



Compostings

by Al Batt

The most Christmas spirit

ECHOES FROM THE LOAFERS' CLUB MEETING
My wife compares me to Brad Pitt.

Really?
Yeah, she says I look nothing like Brad Pitt.

DRIVING BY BRUCE'S DRIVE

I have a wonderful neighbor named Bruce. Whenever I pass his drive, thoughts occur to me. I have Minnesota between my toes, and I know Minnesota goodbyes can take forever. I have many relatives in Iowa. Iowa goodbyes can take forever. Before I find the gumption to get up and go, I must first tell everyone I love them and try to be adorable. I work my way to the door, grab the doorknob and spend an hour with my hand on that door-knob, telling others I have to go. I eventually make it out the door, where I talk to others who had accomplished the same remarkable feat. Several people walk me to my car. No matter what time I leave, I get to the car at the same time. I say goodbye again by my vehicle while its "door is ajar" warning chimes loudly. After running that loving gauntlet, I roll down my car's window and give a wave as I drive off. A goodbye isn't supposed to be easy.

THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW I NEEDED TO KNOW

I hear from people doing research and surveys. Here are some. Wyoming, Utah and Minnesota are the most charitable states for 2024. Iowa is 14th.

<https://wallethub.com/edu/most-and-least-charitable-states/8555>

WalletHub compared the states across 30 key indicators of happiness. The data included the depression rate, the share of adults feeling productive, income growth and the unemployment rate. The study identified the happiest states as: 1. Hawaii 2. Maryland 3. New Jersey. 4. Utah. 5. Delaware 6. Minnesota 19. Iowa 21. Wisconsin.

<https://wallethub.com/edu/happiest-states/6959>

The most distressed states based on credit scores and bankruptcies are 1. Texas 2. Louisiana 3. Nevada 4. Kentucky 5. Florida 28. Iowa 31. Minnesota 43. North Dakota.

<https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-most-people-in-financial-distress/130790>

The states with the most tight-knit communities are: 1. Minnesota 2. Utah 3. Wyoming 4. North Dakota 5. South Dakota 15. Iowa 50. Louisiana.

<https://smilehub.org/blog/states-with-the-most-tight-knit-communities/213>

Rottweilers are the most feared dog breed among Minnesota delivery drivers. Pit Bull Terriers and German Shepherds are the 2nd and 3rd most feared. Iowa delivery driv-

ers are most fearful of German Shepherds.

<https://www.bestattorney.com/dreading-deliveries/#top>

The personal injury law firm John Foy & Associates analyzed data based on road fatalities, road conditions, highway spending per mile, and highway spending per capita to determine which states have the best roads. The best roads are in: 1. Minnesota 2. Delaware 3. Utah 4. Indiana 5. New Jersey 17. Iowa. New Mexico, Louisiana and Mississippi had the worst roads.

<https://www.johnfoy.com/research/which-states-have-the-best-and-worst-roads-in-america/>

Based on holiday spending, community traditions and digital trends, Utah has the most Christmas spirit, followed by New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Minnesota was 30th, Iowa 39th and Mississippi 50th.

<https://wegodating.com/christmas-spirit-states/>

BAD JOKES DEPARTMENT

Most of the words in the dictionary aren't spelled "correctly."

What's the difference between a bird and a fly? A bird can fly, but a fly can't bird.

My pen writes underwater. It writes other words, too.

NATURE NOTES

Wild turkeys run at speeds up to 25 mph and fly up to 55 mph. A wild turkey hen in our yard chases pheasant roosters and flies high into trees to harass crows. The crows relished the company. Once those tasks are completed, it's as if someone flipped a switch, and the turkey gets the zoomies, frenetic random activity periods (FRAPs) or frenetic activity periods (FAPs), a delightful and common behavior exhibited by dogs and cats when they sprint around the yard or house at full speed.

Red-tailed hawks hunt from perches and from the air. As they circle and soar, they can spot a mouse from 100 feet high.

