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The Patriot is the official newspaper for Clear Lake, Clearwater, Orrick, 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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Board discusses Becker Post Office closing

By Ken Francis, Contributing Writer

The Sherburne County Board is concerned about the impact the closing of the Becker and relocation of the Big Lake Post Office will have on the residents of the area.

Tuesday, the board discussed some of the issues, and possibly a preferred resolution to the problem that they outlined in an Oct. 15 letter from Board Chair Gary Gray to the Postmaster General.

"I am writing on behalf of the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners to express serious concern regarding the potential closure of the Becker, Minnesota Post Office and to strongly advocate for the continued operation of United States Postal Service (USPS) facilities in both the City of Becker and the City of Big Lake," wrote Gray.

The USPS plan is to consolidate mail operations for Becker and Big Lake at the Monticello Post Office, which would be a burden for Becker and Big Lake residents.

"While we understand the USPS must evaluate operational efficiencies, consolidating operational

Hugo featured on Morning Show

PARKS DIRECTOR GINA HUGO was featured on the CBS Sunday Morning Show last week to discuss the heart-land interpretive trail at Two Inlets at Bdé Heháka - Omashkooz Zaaga'igaans Regional Park. She was joined by artist Lindsay Buck (not shown) to talk about the project, which weaves the historical and cultural stories of plants, animals, and people and celebrates their interconnectedness in the landscape. (Submitted Photo).

Major transmission line project breaks ground in Becker

EXECUTIVES FROM MISO, Michaels Corporation, Great River Energy, Minnesota Department of Commerce, Minnesota Power, Public Utilities Commission, and others broke ground Oct. 8 on the Northland Reliability Project in Becker. (Submitted Photo).

By Andrew Diemand, Contributing Writer

Delivering power where it's needed—especially across rural areas and in a demanding Minnesota climate—is no easy task. It requires years of planning, community engagement, and coordination across agencies and utilities.

That effort is now taking shape with the launch of the Northland Reliability Project, a joint initiative by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power. Phase one of the project, officially underway as of October 8, marks the beginning of a major regional upgrade to the electric transmission system—aimed at strengthening the grid, preventing outages, and supporting long-term energy needs.

The groundbreaking ceremony, held at the Sherburne History Center in Becker, celebrated the start of construction on a new 345-kilovolt double-circuit transmission line—essentially a big, new power highway. Spanning roughly 180 miles and six counties—from the Iron Range in Itasca County down through Central Minnesota—the line represents the backbone of a larger, multi-phase infrastructure plan.

Officials from Great

River Energy, Minnesota Power, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) were in attendance, sharing a vision of a more reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy future for the state.

"This is more than just the start of construction," said Priti Patel, Vice President and Chief Transmission Officer for Great River Energy. "It's a promise—to our members, to the state, and to the future—that we are building something that will serve the safety and reliability of Minnesotans for decades to come."

Approved by the PUC earlier this year, the project carries an estimated cost of \$2 billion to \$3 billion and is expected to be fully operational by 2030.

So, what does this investment mean for Minnesotans? Alongside improved grid stability and fewer outages, speakers at the event emphasized the economic ripple effects.

"At its core, reliability is the foundation for economic development," said Josh Skelton, Chief Operating Officer of Minnesota Power. "The businesses we serve today—and those we hope to serve in the future—require a steady supply of energy—and lots of

it"

Brian Tulloh, executive with MISO—the regional grid operator serving Minnesota and 14 other states—added: "This project means connecting people and businesses across the state with the power they need to thrive."

The project also aligns with Minnesota's clean energy goals. Katie Sieben, Chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, emphasized the environmental benefits, noting that the improved transmission system could help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 20 million metric tons annually—roughly equal to the energy use of 2.7 million homes.

"As we transition to more renewable energy, lines like this are essential," Sieben said. "They allow us to bring more wind, solar, and natural gas projects onto the grid."

The Northland Reliability Project is one of several regional efforts aimed at modernizing the Midwest's electric infrastructure in the face of increasing demand, aging systems, and climate pressures.

For Minnesota, the message at the ceremony was clear: a stronger, smarter grid isn't just a vision—it's a necessity.

And with the shovels now in the ground, that vision is starting to take shape.

BLFD OPEN HOUSE OFFERS FUN FOR EVERYONE

By Don Bellach, Contributing Writer

The line in front of the Big Lake Fire Department began forming at 10:45 a.m. for rides in a fire truck, and Big Lake Fire volunteers were ready.

BL Firefighters arrived at 8 a.m. on Sat. Oct. 18 to eat breakfast burritos with their families before setting up for the BLFD Annual Open House. The open house was scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Captain Sam Hanson said they expected between 1,200-1,400 people, though as the day progressed, he admitted

BLFD PUT OUT A CONTROLLED BURN that was part of a demonstration sponsored by Lindstrom's Restoration. (Patriot photo by Don Bellach)

that number might be low.

At 11 a.m. firefighters delivered 168 pizzas from Domino's Pizza and served soda purchased at Coborn's. Both businesses supported BLFD by offering the department sizable discounts. Coborn's donated 50% of the soda that would be served for the day. A local restoration company—24 Restore—donated 40 pumpkins from Beck's Nursery.

Children visited stations around the Fire Department trying to collect three or more stamps to receive a free pumpkin. They put on gear, learned about gas and electric safety, planned, practiced, and prepared, and went outside and visited members of the Big Lake Police, MN State Patrol, DNR, and CentraCare EMS.

Throughout the afternoon, families could be seen lugging big orange pumpkins around the firehouse and parking lot. The official name for the pumpkin giveaway is "Pete's Pumpkin Patch," named after retired firefighter Pete Ahrens, who served from 1987-2017. Ahrens grew pumpkins for the annual event and before the open

BLFD to page 2

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Losing Patience

I remember when I was younger I used to enjoy watching sports on television. I'd sit in front of the TV at night or on weekends and watch an entire game of baseball, football, hockey and occasionally, college basketball. Sometimes, like on a Sunday, I'd watch three consecutive football games.

At work the following day, all the sports fans would be talking about some of the big plays we all saw and how they helped our team win or lose.

But I don't seem to have the patience to watch an entire game anymore. I don't know if it's just something that happens as we grow older, or maybe I'm just getting more reluctant about investing too much time on a sports team. I'm still a sports fan. I still have favorite teams in baseball, football, hockey and college basketball. But these days I find myself watching highlight videos on YouTube instead of entire games.

It seems like those 15 to 20-minute highlight videos are just the right length for my taste. Whoever edits them is pretty good about making sure most of the big plays are covered. And I can pause the videos at any time for a snack break.

Sure, there are short commercial breaks, even during the videos. But they're usually 30 seconds, nothing like the string of endless commercials during a televised game. These days the typical NFL game lasts for more than two hours, even though the actual playing time is 60 minutes.

COUNTY from page 1

services into the Monticello Post Office would present substantial challenges," he wrote. "Monticello is not centrally located for either Becker or Big Lake residents, and the increased travel distance would create unnecessary burdens for customers and strain the capacity of the Monticello facility."

Members of the board suggested a combined operation location that would serve Becker and Big Lake instead of moving operations to Monticello.

"...which would be less impactful on these communities than the closure/operational consolidation plans currently under discussion."

Tuesday, some of the commissioners weighed in on the issue.

Commissioner Gray tried to put the issue into perspective, comparing other communities with post offices.

"We have to look no further than Clear Lake. It's only got 660 people and it's got a post office," he said. "Clearwater's got 2,500 people and it's got a post office. Becker and Big Lake combined have three times that amount of people, and they're not going to have a post office? It doesn't make any sense at all."

"This is a situation where everybody wants to have a post office in their community, but we also have a post office that loses money every year," said Commissioner Andrew Hulse. "I think we need to have some creative solutions. I think there's some middle ground to find. I would just like to understand the big picture, so it might be a good workshop to have at some point."

The Becker P.O. building was scheduled to close Friday (Oct. 24). For now, the USPS has agreed to put temporary post office boxes at the Becker Community Center.

Messelt Evaluation

The board approved a performance evaluation rating of "Exceeds Standards" for Administrator Bruce Messelt.

The commissioners met with Messelt Oct. 7 to discuss his performance from the period of Aug. 19, 2024 through Aug. 19, 2025. Members of the board felt Messelt's performance over the past year has exceeded the county board's expectations.

Messelt's salary increase for 2025 will result in an annual salary of \$235,062. The salary increase for Mr. Messelt is 8.25% or a \$17,914 annual salary adjustment.

Vape Collection

The board approved an amendment to the SCORE line item budget to provide \$1,500 towards vape disposal.

The HHS Dept. is partnering with Planning and Zoning to provide safe collection and disposal of vapes that are confiscated in schools within the county.

