photo.)

**By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer**

Katie Mavencamp returns for her second season in charge of the Becker Bulldog volleyball program, and "Coach Bo" as her girls call her will have a wealth of experience on the court for a team that finished in the top half of the M8 Conference a year ago.

"We have eight returning letter winners on the team," said Coach Bo. "One of our goals is to keep building our team chemistry by playing together on the court as one unit."

Junior Libero Kenna Hennessey will lead the pack of talented players, as she last year broke the Becker school record for single season digs with 456. Senior Brynn Koste also looks to have a solid season, as the outside hitter returns as the top striker for the Bulldogs. Coach Bo also will count on a pair of middle players to shut down the opposition.

"Senior Middle Blocker Courtney Gass and Sophomore Middle Blocker Payton Treptau return as our middles denying

opponent hitters with their blocking," said Coach Bo.

Hennessey and Gass will serve as Captains for the Bulldogs, who could challenge for a top spot in a very good Section 8AAA.

As Coach Bo continues to put her stamp on the team, she will continue to build a program that can contend for years to come.

"My expectations for the season include seeing the girls build their self confidence and play at the level they are capable of," Said Coach Bo. "I expect us to shock a lot of teams by the growth they accomplished over the winter and summer seasons. My coaching philosophy is rooted in growing, developing, and supporting each girl as an athlete AND as a young woman."

Volleyball fans can circle September 6 on their calendars, as the Bulldogs will again host their annual tournament, with teams from Cloquet, Eden Valley-Watkins, Holy Family Catholic, Howard Lake-Waverley, Winsted, PACT Charter, St. Cloud Tech and St. Louis Park coming to town.

Bulldogs stand to defend state title



THE BECKER 2025-26 FOOTBALL TEAM. (In no particular order): Cody Deters, Nathan Weiss, Chase Stupar, Isiah Boyer, Adam Wipper, Carson Schwarzkopf, Cayden Goodell, Sawyer Brown, Sebastian Cabrera, Bennett Kujawa, RJ Houle, Tristan Kowalkowski, Nathan Repke, Vincent Carling, Davon Marklowitz, Adam Grabowski, Zachariah Halvorson, Ethan Assmann, Ryan Fischer, Griffin Munsch, Quinn Tayler, Dalton Weisz, Carson Graning, Blaine Cox, Boston Kuschel, Noah Mielke, Colton Pishney, Andrew Friesz, Jace Koste, Drake Davis, Simon Keeler, Owen etron, Owen Ochs, Logan Michalski, Clayton Hamacher, Jacob Lempere, Brennan Spencer, Bo Thompson, Andrew Fischer, Jaxin Fager, Samuel Kasowski, Vincent Blomquist, Damas Wilke, Tyler Hall, Brayden Setru, Jackson Ewing, Blayne Kuschel, Mason Vee, Alexander Adams, Gus Baldry, Thatcher Jurek, Josue Valverde, Jacob Williams, Brandon Struffert, Braden Banyai, Cody Peterson, Deegan Schmidt, Caleb Karels, Tyler Campbell, Owen Trantina, Victor Balboa-Porter, Brayden Weyer, Matthew Wipper, Brigham Ebert, Brody Hoffmann, Aiden Golley, Cemerom Olson, Jaxon Reiffenberger, Connor Gunderson, Cohen Treptau, Taylor Stanley, Boyd Peterson, Noah Lempere, Logan Carrington, Linclon Hendricks, Camden McLean, Saul Kreft, Nathan Smith, Lincoln Praught, Niles Bartkovicz, Gabriel Schmidt, Zachary Simonson, Carson Klimmek, Tucker Becker, Justin Tarr, Hayden Zahner and Tarver Schendzielos. (Photo by David Hyttsten).

**By Bill Morgan,
Editor**

Year 56.
Incredible!

Dwight Lundeen is entering his 56th year as Head Football Coach of the Becker Bulldogs after kicking off the program at its inception in 1970.

In August of last year, Lundeen became just the second high school coach in Minnesota to reach 400 career football victories. The Bulldogs won his 400th game in a 51-0 shutout against Hill-Murray at Dwight Lundeen Stadium, which was named in his honor in 2023.

Lundeen has led the Bulldogs to four state championships, most recently in 2024 when Becker went undefeated and won the Class 4A title over Totino Grace, 24-8.

For the 2025 season,

Lundeen will have 87 players in grades 10 through 12th. He also added three new coaches — Mitchell Golley, Shane Potter and Kristoff Kowalkowski.