Airports often host snowy owls in winter because these handsome owls are accustomed to the Arctic tundra, so they prefer open, flat areas, which make it easier to spot prey. An airport is a different kind of tundra. It's a busy and noisy tundra with bright lights, but it's still tundra to the owls.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Mark Monlux of Tacoma wrote, "When I put them away for the season, I leave a dollar in my coats. That way, the future me would get a surprise and be pleased to know that the past me was thinking of him."

MEETING ADJOURNED

"Kind words, kind looks, kind acts, and warm handshakes—these are means of grace when men in trouble are fighting their unseen battles."—John Hall.

My crystal ice bucket reminds me...

Rainbows fascinate me. When I see them, I look at them for as long as possible, often trying to capture a good photo. Sadly, the pictures cannot rival a bridge of light which fills the sky, but they do serve as reminders of what the moment was like.

Because of this fascination, I have many crystal items hanging in my windows. In winter, when the sun is low in the sky, they scatter my ceiling with vivid color.

I mention them now because among them is a piece of history. I have a small crystal shaped like an ice bucket. Poking out of it is a tiny crystal wine bottle. Etched on the side is "2000."

Forgive me for seeming nostalgic, but it's difficult for me to fathom that many young adults participating in society today were not alive in that auspicious year.

Those of us who were speculated about "the millennium" with remarkable consistency. Musician Prince released a song titled "Party Like it's 1999" already in 1982; perhaps you're acquainted with the number. It



In My Humble Opinion

by Deb Bently

suggested that, since 2000 might represent "party over," people should get their "partying" done in advance.

For much of the 1990s, it was occasionally brought to mind that not only would we step into a new century that new year's eve, we would be starting over with a count that began in the thousands. There were elderly people who had hoped for decades they would be around long enough to experience it. There was a scare that all the computers would crash because their systems weren't set up for years that started with a "2." There were references to the "2000 year reign of Christ" mentioned in the bible, and people either hoping or

fearing that the end of the world would come.

The closer we came to the end of December, the more we heard about it all. Even for those who didn't buy into the various apocalyptic ideas, there was excitement and anticipation. Most historic moments come upon us by surprise—this one could be predicted down to the second. Even I, who always figured the new year would come whether I was awake or not, made plans to stay up and watch the ball drop in Times Square. Though all three of our children were pre-teens, we let them (at least try to) stay awake.

And now, my crystal ice bucket re-

minds me, 25 years have passed. Those pre-teen children are parents. The computers we feared would crash are regarded as antiques. The end of the world may be approaching, but has not arrived.

When the opportunity arises, I often comment that time and money are both slippery stuff. They have a way of sliding through our grasp which leaves us wondering whether we ever had possession of them at all.

I have had numerous conversations over the past couple weeks about being one-fourth of the way through the "new" century; the universal reactions are amazement and confusion. It's arguable 25 years is a significant span of time, so how has it passed so quickly?

For any of you wondering what I could possibly be talking about, let me offer some simple advice. Take lots of pictures and keep track of where you put them. They won't rival the moment when they were taken, but they will serve as reminders of what that moment was like.

Does this tired feeling ever go away?

We survived the holidays. Another year down; as I grow older, each year I find myself doing more observing while focusing less on the Christmas presents placed under the decorated tree for me

I never noticed as a child how much I was all consumed by the holiday. This year I was more just grateful to be with family, enjoying laughs, stories, and good food. I had forgotten how good and delicious fondue is and how, as my mother so wisely puts it, it allows one to take time eating and really enjoy the food. I had forgotten how chill our Christmas day actually is, not doing much besides snacking, napping, and enjoying new presents. I may have also done work, but that's because I was only slightly bored.

As a kid, Christmastime had me constantly excited. The countdown to Christmas morning was always ticking away in my head and the vision of the tree had me skipping through the house. It is still the same now, just not to the same extreme. Life changes



To Be Determined

by Amelia Roessler

that way.