The Sherburne County Substance Use Prevention (SUP) Coalition conducted a survey in 2023 to better understand how county schools collect, store, and dispose of confiscated vaping devices. The survey results showed that collection and disposal processes varied by school, highlighting the need for consistent and safe procedures.

Other Business

In other actions the board:

- Approved a donation of \$2,500 from Mr. Gary and Mrs. Ann Gray to the Health & Human Services Department's (HHS) Therapy Dog program. The donation will be put towards the cost of training services and care needs for the HHS therapy dog, Peach;

- Approved the transfer of \$100,000 from the Energy Transition Aid to support additional Workers Compensation Self Insurance costs. With the closing of Sherco Unit #2, the county received one-time state energy transition funds of approximately \$455,000 in 2025, placed into the General Fund. The transfer will help cover any future unexpected large workers compensation claims.



By Ken Francis
Contributing Writer

I just refuse to sit through all the commentators' remarks, multiple camera angle replays and commercials just to have the game come down a decisive play with less than a minute on the clock. It's like I could have been doing something productive, then just turned on the game in the closing minutes.

I remember many years ago, my father and I listened to a baseball game between the New York Mets (our team) and Houston Astros on a small transistor radio. The game wasn't televised, so the only way to enjoy the game was by radio.

The game started at 7:30 Central time, which was 8:30 p.m. in New Jersey where we lived. I stayed up and listened for a few hours. When I went to bed, the game was tied, 0-0 in the 10th inning.

I didn't know who had won until the next morning. That's when I saw the smashed little radio on the kitchen table. My father had stayed up past 2:30 a.m. to hear the Mets lose, 1-0 in 24 innings.

It's too bad YouTube wasn't around back then. Maybe that little radio would still be around.

TO THE EDITOR:

According to Merriam-Webster, assassination is defined as "murder by sudden or secret attack, often for political reasons." The murder of Charlie Kirk fits this definition. The killer carved politically charged phrases into shell casings and took other deliberate steps pointing to a motive rooted in hatred for Kirk's conservative message. This wasn't random—it was political. And it reflects a disturbing pattern of violence from the political left aimed at silencing voices on the right.

Some commentators were upset by my September 15 letter to the editor, which called out this reality. Are they right to be upset? I wrote that "many" on the left celebrated. The response was it was just a "fringe few". But news coverage showing many public and online celebrations and polling dispute this. Following the assassi-

nation, YouGov found that only 38% of Democrat respondents said "political violence is never acceptable." That means 62% believe it can be justified. This isn't just about one poll. Time and again, the political left—deeply embedded in the Democrat Party—has used or excused violence to resolve political disputes. Just last week, the Virginia Attorney General candidate Jay Jones reportedly called for the murder of a fellow legislator and his children. Yet Democrats continue to support him. If my letter doesn't reflect your personal views, I respect that. But remember: when you're among Democrat or leftist peers, statistically, nearly two out of three disagree with you on the acceptability of political violence. And if you felt satisfaction when Trump or Kirk were shot, you've only confirmed the point I was making. We must reject political violence—clearly,

BLFD from page 1

house, firefighters would go out to his farm and pick pumpkins to give away.

Outside the firehouse, members from the MN State Patrol, Big Lake Police Dept., the DNR, CentraCare, and the Sherburne County Mounted Patrol were on-hand to answer any questions the public had for them.

"It's not just a Big Lake Fire Open House, but a public safety expo," said Hanson.

Perhaps the biggest event of the day, aside from the landing of the Life Link III helicopter, was a controlled burn sponsored by family-owned Lindstrom's Restoration. The demonstration emphasized the concept, "Close before you doze." Close your bedroom door at night to prevent fire from spreading throughout the home. Lindstrom's, based in Plymouth, MN, provides the demonstration to Fire Departments across Minnesota for fire prevention week. A model home sits on a trailer featuring two side by side rooms – a bedroom and a living room. The living room was set on fire. It took moments for it to be engulfed in flames. Thankfully, BLFD was on hand to put out the fire.



FIREFIGHTER JESSE KELLER (L) watches wife Kendra put on gear while FF Jake Cihlar (back) offers advice. FF Colin Maki (M) helps Parker Just and FF Jacob Dietrick (R) helps Annabelle Norlin. (Patriot photo by Don Bellach)

BLFD receives critical upgrades ahead of Open House



THE BLFD BUILDING is getting upgrades both externally as well as internally – just in time for their annual Open House event this weekend. (Photo from Big Lake Township Board's website).

By Andrew Diemand, Contributing Writer

Just in time for its annual Open House, the Big Lake Fire Department underwent a series of essential upgrades aimed at improving both its physical space and internal operations—investments that local leaders say are about more than appearances. They're about ensuring the department can respond quickly, safely, and effectively when residents need them most.

After collaborating on and approving a series of parking lot upgrades and repairs in September 2024, both the Big Lake City Council and Town Board have agreed to additional improvements for the Big Lake Fire Department (BLFD). The initial phase of the project came with a price tag of \$94,316.30, split evenly between the city and the town. Now, another \$20,165 in upgrades has been added to fully complete the project, bringing the total cost to over \$114,000.

That additional cost, once again shared 50/50 between the city and town, will cover two major items: \$8,750 for seal coating the BLFD parking lot, and \$11,415 for drainage im-

provements, both of which are considered essential to maintaining the facility's integrity and accessibility.

The contract for the work was awarded to Astech Corp. of St. Cloud, and seal coating began earlier this month with the goal of wrapping up before the Fire Department's Open House on Sat., Oct. 18. Drainage work is expected to follow shortly after.

While the exterior improvements will be noticeable to all who attend Saturday's celebration, behind-the-scenes upgrades are also underway. Following a Fire Board meeting in September, it became clear that the department's computer system and digital infrastructure were in urgent need of replacement.

The current technology, officials noted, was outdated and affecting the department's ability to map emergencies, coordinate responses, and operate efficiently.

The total cost for the technology upgrades is \$6,242.62, again split evenly between the city and town. The Big Lake Town Board formally approved their \$3,121.31 share during their Oct. 8 meeting, with the funds coming from the Fire Capital Fund.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

consistently, and without exception. That starts with telling the truth, even when it's uncomfortable.

**Dan Schohardt
Chairman
Winnetka County
Republicans**

TO THE EDITOR:

In Tom Emmer's 10/11/25 column, he repeats the Republican lie that Democrats want free health care for illegal immigrants. Federal law, they can only access emergency medical care and limited state benefits. Emmer should be working to mediate a solution to the government shut-down. While on "vacation" the last month, Republicans continue to receive pay and taxpayer funded health care, while over 250,000 federal workers have missed paychecks.

Meanwhile: —ACA insurance costs are increasing 114% annually; many Minnesotans risk losing health coverage. —Rural hospitals that treat low-income patients will suffer from Trump's payment cuts. —45,000 Minnesotans will lose SNAP benefits due to insufficient funding. —MN food shelves will lose more than a million pounds of food from cuts to the Emergency Food Assistance Program. —Farmers are suffering financially, with losses of 40% on soybean prices because China stopped purchases due to tariffs. Cuts to programs that help Minnesotans are funding Trump's tax breaks to the wealthy. The richest 10% of Americans will see income increases of about \$13,600 a year, while the bottom 10% will lose \$1,200 a year.

**Teri Bayer
Becker MN**

MnDOT seeks public comments on final draft of State Rail Plan

Submitted Article

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is asking Minnesota businesses and residents to provide feedback on the final draft of the Minnesota State Rail Plan.

Comments received will be used to guide final updates to the plan, which shapes the future of Minnesota's rail infrastructure and investments.

The Minnesota State Rail Plan envisions the future of Minnesota's rail transportation system over the next 20 years. The plan describes the importance of railroads to Minnesota's economy, the state of the current rail system and trends, and identifies key rail investments that better support the transportation of goods, services and people throughout Minnesota. The plan guides and supports MnDOT's efforts to integrate rail with all modes

of transportation to effectively move Minnesota.

Minnesota residents and businesses can review the plan online at talk.dot.state.mn.us/state-rail-plan. Paper copies are also available for review at eight MnDOT District offices located in Duluth, Bemidji, Baxter, Detroit Lakes, Rochester, Mankato, Willmar and Roseville.

Comments submitted online are encouraged. Written comments can also be submitted by mail to:

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations

Attn: Robert Clarksen
Minnesota Department of Transportation
900 Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403
or by email at info@mn.gov

Visit the project's Let's Talk Transportation website for the latest information.

pizza, and more.

Residents are encouraged to stop by, enjoy the festivities, and see firsthand how recent upgrades are helping the BLFD continue its mission of protecting lives and property in Big Lake.

Dedication honoring Frank Kolbinger, Jr.

Submitted Article

The public is invited to visit Frank Kolbinger, Jr. Veterans Memorial Park on Saturday, October 25 at 3:30 p.m. for a dedication ceremony honoring the namesake hero from World War II.