"I still love the journey, love the kids," Lundeen said.

The Bulldogs will have four captains for the 2025 season. They are, Sawyer Brown, Nate Weiss, Zach Halvorson and Aiden Golley.

"We have a great schedule (this year)," said Lundeen. "We play seven teams that were rated in the Top 10 in 4A last year. Totino Grace game (Oct. 3) will be a rematch of our prep bowl. That will be exciting!"

The schedule for this year's team is as follows: **Aug. 29** at Orono; **Sept. 5** versus Hutchinson; **Sept. 12** at Fergus Falls; **Sept. 19** versus Princeton; **Sept. 26** versus St. Cloud Tech/St. John's; **Oct. 3** at Totino Grace; **Oct.**

10 versus Rocori; **Oct. 15** versus Detroit Lakes.

The roster is as follows:

Cody Deters, Nathan Weiss, Chase Stupar, Isiah Boyer, Adam Wipper, Carson Schwarzkopf, Cayden Goodell, Sawyer Brown, Sebastian Cabrera, Bennett Kujawa, RJ Houle, Tristan Kowalkowski, Nathan Repke, Vincent Carling, Davon Marklowitz, Adam Grabowski, Zachariah Halvorson, Ethan Assmann, Ryan Fischer, Griffin Munsch, Quinn Tayler, Dalton Weisz, Carson Graning, Blaine Cox, Boston Kuschel, Noah Mielke, Colton Pishney, Andrew Friesz, Jace Koste, Drake Davis, Simon Keeler, Owen etron, Owen Ochs, Logan Michalski, Clayton Hamacher, Jacob Lempere, Brennan Spencer, Bo Thompson, Andrew Fischer, Jaxin Fager, Samuel Kasowski, Vincent

Blomquist, Damas Wilke, Tyler Hall, Brayden Setru, Jackson Ewing, Blayne Kuschel, Mason Vee, Alexander Adams, Gus Baldry, Thatcher Jurek, Josue Valverde, Jacob Williams, Brandon Struffert, Braden Banyai, Cody Peterson, Deegan Schmidt, Caleb Karels, Tyler Campbell, Owen Trantina, Victor Balboa-Porter, Brayden Weyer, Matthew Wipper, Brigham Ebert, Brody Hoffmann, Aiden Golley, Cemerom Olson, Jaxon Reiffenberger, Connor Gunderson, Cohen Treptau, Taylor Stanley, Boyd Peterson, Noah Lempere, Logan Carrington, Linclon Hendricks, Camden McLean, Saul Kreft, Nathan Smith, Lincoln Praught, Niles Bartkovicz, Gabriel Schmidt, Zachary Simonson, Carson Klimmek, Tucker Becker, Justin Tarr, Hayden Zahner, Tarver Schendzielos,

Bulldog swimmers have talent and focus for success

**By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer**

As Head Coach Tina Tamm enters her 26th season in charge of the Becker Bulldog swimming and diving team, her team has set a goal to take another step towards the upward evolution of the program.

"I have the girls fill out a goal sheet at the beginning of the season which has them list personal and team goals," Tamm said. "One team goal that the majority of them listed was to get 2nd place at Sections . . . it is possible and more attainable since they want it as a group."

A year ago, the Bulldogs



THE BECKER SWIMMING AND DIVING TEAM again has strong numbers and numerous top performers (Submitted Photo).

took third in Sections, their highest finish ever. Now,

Tamm returns a solid group of returning letter winners

who are focusing on the team's best finish ever.

"Over half of our team is returning letter winners who all have their different skills and place on the team," Tamm said. "With 12 different events, they all play a key role somewhere on the team."

Joining Tamm on the coaching staff is her daughter Avery, in her 6th season, as well as Sarah and Lauren Woelfel, who will be in their first season co-coaching the diving events.

Alanah Awalt, Laila Cook, Karli Kirk and Kailey McGowan will serve as captains of the team, and will be counted on to set the tone for the Bulldogs.

Their experience and leadership, as well as the

depth in the pool and diving well, have Tamm optimistic about the potential of this year's squad.

"It is going to be a great season, as we have a great core group of girls and our newest additions (7th grade) are working their way right with the others," Tamm said. "With our goal being a 2nd place finish at Sections, we need to focus, work hard and remember that each individual race combines with every other race to reach that goal. If we all work together, the goal can be achieved."

**GOOD LUCK
FALL SPORTS ATHLETES!**

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