That was another thing I spent time observing as well—the circle of life. My grandparents' dog is struggling through its decline, leading me to realize just how difficult that time of life can be. My parents' dog is also getting up there in age and has some throat problems; I've let my family know that if there is a decision to put her down, I want to be informed so I can be with her. My Mayzie won't leave without me.

So I partially understand, but I've never had to make the decision. I watched as friends and family members comforted my grandparents as they battle with the difficult

choice.

"You hold out hope, but the end of life is up and down," they told them. So true.

Christmas is all about family and it makes me realize just how strange some family relationships are as we talked around the dinner table about certain family members, why they act the way they do, what some people are up to now, those types of things. And then of course, we talk about all the people we know and what they've been up to and how everything is going on in Waseca. Turns out I'm really behind in Waseca news—my bad.

Yet with all the holiday relaxing,

I'm still tired. Does this ever go away? Maybe when I go to Mexico this week with my family as our Christmas present, it will be all good. Just me and the beach and hopefully a Miami Vice (half piña colada, half strawberry daiquiri - blended). I will let you all know how it goes. Let me just say it appears I will be sunbathing while the temperatures are in single digits here. Sorry, not sorry.

Also I just want to throw this in there: I still firmly believe "White Christmas" is the best Christmas movie. I know "It's A Wonderful Life" is many people's choice, and even "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation," but I will forever stand behind "White Christmas." The music, the dancing, the good ol' romance, the great storyline. Mwah. Perfection.

My Determination: "My dear partner, when what's left of you gets around to what's left to be gotten, what's left to be gotten won't be worth getting, whatever it is you've got left." - Phil Davis, "White Christmas"

In Brief

Boundary Waters exhibit at the New Richland Library in January

Learn about the Boundary Waters Canoe Area at the New Richland Library, its wildlife, and how to visit in this pop-up Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System exhibit. This will be available during the month of January.

Book Blizzard Reading Challenge at Waseca Le Sueur Regional Library Jan. - Feb.

Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System will be holding its annual adult winter reading challenge in January and February. To encourage reading and thank patrons who use our booksReaders over the age of 18 can read to win prizes, this year with bonus reading challenges! See your local library for more details.

"MN Chaos" Bean Bag Tournament at the Mill Saturday, Jan. 4

The Mill will host the MN Chaos Bean bag Tournament at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 4, bags fly at noon. There is a \$40 entrance fee. Best two of three games wins, first to 21 is the winner.

Knit Tree Workshop at C and A Designs in Waseca Sat., Jan. 4

C and A Designs, 208 North State Street, Waseca, will host a Chunky Knit Tree Workshop at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4. Learn how to make textured, oversized chunky yarn trees for the close of the holiday season.

Former Viking Chuck Foreman will have a

watch party at The Mill Sunday, Jan. 5

The Mill will host former Vikings Chuck Foreman Sunday, Jan. 5 to watch the Vikings play the Lions. He will have memorabilia for purchase at the event. Skol!

Gun and Knife Show at The Mill Friday and Saturday Jan. 10 & 11

The Mill will host a Gun and Knife show from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 10 and from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 11. Dealers and vendors will be buying, selling and trading guns, ammo, tactical gear and other accessories. I.D. required.

Farm-to-Fork dinner at Farmamerica Friday, Jan. 17

Farmamerica will have a women's

Farm-to-Fork dinner at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17. Keynote speaker Michelle Miller, cocktails and entertainment. Tickets are currently available online.

The band Family Tradition will play at Indian Island Winery Saturday, Jan. 18

The Indian Island Winery will host the band Family Tradition at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18. They are known for their old and new hit country music.

Treasure Chest Bingo at The Mill Sat., Jan. 18

The Mill Event Center will have Treasure Chest Bingo at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 18. Beside bingo there will be meat raffles, horse races. Prizes include power tools, designer purses and more.

What will life be like in 2085?

A new year and a new start. I have made zero New Year's resolutions for 2025.

That does not mean I lack goals, expectations, and the like. I simply already had those plans in place and will continue to pursue them.