A plaque will be unveiled that summarizes Kolbinger's incredible military service, as well as his commitment to the Becker community.

Kolbinger was part of the Allied Forces that stormed Utah beach in Normandy, and he later was seriously wounded near Pretot, France on July 3, 1944. Believing Frank had been killed in action, the US Army notified his parents back in Becker of his status and they in turn began

making arrangements for a Memorial Service for their son.

Weeks later, Frank regained consciousness at a military hospital near Malvern in the United Kingdom and word trickled back to Becker that he was indeed alive, although seriously wounded.

Kolbinger would ultimately return to Becker, where he later worked for the Becker Post Office and became Postmaster.

Kolbinger's four surviving daughters, as well as their families and other relatives, will be on hand to dedicate the plaque and celebrate the life of this amazing American Veteran.

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Lakefront Property!

Only available due to a job relocation, this well-maintained home has seen approx. \$150,000 in improvements since Aug 2024. 3 BR, 3 baths, plus a den & office that can flex as extra sleeping spaces. Primary suite includes two closets, a jetted tub & a separate walk-in shower. Recent updates include staining the cedar siding, new lakeside stairs, a spacious paver patio, fresh shoreline rip rap, aluminum dock panels, quartz countertops, an Andersen patio door & a new asphalt driveway-all designed for long-term lakeside enjoyment. With 307 feet of frontage wrapping around a point, you will enjoy the natural sand/hard rock bottom shoreline. Lake Francis is one of the area's premier lakes, offering 10-12- ft clarity & over 1,000 acres of full recreation fun. The sellers would like to sell this property "turn-key" ready for the next owners to enjoy. The pontoon & lift can even be included with the right offer. Take in beautiful sunrises over the tranquil waters & don't let the elevation deter you. There is a golf cart/ATV path for easy lake access. Perfect as a year-round residence or weekend retreat. 74308 323rd St., South Haven, MN. **MLS# 6797722, \$989,900.** Call **Patrick Splinter**, 612-437-1383.

Located just a short walk to downtown Foley is this Value priced property. What a great opportunity to get into a home at a low purchase price. Sure it could use a little TLC, but it is certainly livable how it is. With three bedrooms on the main level, a bathroom, and an unfinished basement for future expansion, the possibilities are nearly endless. Come check out this great property! 330 7th Avenue Foley, MN. 56329 - **\$149,950, MLS# 6778126.** Contact **Rick Seagraves**, 320-282-5656.

PENDING

Weber to speak at BL Library next week

Submitted Article

Forensic Psychologist and True Crime author Frank F. Weber will be speaking at the Great River Regional Public Library in Big Lake from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 29.

Frank will speak about his forensic work and the writing of true crime mysteries. Frank's 2025 release, *The Sun*, will be available at the event. *The Sun* is based on a Minnesota mystery that was once touted as "the crime of the century." Frank will share information related to the case and give a live demonstration of a lie detector test (volunteer a friend).

Frank will be at the Big Lake Public Library signing books and answering individual questions by 5 p.m. and will be available after the event. The Big Lake Public Library is

MINNESOTA AUTHOR Frank F. Weber will be in Big Lake next week for a speaking engagement and the signing of his latest book. (Submitted Photo).

part of the Great River Regional Library System and is located at: 790 Minnesota Avenue, Big Lake, Minnesota, 55009.

About the Author

Frank F. Weber is a forensic psychologist specializing in homicide, sexual assault and domestic abuse cases. He uses his unique understanding of how people think, knowledge of victim trauma, and expert testimony in writing his true crime thrillers. Frank has been interviewed on investigative shows and profiled cold case homicides. His novels have earned numerous awards. Frank is the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award from MN Psychological Association and received the President's Award from the MN Correctional Association for his forensic work.

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Contact us at: 763-275-0275
or Email: legals@patriotnewsmn.com

OBITUARIES

Alma L. Petersen, 97
Clear Lake, MN
February 23, 1928 - October 7, 2025

Alma Lucille Petersen, 97 of Clear Lake, MN died peacefully on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at her home.

A private memorial is planned at Trinity Lutheran Church, Clear Lake, with Reverend Joshua Reber presiding. Burial will be in Trinity Lutheran Cemetery, Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. Alma was born February 23, 1928 in Fair Haven, Minnesota, to William and Meta (Bartell) Truenow. She married Diner Petersen on April 10, 1948, at Concordia Lutheran Church in Fair Haven. She retired from White Consolidated Industries in 1990, where she worked as a line worker. She was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Clear Lake. Alma was

dedicated to the Lord and her family.

Survivors include daughters, Marian (Robert) Riggert of Aztec, NM; Joan (Jim) Moncur, Roseville, MN; Jennifer (Wally) Zipf, Clear Lake, MN; Susan (Chris) Klippen, Clear Lake, MN; 7 grandchildren, Justin, Aaron, Kirsten, Kate, Sara Meggan, Jennifer, and Jameson; and 9 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Diner; parents; sister, Lillian Wolf; brothers, Walter Truenow and William Truenow, Jr.; and 3 infant sisters.

Alma will be missed, but the loving memory of her will remain with us.



Celestine A Pappenfus, 93
Becker, MN
February 14, 1932 - October 17, 2025

Mass of Christian Burial will be 11 am . on Friday, October 31, 2025 at Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church in Becker for Celestine A. Pappenfus, age 93, of Becker who died Friday, October 17, 2025 at the St. Cloud Hospital. Rev. Mike Kellogg will officiate and burial will be in Immaculate Conception Catholic Cemetery in Becker. Visitation will take place one hour prior to the funeral service at the church on Friday. The Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Home in Becker has been entrusted with arrangements.

Celestine was born February 14, 1932 in St. Cloud to John and Mary (Rooney) Ahles. She married George Pappenfus on June 11, 1957 at St. Augustine's Catholic Church in St. Cloud. The couple moved to Becker in 1958. Celestine worked at North-western Bell/Qwest in St. Cloud and Brooklyn Center for 23 years retiring in 1992. She is a member of Mary of the

Visitation Catholic Church in Becker and the Becker Quilting Guild. Celestine most loved family time on the farm, cooking, cards, quilting, and baking for her husband, kids, grandkids, great-grandkids and friends.

She is survived by her children, Mary Jo Donahue of Belgrade, MT; George Pappenfus of Becker, MN; Alice Pappenfus of Des Plaines, IL; Leo (Jennifer) Pappenfus of Annandale; Ted (Sandra) Pappenfus of Moncks Corner, SC; Howard (Lisa) Pappenfus of Clear Lake; siblings, Timothy (Joyce) Ahles of Woodbury; Roland Ahles of Andover, MA; sister-in-law Mary Ahles of Brownsburg IN; 11 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband George, sisters, Marcella Ahles and Yvonne Gapinski; brother Aelred Ahles; brother-in-law, Sy Gapinski and sister-in-law Julie Ahles.



Becker P.O. Announces Temporary Operations

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

(Editor's Note: The following information was appropriated from the *UP State Beat*.)

The Becker Post Office retail operations located at 13974 1st St SE, Becker, MN 55308 was suspended at the close of business on Friday, October 24, 2025, due to the expiration of their lease on October 31, 2025.

Beginning Saturday, October 25, 2025, retail operations for the Becker Post Office will transfer to the Monticello Post Office, located approximately eight miles away. Customers who currently have a Post Office Box will be able to receive their mail daily at the mailboxes on the north side of the Becker Community Center, located at 11500 Sherburne Ave SE, Becker, MN 55308, starting Saturday, October 25, 2025.

Customers wishing to obtain Post Office Box service may do so at the Monticello Post Office, which offers lobby access for customer convenience. Post Office Boxes are available

at this location (please check with the office for fees). If applicable, Post Office Box refunds will be available at the Monticello Post Office.

Retail services are also available at the Post Offices listed below:

Monticello Post Office

206 7th St
Monticello, MN 55308
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Big Lake Post Office

85 Rose Drive
Big Lake, MN 55098
Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Clear Lake PO

88 Main Ave
Clear Lake, MN 55319
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

The USPS apologizes for any inconvenience to their customers.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 726 (BECKER PUBLIC SCHOOLS), MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 726 (Becker Public Schools), Minnesota (the “School District”), on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., in part, for the purpose of electing one school board member to fill the vacancy in the term of School Board Member expiring the first Monday in January 1, 2029, and, in part, for the purpose of voting on the question of approval of a referendum revenue authorization. The ballot shall provide as follows:

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote, completely fill in the oval next to your choice like this: 

Special Election for School Board Member To fill vacancy in term expiring January 1, 2029 Vote for One

☐ Renee Regel

☐ _____
write-in, if any

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION 1

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM REVENUE AUTHORIZATION

The school board of Independent School District No. 726 (Becker Public Schools), Minnesota has proposed to increase its general education revenue by \$200 per pupil, subject to an annual increase at the rate of inflation. The proposed referendum revenue authorization would first be levied in 2025 for taxes payable in 2026 and would be applicable for ten (10) years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

Shall the increase in revenue proposed by the School Board of Independent School District No. 726 (Becker Public Schools) be approved?