I've given thought to my life all the way to what I would like to do through the age of 85 years old. It's written down somewhere. There are large gaps every so often with simply, "live" or "enjoy life" or "grow" or "learn" or "raise children." Oh and my favorite, "actually write a book." That part is set for my 50s and 60s when I feel I will have the time.

There are concrete goals, expectations and other things I'd like to accomplish. The list for each year tapers off considerably as time goes on. In those last two decades or so, I shrink the expectations gradually from simply retiring to just doing my little newspaper to maybe only writing a column at the end. I never want to stop working, stop writing, or stop learning and growing and developing



STAR GAZING

by Eli Lutgens

as a person. All of these things give me purpose, enjoyment, fulfillment and much more. I look forward to sharing these life experiences with readers. It's kind of crazy to believe there are many readers of my column who have passed away. Others are just reading it for the first time and there are readers of my newspaper who may not have been born yet. Sixty years from now the year will be 2085.

I don't pretend to know what the newspaper will look like then. Maybe the entire thing will be digital. Maybe it will be a simple newsletter in print because I will still like things "on paper" but also a digital/online option. Maybe the

world will be engrossed in virtual reality. Will there even be cameras to take pictures with? Or will people simply be able to look at something, think, "take picture" or "capture moment" and our computer-assisted AI implants will save it for all of eternity.

I hope life is simple and I pray that sicknesses, illness, cancer, all of the horrible wars, plagues, and hunger are conquered. A world of artificial intelligence, living in a computer, is not something I want. I want to see creative people create beautiful works of art. Writing. Poetry.

If it were not for my faith, I would worry about these things. But I am at peace. I believe people, myself, will

be able to live lives as "simple" as they desire in the year 2085. My last hope is that the planet is still here and healthy at that time. The poor air quality from the Canadian wildfires these past couple years has been a real nuisance. People should really take care of the planet. Like our bodies, we only get one earth.

The year of 2024 was full of a lot of physical pain for me. It taught me to do less, take care of myself, and prioritize. For me to be the best me I can for the world and those around me, I must take care of myself. At different times this year, that has meant different things. Speaking broadly, I've drawn back for further introspection. No one person has all of the answers. I simply know I must do my best to take care of myself. Others should do the same.

Happy new year, one and all.

P.S. I had a pleasant Christmas, three celebrations in fact. There were no tears this year from any member of my family. So I'm marking this year as a success.



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including the communities of Waseca, Janesville, New Richland, and Waldorf

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DEADLINES: Pioneer: Noon Monday
GOLDEN LINK: Previous Friday

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DEB BENTLY	News Editor
JIM LUTGENS	Sports Editor/Dad
JON LUCCA	Ad Design
BEN REVERMANN	Staff Writer
TERESA ROSACKER	Advertising Sales
JESSICA LUTGENS	Staff Writer
RACHAEL JAEGER	Staff Writer
MELISSA DUNN	Staff Writer
AMELIA ROESSLER	Editorial Assistant

Contributing writers/photographers: Dave Zika, Al Batt, Pastor Ken Andrs

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OBITUARIES

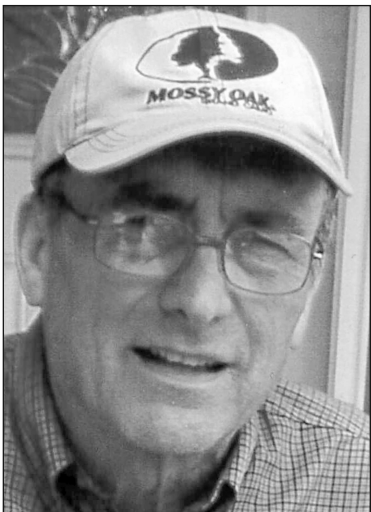
Ronald Steffen

RONALD MARTIN STEFFEN, age 75, of Waseca, died peacefully on Christmas morning, December 25, 2024, at his lifelong home.