BY VOTING “YES” ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

The polling place and precincts served by the polling place for the special election will be as follows:

This combined polling place serves all territory in the School District.

Any eligible voter residing in the School District may cast their ballots at the polling places designated above. The polls for said election will open at of 7:00 a.m. and will close at 8:00 p.m. on said election day.

A voter must be registered to vote to be eligible to vote in this election. An unregistered individual may register to vote at the polling place on election day.

Dated: August 4, 2025

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

/s/ *Pete Weismann*, Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/18 25,10/ 25/25)

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 727 (BIG LAKE), MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 727 (Big Lake), Minnesota, on November 4, 2025, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to vote on the following questions:

School District Question 1

Approval of New School District Referendum Revenue Authorization

The board of Independent School District No. 727 (Big Lake), Minnesota has proposed to increase the School District’s general education revenue by \$640 per pupil, subject to an annual increase at the rate of inflation. The proposed new referendum revenue authorization would be first levied in 2025 for taxes payable in 2026 and applicable for ten (10) years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.



YES
NO

Shall the new referendum revenue authorization proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 727 (Big Lake), Minnesota be approved?

BY VOTING “YES” ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

PASSAGE OF THIS REFERENDUM WILL RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN YOUR PROPERTY TAXES

School District Question 2

Approval of School Building Bonds



YES
NO

If School District Question 1 above is approved, shall the board of Independent School District No. 727 (Big Lake), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$36,230,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, construction of a multi-purpose addition?

BY VOTING “YES” ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

For School District Question 1, the property tax portion of the revenue authorized will require an estimated referendum tax rate of is 0.08052% for taxes payable in 2026 of the referendum market value of all classes of taxable property in the School District, as defined by Minnesota Statutes, Section 126C.01, Subdivision 3, which excludes certain agricultural property, seasonal property and post-secondary student housing.

The projected annual dollar increases for typical residential homesteads, apartments, commercial-industrial properties, and most other classes of property within the School District are as shown in the table below, subject to an annual increase at the rate of inflation.

Agricultural property will pay taxes for the proposed referendum based only on the value of the house, garage and one acre of land. Seasonal recreational residential property (*i.e.*, cabins) will pay no taxes for the proposed referendum.

The figures in the table below are based on School District taxes for the new referendum revenue authorization only and do not include tax levies for other purposes:

Type of Property	Estimated Market Value	Proposed Referendum Revenue Authorization Taxes Payable in 2026 (Question 1)
Residential Homesteads, Apartments, and Commercial-Industrial Property	\$100,000	\$81
	200,000	161
	300,000	242
	350,000	282
	375,000	302
	400,000	322
	450,000	362
	500,000	403
	600,000	483
	750,000	604
	1,000,000	805
Commercial/Industrial	\$100,000	\$81
	250,000	201
	500,000	403
	1,000,000	805
	2,000,000	1,610
Apartments & Residential Non-Homestead (2 or more units)	\$100,000	\$81
	250,000	201
	500,000	403
	1,000,000	805
	2,000,000	1,610

The polling place and precincts served by the polling place for the special election will be as follows:

Combined Polling Place:

Saron Lutheran Church
311 Lake Street South
Big Lake, Minnesota 55309

Precincts:

All School District precincts.

All qualified electors residing in the School District may cast their ballots at the polling place listed above during the polling hours specified above.

A voter must be registered to vote to be eligible to vote in the special election. Unregistered individuals may register to vote at the polling place on Election Day.

Dated: October 18, 2025

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

/s/ Lenette Brown, Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/18 25,10/ 25/25)

Independent School District #726 Becker, Minnesota Work Session July 29, 2025

Roll Call.

Members present: Ryan Hubbard, Aaron Jurek, Connie Robinson, Corey Stanger, Pete Weismann

Members absent: None

Others present: Dr. Jeremy Schmidt, Superintendent
Carla Nolan, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Rick Kraus, Director of Buildings & Grounds
Dave Niemi, Activities Director

The School Board Attended a Work Session from 5:00 – 7:00 PM at Becker City Hall.

/s/ Aaron Jurek, Chair
/s/ Pete Weismann, Clerk
Recorder: /s/ Angela Oswald
(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/25/25)

TOWNSHIP OF BECKER NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Becker Township Planning Commission will hold its regular meeting at 7 00 pm on Monday, November 10, 2025 at Becker Town Hall, 12165 Hancock Street. The Planning Commission will hold the following public hearings beginning at 7 01 pm and following:

Public hearing for Minor Subdivision for Owner Matthew Gibas and Applicant AM Group LLC. The owner and applicant have submitted a minor subdivision application for land located in Section 15, Township 34N, Range 28 Becker Township and identified by parcel number 05-00115-1101.

Anyone interested in this request is encouraged to attend in person or via zoom and comment at the Public Hearing. If you have questions regarding the requests please contact Lucinda Messman at Becker Township Hall, 1216 Hancock Street, Becker, MN, 55308. If you are unable to attend, please provide written comment to Lucinda Messman at P.O. Box 248 Becker, MN 5508 or by email to lucinda@beckertownship.org by 4:00 p.m., November 10, 2025.

/s/ Lucinda Messman

Clerk, Becker Township

(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/25/25)

Practice. You must still send your written response to the Complaint even if you expect to use alternative means of resolving this dispute.

7. QUIET TITLE. This action involves, affects or brings into question certain real property located at 13310 4th Avenue South, Zimmerman, MN 55398, legally described as follows:

Lot 10, Block 3, Marturano Meadows, Sherburne County, Minnesota (the “Property”)

The object of this action is: (i) to determine that Defendants have no right, title, lien, estate or interest in the Property; (ii) and Adam R. Kretsch is the current fee simple owner of the Property; and (iii) to award Plaintiff such other further relief as the above-named Court deems just, fair and equitable.

Lutz Law Firm

120 South 6th Street,

Suite 1515

Minneapolis, MN 55402

3. YOU MUST RESPOND

TO EACH CLAIM. The Answer

is your written response to the Plaintiff’s Complaint. In your Answer

you must state whether you agree or disagree with each paragraph of the Complaint. If you believe the Plaintiff should not be given everything

asked for in the Complaint, you must say so in your Answer.

4. YOU WILL LOSE YOUR

CASE IF YOU DO NOT SEND

A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO

THE COMPLAINT TO THE

PERSON WHO SIGNED THIS

SUMMONS. If you do not Answer

within 21 days, you will lose this case. You will not get to tell

your side of the story, and the Court

may decide against you and award

the Plaintiff everything asked for in

the complaint. If you do not want

to contest the claims stated in the

complaint, you do not need to respond. A default judgment can then

be entered against you for the relief

requested in the complaint.

5. LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

You may wish to get legal help

from a lawyer. If you do not have

a lawyer, the Court Administrator

may have information about places

where you can get legal assistance.

Even if you cannot get legal help,

you must still provide a written

Answer to protect your rights or

you may lose the case.

6. ALTERNATIVE DIS-

PUTE RESOLUTION. The parties

may agree to or be ordered to

participate in an alternative dispute

resolution process under Rule 114

of the Minnesota General Rules of

in equal shares.

3. Granting such other and further relief in the premises as to the Court may seem just and proper.

NOW, THEREFORE, upon motion of Steinhagen, Crist, Wehrly & Kufus, P.L.L.P., attorneys for said petitioner, IT IS ORDERED that the petition be heard and all persons interested in the matter appear before a referee of this Court, via Zoom or other remote means, on the 19th day of November, 2025, at 8:30 o’clock a.m., or as soon thereafter as the petition can be heard, and show cause, if any there be, why the relief requested in the petition should not be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that notice of the hearing be given by publishing this Order one time at least twenty (20) days before the date of the hearing in a legal newspaper of Sherburne County, Minnesota, and by mailing a copy of this Order to the persons named in the petition as having or who may claim to have an interest in the trust, at their last known addresses, at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the hearing unless notice is waived. Dated: October 14, 2025

/s/ Katrese Ringham,
Court Administrator
**ATTORNEYS FOR TRUSTEE
AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

John A. Wehrly, ID #393476
Katherine G. Kemp, ID #505710
Steinhagen, Crist, Wehrly, & Kufus P.L.L.P.

5001 Chowen Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410-2150
(612) 922-2260/
Fax: (612) 922-2996

jwehrly@steinhagen-crist.com
kkemp@steinhagen-crist.com
(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/18/25, 10/25/25).

LYNDEN TOWNSHIP REQUEST FOR QUOTES SINGLE SORT RECYCLING

The Lynden Township Board, Stearns County, is requesting Quotes for single sort, residential recycling to be picked up every other week. Currently there are 561 each, 64 gallon wheeled recycling bins in service at the homes of Lynden Township residents. We are looking for a 5 year term on the contract. Quotes will be opened at or about 7:30 pm on January 12th, 2026 at the Lynden Township Hall, 21367 County Road 44, Clearwater, Mn. 55320. Quotes must be mailed or delivered to the Lynden Township Clerk, Jenny Schmidt, at 20517 Woodbine Road, Clearwater, MN. 55320 and arrive no later than 6 00pm , Wednesday, December 31st, 2025. The Lynden Township Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotes.

/s/ Jenny Schmidt

Lynden Township Clerk

(Published in the *Patriot*: 10/25/25)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Citizens speak at city council about playgrounds

By Don Bellach,
Contributing Writer

All members of the Big Lake City Council were present on Wed., Oct. 8 and were joined by 12 residents who live near Mitchell Farm Park (also referred to as Teal Park). The playground equipment at their park was recently removed. During the open forum, residents explained why the park was important to them and expressed a desire to have the equipment replaced.

Emy Mammenga presented a petition she claimed was signed by 120 neighbors and also noted that as of Wednesday, an online petition had another 92 signatures. She was disappointed knowing that their tax dollars would be used for other parks and not their own.

“It’s been 30 years,” she said. “We’ve had time to try to either repair it or plan for removal and repair.”

That sentiment was shared by Shaun Dunkle, who lives directly adjacent to the park. His voice filled with emotion, Shaun explained why the park was important for the neighborhood and his family.

“For the five years that my children and I have lived there, we’ve enjoyed that playground every fair-weather day,” he said. “It was more than equipment. There were friendships formed there. There were children who learned to swing and share that swing with their neighbors and it’s where a community gathered and bonded. Since the equipment has been moved, the neighborhood has felt significantly quieter and lonelier and a little less whole.”

Dunkle concluded by asking council to direct staff to figure out replacement costs and consider funding capabilities to rebuild the park.

Neighborhood residents were confused about what happened and why. Kieren and Evie told council they didn’t have any answers for them as they went door-to-door to gather signatures for the petition or when they met their friends in the now empty park.

“I was really sad because it’s where my friends and I meet up to talk about things that happened during our week,” said Evie.

Consent Agenda

Item 6J was removed from the Consent Agenda to be discussed and voted on separately. Item 6J was asking council to approve an extension to Prairie Meadows 4th Addition Development Agreement proposing to postpone the wear course installation until Oct. 15, 2026 to — according to the builder — reduce the risk of damage from heavy construction equipment using the finished roadway.

Halvorson noted that the city was already on the hook for four other times that projects were postponed by developers, but never completed and wondered aloud why the city would do it a fifth time.

Finance Director Deb Wegeleben noted that because of new letter of credit requirements, the builder has an irrevocable line of credit where their lender bank guarantees payment if the project is not completed and the developer is in default. That was enough to persuade four of the members who voted aye. Halvorson opposed the measure.

Other items of note passed in the consent agenda included purchases for Big Lake Fire Department: Computer equipment totaling \$6,242.62 and upgrades to the parking lot of the BLFD, to be completed by Astech Surface Technologies, for \$20,165. Both costs will be

equally split between the city and township. Also approved was the purchase of a Parking Meter System at Lakeside Park totaling \$5,745.

Street Project Update

City Engineer, Layne Otteson updated council about ongoing projects. Work at Highland Dr. and the Mitchell Ridge neighborhood began two weeks later than anticipated however, curbing has been replaced and road surfaces have been milled. Paving is expected to begin during the week of Oct. 27. Otteson noted that Co. Rd. 5 is a county project, but did estimate that the final layer of pavement would be completed in the next two weeks.

Fire and Police Updates

Fire Chief Seth Hanson shared calls for service numbers through July. There was a total of 315 calls, 212 were for the city, 70 for the township, 19 for Orrock, and 14 were mutual aid calls.

Chief of Police John Kaczmarek also shared CFS numbers. Through Aug./Sept. Big Lake Police received 2330 calls. Notable calls include 15 DWI, 59 welfare checks, 14 theft, and 3 calls for burglary.

Call for Action

The final moments of Wednesday’s meeting became contentious. Halvorson called council to readdress the decision to not replace the equipment at Mitchell Farm Park at the next city council meeting.

“If we’re supposed to represent taxpayers and the taxpayers have spoken, then I think if we don’t reevaluate our thoughts, we’re in the wrong,” Halvorson said.

Noding agreed with Halvorson and thought it would be a good idea to add an agenda item to the next city council meeting to discuss how the city could replace the equipment. However, no formal proposal was voted on.

Independent School District #726
Becker, Minnesota
Regular School Board Meeting
July 7, 2025

SUMMARY

The complete minutes are on file in the district office and on the district website.

Chair Jurek called the regular meeting of the School Board of District #726 to order on the 7th day of July, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in the Teaching & Learning Center.

Roll Call.

Members present: Ryan Hubbard, Aaron Jurek, Connie Robinson, Corey Stanger, Pete Weismann

Members absent: None

Others present: Jeremy Schmidt, Superintendent, Kevin Januszewski, Director of Business Services

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

PRESENTATION: 2024-2025 School Year Recap: Cabinet Members

Motion by Connie Robinson, seconded by Corey Stanger, to Approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 2, 2025 REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

DISBURSEMENTS – in the amount of \$3,104,251.84

PERSONNEL, as presented

SCHOOL BOARD PAY - Chair @ \$3,000 per year, Clerk @ \$2,000 per year, Board Member @ \$2,400 per year

OVERNIGHT CAMP REQUEST: BOYS & GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY, as presented

HANDBOOKS – High School/Middle School/Intermediate & Primary School/Activities/ Community Education/Coaches/Staff, as presented

2024-2025 FUNDRAISERS RECAP, as presented

ANNUAL WELLNESS REPORT, as presented

2025-2026, 2026-2027 INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS – Directors of Human Resources/Food Service/Curriculum & Instruction/Business Services/Building & Grounds, Activities and Child Care Coordinator, as presented

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN, as presented

Motion by Pete Weismann, seconded by Ryan Hubbard, to Approve a Resolution Accepting the Following Donations:

Hubbard Electric for softball	\$500.00
Liberty Paper for girls tennis	\$250
Liberty Paper for baseball	\$250

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Connie Robinson, seconded by Ryan Hubbard, to Approve a Resolution Establishing Combined Polling Places. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Corey Stanger, seconded by Ryan Hubbard, to Approve a Resolution Calling Special Election for Operating Levy, with amount to be determined at the August school board meeting. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Ryan Hubbard, seconded by Pete Weismann, to Approve a Resolution Calling Special Election for School Board Vacancy. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Connie Robinson, seconded by Corey Stanger, to Approve a Resolution Establishing Dates for Filing Affidavits of Candidacy. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.
/s/ Aaron Jurek, Chair
/s/ Pete Weismann, Clerk
Recorder: /s/ Angela Oswald
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

CITY OF BIG LAKE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR ASSESSMENT OF STREET PROJECT
PUBLISH NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Big Lake City Council will meet in the City Council Chambers, 160 Lake Street North, Big Lake, Minnesota, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, to consider and possibly adopt the proposed assessment for street improvements in the following areas:
• Highline Drive – County Road 3 to County State Aid Highway 5
• Mitchell Ridge Drive – Pond View Lane to east cul-de-sac
• Pond View Lane – County Road 3 to Mitchell Ridge Drive
• Bluff Road – Highline Drive to Mitchell Ridge Drive
Description of Improvements:
Construction of drainage improvements, sidewalk repairs, concrete curb and gutter, base repairs, milling, bituminous pavement, and other miscellaneous work. Adoption of the proposed assessment against abutting property may occur at the hearing.
Assessment Terms:
The assessment is proposed to be payable in equal annual installments over 10 years and will bear interest at 4.00% per annum from the date of adoption of the assessment resolution. The first installment shall include interest on the entire assessment from the date of adoption until December 31, 2025. Each subsequent installment will include one year of interest on all unpaid balances. Installments will be added to the property owner's property taxes.
Prepayment Options:
Any property owner may, prior to certification of the assessment to the county auditor, pay the full amount of the assessment (plus accrued interest) to the City Finance Director. No interest will be charged if the assessment is paid in full within 90 days of adoption. Thereafter, full payment may be made at any time, with accrued interest calculated to December of the year in which payment is made. Payments must be made before November 15 to avoid interest through the following year. Partial prepayments are also permitted prior to certification. If the assessment is not paid before December 31, the 400% interest rate will apply.
Assessment Roll:
The proposed assessment roll is on file and available for public inspection at the City Clerk's office. The total amount of the proposed assessment is \$3,104,251.84.
Objections and Appeals:
Written or oral objections will be considered at the hearing. No appeal may be taken as to the amount of any assessment adopted pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 429.061, Subd. 2, unless a written objection signed by the affected property owner is filed with the City Administrator prior to the hearing or presented at the hearing. An owner may appeal an assessment to District Court pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 429.081 by serving notice of appeal upon the Mayor or City Administrator within thirty (30) days after adoption of the assessment and filing such notice with the District Court within ten (10) days thereafter.
Deferral of Assessments:
Under City Code Section 90 and Minn. Stat. § 431.9343195, the City Council may, at its discretion, defer the payment of assessments on homestead property owned by:
• Persons age 60 or older,
• Persons permanently and totally disabled, or
• Members of the National Guard or reserves ordered to active service, if payment would cause hardship. Applications for deferral must be filed with the City Finance Director within thirty (30) days of confirmation of the assessment.
/s/ Deb Wegeleben, Finance Director
City of Big Lake
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25, 11/01/25)