Born on January 15, 1949, at home in rural Waseca, Ron was the youngest child born to Earl and Grace (Kumerow) Steffen. He received his education at Waseca Central High School, graduating with the class of 1967. Following the unexpected passing of his father, Ron, at the age of 18, took on the responsibility of caring for his mother. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of his lifelong devotion to family and friends. Ron was a farmer at heart and worked alongside his dad on the farm, raising milk cows and crops. After his father's death, he continued to manage the farm for a short time while providing support and care to his mother.

Ron later worked for Design Homes, where he met Marcia Tolfelson. They were united in marriage on July 5, 1974, at Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church in Gaylord. Together, they made their home at Ronald's childhood homestead, where they raised two sons. For over 40 years, Ron worked at Brown Printing, where he was the head of the lab producing ink for the printers.

Throughout his life, Ron and Marcia enjoyed traveling to Mexico with friends, Spencer and Patti Wilker, visiting their children, and following their grandchildren's activities. He was a rock-solid family man who would do whatever it took to bring his family together. Ron enjoyed mowing the lawn, playing cards, hunting in his younger years, and was an avid fisherman. A devoted Christian, he was a member of Emmanuel Lu-



Ronald Steffen

theran Church in Owatonna, serving on the church council.

Ron is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Marcia; sons: Peter (Christine) Steffen of Waconia, Tim (Lidia) Steffen of Storm Lake, IA; grandchildren: Grace (20), Charlie (18), Jack (18), Joshua (20), Brianna (19), Gabriella (11), Jacob (8), and Isaac (4); sister: Darlene (Bob) Jones of Napa Valley, CA; sister-in-law, Joyce Steffen of Bloomington; along with nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Duane Steffen.

Visitation was from 2:00 – 5:00 PM on Sunday, December 29, 2024, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral Homes in Waseca. Visitation continued for one hour prior to the service at the church on Monday. Funeral Service was at 11:00 AM on Monday, December 30, 2024, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Owatonna with Rev. Roger Rockhoff officiating. Interment was in Woodville Cemetery. DSOFuneral.com

Lucille Nelson

LUCILLE "LUCY" EMMA NELSON, age 80, of Waseca passed away on Monday, December 23, 2024 at her home.

Born on May 3, 1944 in Springfield, MN, Lucy was the daughter of Fredrick and Grace (Johnson) Zimmerman. She attended Comfrey High School. She was united in marriage to Roger Nelson on April 8, 1961 in Darfur, MN. Together, they raised three sons: Timothy, Jeffrey, and David.

While raising her family, Lucy ran a daycare, a role that allowed her to nurture and care for many children over the years. Her love for children, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, was immeasurable, and they were truly her world.

Lucy worked throughout her life, including jobs at Heavenly Home-baked, Birdseye, and Elm Care, from which she eventually retired. In her free time, Lucy enjoyed playing cribbage with her husband, Roger, cheering on the Minnesota Twins and Wild, tending to her beloved garden, and reading. She had a special fondness for Christmas and was overjoyed to celebrate with her family this past Saturday.

A devoted member of Christ the King Lutheran Church. She lived her life with kindness, faith, and a deep sense of love for her family and community.

Lucy is survived by her husband, Roger Nelson of Waseca; sons, Timothy (Elizabeth) Nelson of Northfield, Jeffrey (Kellee) Nelson of Fairmont, David (Heidi) Nelson of

Red Wing; grandchildren, Kristyn, Wade (Bonnie), Alex (Kristin), Evan (Eden), Marisa (Luis), McKenna, Ella, Ava; great-grandchildren, Elaina, Maddox; sisters, Shirley (Richard) Green of Mountain Lake, Sharon (Glen) Galles of Montgomery; sister-in-law, Mary Zimmerman of St. James.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Lorraine (Marvin) Hoffman; brother, Wayne Zimmerman.