CITY OF BIG LAKE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR ASSESSMENT OF UNPAID CHARGES

You are hereby notified that the Big Lake City Council will hold public hearings in order to consider assessments for unpaid charges due to the City. The public hearings will be held in the Big Lake City Council Chambers located at 160 Lake Street on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
Notices for these hearings have been mailed to past due accounts in the City of Big Lake. The notices indicate the past due charges are for water/sewer, and snow removal services provided by the City for their property. Residents have until Monday, November 17, 2025 to bring their accounts current. Any amount remaining unpaid will be certified to the Sherburne County Auditor for collection with the 2026 property taxes. If you decide not to pay the assessment before the date given above, the rate of interest that will apply is 6%, plus a \$0 assessment fee payable in one installment.
Written or oral objections will be considered at the meeting. No appeal may be taken as to the amount of an assessment adopted pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 429.061, subd. 2, unless a written objection signed by the affected property owner is filed with the City Administrator prior to the hearing or presented to the presiding officer at the hearing. An owner may appeal an assessment to the District Court pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 429.081 by serving notice of appeal upon the Mayor or City Administrator of the City of Big Lake with in thirty (30) days after the adoption of the assessment and filing such notice with the District Court within ten (10) days after service upon the Mayor or City Administrator.
Under City Code Section 730 and Minnesota Statutes 435.193 to 435.195, the Council may, in its discretion, defer the payment of the special assessment for any homestead property owned by a person 65 years of age or older or retired by virtue of a permanent and total disability. When deferment of the special assessment has been granted and is terminated for any reason provided in that law, all amounts become due. Any assessed property owner meeting the requirements of this law and the ordinance or resolution adopted under it may, within thirty (30) days of confirmation of the assessment, apply to the City Administrator for the prescribed form for such deferral payment of this special assessment on his/her property.
/s/ Deb Wegeleben, Finance Director
City of Big Lake
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

NOTICE OF LOCATION WHERE
BALLOTS WILL BE COUNTED
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26
(BECKER PUBLIC SCHOOLS)
STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the election judges for Independent School District No. 26 shall count the ballots cast in the School District's November 4, 2025 special election at the following locations:

COMBINED POLLING PLACE:
Becker Community Center
11500 Sherburne Avenue
Becker, MN 5508

Dated: 10/21/25

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD
/s/ Pete Weismann
School District Clerk
Independent School District No. 26
(Becker Public Schools)
State of Minnesota
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

NOTICE OF TESTING OF OPTICAL
SCAN VOTING SYSTEM
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26
(BECKER PUBLIC SCHOOLS)
STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Independent School District No. 26 (Becker Public Schools) shall perform a public accuracy test of the optical scan voting system to be used in the District's November 4, 2025 special election. The test shall be conducted at:
Becker Public Schools District Office, 12000 Hancock St., Becker, Minnesota
on October 31, 2025 at 1 o'clock p.m. Interested individuals are authorized to attend and observe. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Oswald at 763-266-4502,3.
Dated: 10/21/25

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD
/s/ Pete Weismann
School District Clerk
Independent School District No. 26
(Becker Public Schools)
State of Minnesota
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

CITY OF BIG LAKE
NOTICE TO RESIDENTS
VACANCY ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Big Lake is presently seeking applicants to fill two (2) vacancies on the Big Lake Planning Commission. Each vacancy is a 4-year term.
The Planning Commission meets at 6:00 p.m. on the first Monday of the month and advises the City Council on land use decisions such as plat approvals, variance and conditional use permit requests, and planned unit developments.
Any City resident interested in serving on the Planning Commission should submit a letter of interest that includes a description of employment and educational background which may be relevant to the position as well as reasons for applying and their aspirations for the future of Big Lake. Contact Community Development Director Marie Pop at 763-486-9868 or mpop@biglakemn.org with questions. The letter of interest can be submitted by:
Mail or delivery: Big Lake City Hall
Attn: Marie Pop
Community Development Director
160 Lake Street North
Big Lake, MN 55089
E-Mail: MPop@biglakemn.org
Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 6.
/s/ Gina Wolbeck, City Clerk
City of Big Lake
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

IMPORTANT PROPERTY TAX HOMESTEAD NOTICE*
THIS WILL AFFECT YOUR PROPERTY TAXES AND
ELIGIBILITY FOR PROPERTY TAX REFUND.

Have you purchased or moved into a property in the past year? Contact your county assessor to file a homestead application if you or a qualifying relative occupy the property as a homestead on or before December 3, 2025.
What is a qualifying relative?
For unoccupied agricultural property, a qualifying relative includes the child, grandchild, sibling, or parent of the owner or owner's spouse.
For occupied agricultural or residential property, a qualifying relative also includes the owner's uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece.
When does it apply?
You must apply on or before December 3, 2025.
Once homestead is granted, annual applications are not necessary unless they are requested by the county assessor.
Contact the assessor by December 3, 2025 if the use of the property you own or occupy as a qualifying relative has changed during the past year.
If you sell, move, or for any reason no longer qualify for the homestead classification, you are required to notify the county assessor within 90 days of the change in homestead status.
Sherburne County Assessor's Office (763) 266-4900
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

CITY OF CLEARWATER
PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC ACCURACY TESTING
SPECIAL ELECTION - SENATE DISTRICT 9

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City of Clearwater will be conducting a Public Accuracy Test on the voting system equipment (DS200 & OmniBallot) that will be used for the 2025 Special General Election. The Public Accuracy Testing will take place on October 6, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Lions Park Pavilion, 1100 County Road 75 in Clearwater, Minnesota. The testing is open to the public.
/s/ Annita Smythe, City Administrator
City of Clearwater
(Published in the Patriot: 10/25/25)

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BFD Open House a delight on Oct. 11

By Bill Morgan, Editor

The Becker Fire Department held their annual Open House last Saturday to throngs of curious people on a beautiful, fall day.

The event ran from late morning to early afternoon and included a plethora of fun activities and learning experiences.

As usual, the fire department station had a bounce house inside along with food and drink choices, balloons, raffles and more. Outside, there were free truck rides through the city as well as some demos and a visit from North Memorial's Air Care chopper.

Also outside, firefighters instructed youngsters on handling a fire hose while shooting water at a simulated burning building. All-in-all, the day was delightful for all visitors who wanted to know more about their local fire department.

TRUCK RIDES (right photo) is always a main attraction at the Open House as the Haas girls – Aspen and Aria – get excited to take a trip around the block. (Patriot Photo by Deven Haas).

BECKER FIREFIGHTER DAVE DAULHIMER aided second grader Aspen Haas with the fire hose during last weekend's BFD Open House. (Patriot Photo by Deven Haas).

NORTH MEMORIAL'S AIR CARE HELICOPTER came in for a landing near the fire station Saturday and guests were allowed to get an up-close view of the life-saving vehicle. (Patriot Photo by Deven Haas).

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Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf hosts fundraiser

By Mary Nehring, Contributing Writer

Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf hosted a fundraiser Sat., Oct. 18 at the Clearwater Legion to help with the new food shelf building.

A silent and live auction were held.

The Clearwater Lions presented a check for \$25,000 to the Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf at their fundraiser held Oct. 18 2025 at Clearwater Legion.

Clearwater Legion Riders, Legion Auxiliary and 3 Of A Kind also presented checks to the food shelf, as well. Additional donations were given from individuals.

"We want to thank everyone who attended our fundraiser and for all the donations that were presented to us," said Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf president Mary Abraham.

Money is still needed for the Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf. If one would like to donate,

CLEARWATER/CLEAR LAKE FOODSHELF FUNDRAISER. A fundraiser was held Saturday, October 18 at Clearwater Legion including a meal and both a silent an live auction. (Submitted Photo).

e-mail Mary Abraham at cclfs2@aol.com.