Memorial service was at 11:00 AM on Friday, December 27, 2024 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Waseca. Visitation was held one hour prior to the service at the church. Following the service, interment was at Woodville Cemetery. Dsofuneral.com



Lucille Nelson

■ Pardon

from Page 1

peared to belong to the city, naming it "Reserve Sewer Capital Development Account" (RSCDA), to which only she had access. She went on to create false invoices and write checks to herself. Her first large embezzlement was \$181,000 in 1991. From there her average theft was \$2.5 million per year with the largest in one year totaling \$5.8 million in 2008. Census.gov says Dixon, Illinois has a population of 15,000; Waseca's population is 9,000.

To explain funding shortfalls, according to Newsweek, Crundwell claimed the state was late in making payments of tax revenue to the city. Crundwell's thefts were discovered in the fall of 2011 when she took an

extended vacation; city clerk and acting comptroller Kathe Swanson discovered the RSCDA account with 179 deposits and associated checking activity. Swanson alerted Dixon Mayor James Burke, who alerted the FBI. For the next six months, while the FBI was building its case, both Burke and Swanson maintained "business as usual" while Crundwell continued working. She was arrested on April 17, 2012, at work.

According to Politico and Wikipedia, during the thefts, city employees went two or more years without raises. The Dixon Police Department was unable to acquire updated equipment. City streets went without repair for a decade, and three of nine city workers were laid off to combat the budget losses. In 2011 one of the Dixon city commissioners had stated Crundwell "looks after every tax dollar as if it were her own."

Across the span of 1988 to 2012,

Crundwell prospered. She was named as a leading owner by the American Quarter Horse Association for eight years running: Her horses won 52 world championships. Assumed to be a beneficiary of an inheritance, Crundwell had acquired several cars, a \$2.1 million motorhome, a Florida vacation house with custom built furniture, and 405 horses.

In 2013, the city of Dixon brought a lawsuit against its financial auditors, as well as the city's banker, Fifth Third Bank, for failing to catch any theft. In September of 2013, the auditors and Fifth Third settled for \$40 million, while the auction of Crundwell's assets brought in over \$9 million.

Crundwell was sentenced by Judge Philip Reinhard on Feb. 14, 2013, to 19 years and seven months. On March 26, 2020, after serving only 8.5 years of her 19-year sen-

tence, then Attorney General William Barr submitted a Response to Covid-19 Pandemic. Crundwell requested home confinement under the First Step Act citing health reasons, which was granted on August 4, 2021.

Dixon City Manager Danny Langlossa said the City of Dixon was not pleased with the decision to commute Crundwell's sentence: "The City of Dixon is shocked and outraged with the announcement that President Biden has given Rita Crundwell clemency for the largest municipal embezzlement in the history of our country. This is a complete travesty of justice and a slap in the face for our entire community."

According to USA Today, also commuted were the sentences of Minnesotans Kelsie Lynn Becklin, 38, of Falcon Heights; Sarah Jean Carlson, 49, of Coon Rapids; and Lashawn Marvina Walker, 51, of Minneapolis.

Eulalia Dahl

EULALIA "LALLIE" ANN DAHL, age 92 of Waseca died on Sunday, December 15, 2024, at Foxdale in Waseca.

Lallie was born on June 23, 1932, in Rice County, Minnesota, the daughter of August and Agnes Malecha. She graduated from Sacred Heart High School with the class of 1950. Lallie married LaVerne Dahl on October 3, 1953, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. She began her working years in the Twin Cities as an Executive Secretary for the founder of Insty-prints. Years later, Lallie and LaVerne owned and operated Quality Print in Waseca. She was an incredibly talented seamstress and she was excited to have designed and sewn the Queen's Attendant's dress for the Aqueatennial Parade in Minneapolis. She was a proud cancer survivor, a volunteer chairperson with the American Cancer Society, a long-time member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and she enjoyed dancing, traveling, visiting casinos, marching in parades with her beloved American Legion Auxiliary, and sharing her famous roast beef sandwiches.

Lallie is survived by her husband, LaVerne of Waseca; two children, Jackie (Jeff) Dickie of Waseca, and Mitchell (Sharon)



Eulalia Dahl

Dahl of Waseca; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. She is also survived by two sisters, Yvonne Gehring of Waseca and Virginia Wobschall of Waseca; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; a sister in childhood, Jacqueline Malecha; a sister, Charlotte Pleiss; and two brothers, August Malecha and Roman Malecha.

Funeral services were held at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, December 30, 2024, at the Third Street Chapel of Dennis-Steffel-Omtvedt Funeral and Cremation Service in Waseca. Visitation was held for one hour before the service at the funeral home.

■ County

from Page 1

across 20 years, meaning the building would be paid for at about the same time, based on DOC averages, that it needed to be replaced.

Commissioner Brad Milbrath, a former Waseca County Sheriff,

turned the conversation away from finances toward the many complications that could arise if the county no longer operated its own jail. First among them was the concern other facilities would not accept individuals arrested in Waseca County. Milbrath mentioned inmates whose mental state or use of substances make them dangerous to themselves, others, or both.

"Other facilities are not going to want that liability," Milbrath cau-

tioned. "Any agreement we might reach about daily rates is useless if it doesn't ensure the other facility will take all our inmates."

Administrator Johnson observed one way to overcome that obstacle would be to form a "joint powers agreement" with a nearby county.

But while that possibility provides a potential path to overcome the first obstacle, it does not deal with other objections stated during previous discussions, including the complica-

tions which would arise from having to transport inmates to and from court appearances, the time law enforcement officers would be taken away from their typical duties for the sake of transporting inmates, and the complications presented by bad weather or dangerous driving conditions. Also considerations are the inconveniences to probation officers, lawyers, and family members.

■ Council

from Page 1

"Montgomery doesn't. Their city manager said people decide to build based on the cost of living... People wanting to build are going to want to build because they want a house they want. They're not looking for incentive to build from a tax abatement."

All councilors were in agreement homeowners in Waseca should be incentivized to make visible home improvements. Council members agreed a future work session should be dedicated to the topic.

Council members unanimously approved the Waseca County Pioneer as the city's designated publication for legal notices in 2025.

"Seeing the amount of people who have a copy in their hands compared to the other [newspaper] speaks for itself," Schroeder said.

Development Manager for Rebound Real Estate, Marc Basara, provided a brief Marketplace Development update.

Investors in the project, a 36-unit apartment structure to be located in Waseca between the Walmart store and the high school, hope to break ground in early May of 2025.

The council agreed not to renew a rental license to Mike Nelson, property owner at 717 Second Avenue NE after Waseca Police responded to repeated calls for service in 2024. At least seven calls were received; drug activity, disturbances and assault are

suspected. Violation letters for incidents in April, June and July were sent to the landlord. Nelson responded to the letters but took no other action. The council also imposed a \$250 fine and determined not to renew the license for the property until it comes into satisfactory compliance with city code.

A "lot of work" went into the Airport Hangar Commercial Lease agreement for 2025. Approximately \$5,300 in lease revenue will be received this year from three commercial T-hangar spaces. The lease agreement was approved by the council.

The council decided against approving a new name recognition for the basketball court at Clear Lake Park until the city has a 'naming policy' in place. In honor of Malik and Kyreese Willingham, 2019 and 2021 Waseca High School graduates, and state champions, the park board approved recommendation to the council that the court be renamed, "Willingham Community Court."

"I know the people involved with this process have been diligent and patient," Mayor Randy Zimmerman stated. "I hope they can just be patient a little bit longer."

"I think it would be wonderful to name this basketball court," councilor Schroeder stated. "It's deserving."

"I witnessed what these two boys did at that court," Zimmerman added. "If anyone spent more time there than them, I'd beg to differ."

The council hopes to approve the name before spring.

Ann Fitch spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting and thanked the city for its collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce during her time as executive director.

"An absolute dream to work with the staff," she said. "Thank you so much for everything you've given to the city and the Chamber."