The new Clearwater/Clear Lake Food Shelf building is located at 1135 Co. Rd. 75 in Clearwater, across the street from its original location. Hours

of operation are Mondays 5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday 9-11 a.m. and 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesdays 3 to 5 p.m. . No apptment is needed. The food shelf can be reached at 30- 558 2954.

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SPORTS/AREA NEWS

4-H Shooting Sports team competes at State Invitational

Submitted Article

The Sherburne County 4-H Shooting Sports team showcased their hard work and dedication at the State 4-H Shooting Sports & Wildlife Invitational, held Sep. 5-7 2025, in Alexandria, Minnesota.

Youth from across the state competed in events such as archery, shotgun, air rifle, .22 rifle, and air pistol, along with Skillathon, wildlife calling, and conservation projects.

Team members include: Colton Bond, Grace Dahlin, Sarah Blake, Elizabeth Hagen, Preston Hillstrom, Wyatt Schaumburg, Noah Blake, Silas Dahlin, Leah Schlueter, Simeon LaDoux, Samuel Blake, Jubilee LaDoux, Lola LaDoux, Shula LaDoux, Neva Schaumburg, Titus Schaumburg, and Piper Kolbinger. Coaches include:



THE SHERBURNE COUNTY 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS TEAM competed at the State Invitational in Alexandria in September. (Submitted Photo).

Michael Bond, Tim Hagen, Matt Savage, Cole Petroske, Kasandra Schaumburg, Eric Schaumburg, Kyle Haugen, and Paul

Haugen. The program helps youth build confidence, responsibility, and teamwork through safe and educa-

tional shooting sports. Learn more at extension.umn.edu/4-h-showcase-events/state-4-h-shooting-sports-and-wildlife-invitational.

Professional Mechanical Services honored with Award

Submitted Article

Professional Mechanical Services of Big Lake, was awarded the Diamond Award at the 10th Annual HomeServe Contractor Conference held Oct. 14-15 at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel. This award recognizes Professional Mechanical Services as a standout partner in HomeServe's network of more than 2,900 skilled trades contractors across North America.

The Diamond Award is presented to contractors who consistently deliver exceptional service through solid business practices, innovation, attention to detail and exceptional customer care.

In addition, Professional Mechanical also was awarded the Pinnacle Performer Award for the Midwest Region. The Pinnacle Performer Award is given to the top performing contractor partners in each region who consistently delivered exceptional service, held their teams to the highest level of accountability and ensured their operations were in line with HomeServe's values and goals.

The annual conference brought together less than 150 contractors, representing the top five percent of HomeServe's contractor network, for presentations and workshops on customer service, technology and business growth strategies; a tradeshow; and an awards ceremony. Winners were selected based on evaluations of their performance metrics, with a focus on customer service excellence, repair quality, responsiveness and timeliness.

"Earning the Diamond



PROFESSIONAL MECHANICAL SERVICES AND HOMESERVE NORTH AMERICA REPRESENTATIVES, including, from left, Matt Chenowith, HomeServe Midwest Regional Operations Manager; Jonathan Cunningham, HomeServe Vice President of Contractor Operations; Robert Judson, HomeServe Chief Operating Officer; Kari Gust, Troy Powers, Stacy Zahler and Ryan Rowland of Professional Mechanical Services; Tom Rusin, HomeServe Chief Executive Officer; Sylvester Criscone, HomeServe Senior Vice President of Contractor Management and Administration; and Bryan Rooney, HomeServe Senior Director of Operations, celebrated the Big Lake, Minnesota-based company earning the Diamond Award during the 10th annual HomeServe Contractor Awards held Oct. 14-15 in Orlando, Fla. (Submitted Photo).

Award is a testament to the unwavering dedication that Professional Mechanical Services has shown in delivering exceptional repair services and prioritizing customer satisfaction for our shared customers," Tom Rusin, HomeServe North America CEO, said. "Their tireless efforts to raise the bar for quality make them an invaluable part of our mission to simplify homeownership. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!"

Celebrating its 10th year, the Contractors Conference is more than an awards event; it's an opportunity to recognize the best professionals in the skilled trades. The recipients, including Professional Mechanical Services represent the highest standards in customer care and technical expertise.

Professional Mechanical Services provides HVAC, plumbing, drain cleaning, electrical and

insulation services to the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area from two locations with nearly 30 employees.

"Our contractor partners are the backbone of everything we do," Sylvester Criscone, HomeServe's Senior Vice President of Contractor Management and Administration, said. "Professional Mechanical Service's work exemplifies the excellence and professionalism that make HomeServe a trusted source for home repair solutions. We are proud to honor their achievements and thankful for their invaluable partnership."

HomeServe, in cooperation with its contractor network, offers emergency home repair services to more than 4.5 million customers, servicing hundreds of thousands of households each year. Network contractors include plumbers, electricians and HVAC and appliance technicians pro-

viding service across a variety of household systems. HomeServe customers also have access to a repair hotline available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to schedule a repair.

For more information, visit homeserve.com.



BL runners impressive at M8 Conference meet

By Ken Francis, Contributing Writer

The Big Lake cross country runners have been battling and struggling with heat and humidity over their past few meets.

But that changed last week at the Mississippi 8 Conference Championships at the Ponds Golf Course in St. Francis when the weather was cool and rainy.

"The kids really handled the weather well," said Coach Todd Trutna. "It's not easy to run fast in steady rain, but they stayed focused and kept competing."

The varsity boys bounced back with a third place finish behind Becker and Cambridge-Isanti, led by Gavin Flavin, who took third in 16:11.4.

He was followed by Trent Erickson (ninth, 16:48), Theo Johnson (15th, 16:58) and Jack Schmidt (16th, 17:00), all earning All-Conference recognition.

"Quite unusual that you have four all-conference runners and finish in third place," said Coach Trutna. "It shows the competitiveness at the top of our conference."

Eli Henning finished 26th in 18:04 and earned Honorable Mention honors, while Max Baron (31st, 18:13), Eli Schaller (49th, 19:01) and Nicholas Er-

ickson (50th, 19:01) completed the varsity squad. And the team showed its depth when the JV boys won their team title behind Evan Hitter and Avery Jarvis who finished 1-2 in 18:48 and 19:02 respectively.

For the girls, ninth-grader Shay France in her first season as a cross-country runner, led the way with an impressive sixth-place finish in 19:46.6, earning All-Conference honors and leading the team to a seventh-place finish.

She was followed by Hazel Guldseth (36th, 21:51) who had another strong run and lowered her personal best by about 20 seconds.

Elsie Jagusch (44th, 22:42) and Clara Devine (46th, 22:51) also set personal best times by about 10 seconds. Rounding out the varsity squad were Aubri Judge (53rd, 23:47), Ainsley McGuire (54th, 23:57), and Chloe Howe (61st, 25:05) all of whom set season's best times.

"Though the team would have liked to have placed a bit higher," said Coach Trutna, "their training has been going well and they are starting to peak at the right point in the season."

The Hornets competed in the Section 5AA Championships Thursday at Apollo High School in St. Cloud, results next week.

Becker first grade students learn about grains, farming



BECKER FIRST GRADERS harvested a trailer-load of potatoes that will be donated to the Becker food shelf. (Submitted Photo).

By Mary Nehring, Contributing Writer

All 10 classes of Becker first graders visited the Farm Friends Barn on October 13 and 14.

They participated in a prairie walk, learned about grains and harvested the garden they planted last Spring as Kindergartners. This included corn, potatoes, onions, carrots and sunflowers.

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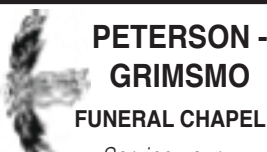
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BECKER BULLDOGS SCHOOL RECORD

MOST GOALS SCORED IN A SEASON

BECKER'S SUPER ATHLETE Adele Changamire has broken the girls soccer record for the most goals scored in a single season with 33 goals in 17 games. An amazing display of Changamire's incredible talents on the pitch. (Submitted Photo).



ADELE CHANGAMIRE was also selected as a first team Class AA All State Girls Soccer player for the 2025 fall season. (Submitted Photo).

Becker girls soccer ends season at 10-4-3



THE BECKER GIRLS SOCCER TEAM ended their season with a record of 10-4-3, a second place conference finish, and earned spot as the #2 seed in the 6AA sections. (Submitted Photo).

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

The Becker girls' soccer team worked extremely hard this season, and it paid off with a 10-4-3 overall record.

They also received a second-place finish in the Mississippi 8 Conference and earned the number two seed in the 6AA sections. However, the girls did end up losing in the sectional

semifinal against Monticello.

The team will miss graduating seniors Captain Avery Atwood, Lorelei Clouse, Meghan Person, and Gracie Bernel.

"Each of these seniors has contributed so much to the team, both on and off the field," said coaches Arnold Changamire and Emily Barthel. "Their commitment, example, and love for the game have helped

shape the culture of Becker soccer for years to come."

Throughout the season, the girls worked relentlessly to show off their skills on the field with their teamwork, effort, and strong defensive presence. With rising talent from the JV team and strong returning varsity players, the future of the Bulldog's looks bright.

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Congratulations Becker CC Teams

Becker boys CC takes 1st in conference

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

The Becker boys' cross country team managed to do it again with a first-place conference championship.

This would be the second time in program history and the first time that both the boys and the girls managed to earn the conference titles.

They traveled to St. Francis for the Conference Championship meet. The meet was wet and slippery, which made it challenging on the course.

JV Squad

For JV, Weston Denne (19:25) and Cooper Pany(19:31) earned conference ribbons. Carson Schuster took 20th in the race (20:14). Next was Tanner Schmitt (21:36) with his best 10-sec-



THE BECKER BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY TEAM is shown above holding the conference champions trophy. (Submitted Photo).

ond PR time, and then Sean Geurkink (22:03). Aiden Jacobs (23:17) earned a career PR. Last were Edoardo Serra (23:50), Brody Zinken (25:37), and Mason Corner (29:27).

Varsity Squad

For varsity, Tanner Felton (16:12) took fourth in the meet overall. Felton, Parker Spindler (16:30, fifth),

Swanson (16:32, sixth), & Evan Hubbard (17:04, 18th) earned All-Conference honors. Brandt Hemmellgarn (17:18), Holden Hubbard (18:13), and Mason Tschida (18:13) also performed well.

"I was glad to see the Bulldogs rise to the challenge to retain the title and proud of them for not allowing stum-

bles along the course to derail them at all," said Coach Dustin Weege. "It is a testament to the character of these guys, and I look forward to seeing all that they can accomplish from this point onward with this season and beyond. These Bulldogs are an impressive group and a true joy to get to work with,"

Becker girls CC takes 1st at St. Francis



By Bill Morgan,
Editor

The Becker girls cross country team traveled to the Pond's Golf Course in St. Francis Oct. 14 to compete in the 2025 Mississippi 8 Conference championship.

They came away with the conference title!

Alyse Denne took fifth in a time of 19:44.2 to lead all Becker girls runners. She was followed by Katelynn Brower (20:05.80) in ninth, Sydnee Bull (20:11.50) in 12th, 20:12.70 Anna Wynia (20:12.70) in

13th, Evelyn Malisheski (20:18.60) in 14th, Savannah Cunningham (20:22.90) in 16th, Laney Hodel (20:29.30) in 18th and Aysa Johnson (21:09.60) in 26th.

JV Squad

In JV, Sophia Otto (22:37.10) took second, Elizabeth Jones (22:37.90) took third, Lorelei Swanson (23:15.00) took fourth, Addy Goenner (23:18.90) took sixth, Abigail Frey (23:53.30) captured 10th, Greta Schmitt (24:45.40) took 20th, Naiya Hanson (25:24.80) took 26th and Charlotte Dirkes (31:09.70) took 50th.

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*Congratulations
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Morks break records at OMST

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

It was a crazy successful day for the Mork sisters - Izza and Grace - at the recent Ogilvie-Mora Swim Team (OMST) meet, as they each came home with a pool record.

It was also the Bulldogs' final dual meet of the season, with Becker coming out on top 100-72.

"It's different to swim in Ogilvie because it's a 25 meter pool so the times need to be calculated from meters to yards after they swim so they know if they dropped time or not," Coach Tina Tamm said. "A first glance at the clock when you touch the wall will always show added time to your race but then

you remember - the pool is longer."

Grace Mork broke the 2023 record for the 400M (500 yd) freestyle going 4:39.06 (5:18.06), and Izza Mork broke the 2000 pool record for the 100m breaststroke (100 yd) going 1:18.31 (1:10.42).

Up Next

Next up for the Bulldogs is the JV championship meet in Monticello on Friday, Oct 24.

"We have our JV girls training for that right now while our varsity girls have begun their training for sections," Tamm said. "We still have 2.5 weeks until sections which gives us a lot of time to get ready."

Sections will be held in Becker on Nov 6 - 8.

Bulldogs annihilate Lakers, 33-0

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

The Becker Bulldog football team hosted the Detroit Lakes Lakers last Wednesday and came away with an easy, 33-0 shutout in their final regular season game of 2025.

With the win, Becker evened their season record to 4-4 and will play at home Saturday against Princeton.

Against Detroit Lakes, the Bulldogs started a little slow, scoring just one TD in the first quarter. That was accomplished by QB Tristan Kowalkowski's four-yard pass completed to Sawyer Brown.

In the second, Kowalkowski found Brown again, this time from 24 yards out to put the home team up, 14-0.

With under a minute to go in the first half, Kowalkowski took care of business on his own, scoring on a one-yard plunge to put the



BECKER WR ADAM WIPPER reeled in this nine-yard pass in the end zone to finish Becker's scoring on the night against Detroit Lakes. (Submitted Photo by Anne Koste).

Bulldogs up by three TDs at 20-0 (xp was missed).

In the third after shutting down the Lakers once again, Kowalkowski threw a bomb to Tarver

Schendzielos for a TD from 49 yards out to increase the score to 27-0.

In the fourth, Kowalkowski found Adam Wipper for a nine yard TD pass

to make the final score, 33-0.

Kowalkowski finished with 191 yards through the air on 14-of-20 completions and four TDs. He also had a rushing score.

On the ground, Isiah Boyer gained 109 yards on 14 carries while Brown had three carries for 32 yards.

Schendzielos led the receiving corps with 74 yards on three catches and one TD. Brown had five catches for 48 yards and two scores.

On defense, Bennett Kujawa had a monster day as he tallied 10 tackles, two sacks and three tackles for loss. Andrew Fischer added six tackles to the stat sheet.

The Bulldogs finished with 400 total yards compared to just 161 for the Lakers. Becker had 17 first downs compared to just nine for Detroit Lakes.

The three stars for the game were Kowalkowski, Boyer and Schendzielos.

Xcel proposing first-in-the-nation distributed capacity procurement

Submitted Article

Xcel Energy is making a first-of-its-kind proposal to build out a battery storage network across Minnesota, optimizing the state's energy grid and helping the company meet the growing electricity needs of the communities it serves.

Under its Capacity*-Connect proposal, Xcel Energy will install up to 200 megawatts of battery storage resources at strategic locations on the grid by 2028. Deployed in collaboration with Sparkfund, the distributed energy resources will help meet increasing demand for electricity, maintain reliable service for customers, maximize the efficiency of existing infrastructure, and support local jobs.

"We're focused on supporting economic growth and the needs of our communities by building out and modernizing our energy grid," said Ryan Long, president of Xcel Energy-Minnesota, North

Dakota and South Dakota. "We believe distributed energy resources are an important part of that strategy. They will complement our current plans for additional renewable and firm dispatchable generating resources to meet our customers' needs."

Xcel Energy's approach takes advantage of its integrated system planning processes to determine the best customer locations to install the new battery storage resources. The company will integrate the battery storage into its system operations, charging the batteries during times when energy is inexpensive and dispatching that energy to serve all customers during periods of peak demand.

"By storing energy when it's cheap, delivering it when it's needed most and placing assets where they maximize grid value, Xcel Energy is delivering reliable energy to customers today and building a grid that is ready for tomorrow," said Pier LaFarge, CEO

of Sparkfund. "Sparkfund will help Xcel Energy deploy distributed energy resources to meet growing customer energy needs, support economic growth in Minnesota and unlock the full value of the U.S. electric grid."

Battery storage is an important part of Minnesota's energy future. Xcel Energy's recently approved Upper Midwest Energy Plan calls for the installation of 600 megawatts of energy storage by the end of 2030. The proposed distributed capacity procurement will help achieve that goal, and Xcel Energy is bringing it forward to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission with the encouragement of many stakeholders.

Xcel Energy intends to locate the batteries at local businesses, commercial or industrial sites, or nonprofit organizations. This provides more customers - including those in environmental justice communities - with an opportunity to benefit fi-

nancially from hosting clean energy technologies. Hosts would receive direct payments for participating in the program. Each site will have approximately one to three megawatts of storage (one megawatt is about the size of a shipping container).

Xcel Energy, in collaboration with Sparkfund, will scale the deployment so the grid can keep pace with increasing demand while prioritizing local workers and complying with the company's labor standards. Xcel Energy will operate each battery storage asset to maintain safety and security of the system.

With this novel approach, Xcel Energy and Sparkfund will closely review performance, costs, and customer experience as the program grows, ensuring this approach is cost-effective while supporting a clean, reliable and safe grid.