As a token of her appreciation, Fitch donated \$500, personally, to city snow plow drivers.

"What they do is so important and often overlooked," Fitch said. "They get in their trucks at all hours of the day and night... This is my way of saying thank you."

"Even though I'll be done at the end of the year, I plan to be an even more engaged citizen," Fitch concluded. "I'm sorry council, I'll have even more time to be an engaged citizen in my community. Thank you."

Councilor Mark Christiansen said he wanted to thank Ann for her years of service with the Chamber.

"Six short years," Christiansen stated. "It feels like just a couple weeks ago she was up here [as a member of the council]."

Serving as a councilor for the final time was John Mansfield who chose not to seek re-election and whose term has come to an end.

Mansfield was presented with a plaque and thanked, not only by his colleagues, but by some of those in attendance.

"I know we're not supposed to single anyone out during the public comment portion," Deb Dobberstein told the council. "But I want to single out somebody. John has been a very

good councilman. He votes for common sense. Steps up for the rights of the taxpayers and does an awesome job. We're going to miss you. Good luck to you."

Councilor Jeremy Conrath thanked Mansfield for his service to the council.

"We'll miss you," he added.

Mayor Zimmerman presented Mansfield with a plaque commemorating his service to Waseca from January 2021 until December 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.



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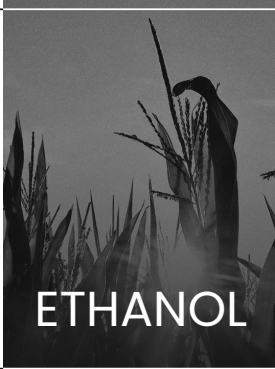
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In December, the Janesville Public Utility Commission highlighted Commissioner John Gardner for more than 25 years of service on the board.

■ Janesville

from Page 3

cerns. “We all hope that all departments hold to their budgets, which they historically have,” he replied. Arnoldt also mentioned the library, which he and Maas went through together between the late November meeting and this one. He figured another \$10,000 in the library budget would help them. “I compiled a fairly long list of things they could use,” he explained. “We could take the money we’ve got in the budget, see what’s needed more, and knock those items off the list within the next few years.”

After approving the 2025 tax levy and budget, the council accepted the contract terms between the Janesville Fire Department and the Township Fire Board. They will all contribute 25 percent of the budget while the city funds the other 75 percent. These were the terms for the past three years, as the call numbers have matched this split in the budget funding between the rural fire and Janesville.

Kurt Anderson of Le Ray Township brought up recent discussions on saving money. He asked where any over-budgeted funds from the fire department budget go if they aren’t spent. It was clarified that the funds can stay in Fire Fund 214 or be transferred into the Fund 420, which is the fire capital reserve. Moen elaborated that it was the council’s decision where those excess funds go. Rogers suggested a transfer of any leftover funds from the Fire budget into the capital reserved in either January or Feb-

ruary.

Anderson liked the idea, and so did Chuck Schwab of Alton Township. The council then approved the user water treatment agreement between Frechette Truck Wash and Arnoldt Corporation (with Arnoldt abstaining). The agreement, starting in 2025, will last until the end of 2027. The council then accepted numerous donations. Allen Starke once again donated \$50 to the police and fire departments, with MEI donating an additional \$6,000 for firefighting boots. The Janesville Area Golf Association then donated \$509.43 for the purchase of gravel from the golf course. Lastly, the Waseca Area Foundation gave \$500 to go toward the funding of Music in the Park.

The council then transferred funds and made its board appointments. Bob Burns will serve another term on the Planning and Zoning Commission until 2028. Rosalie Grams and Dennis Kuefner will be serving on the Housing and Redevelopment Authority; Grams’ term will be until 2026, and Kuefner’s until 2029. Jacob Lehrke will be on the Park Board until 2028. There were brief talks between choosing Ben Salaba and Pam Lehrke to serve on the Economic Development Authority. While Salaba is the current chair, the council decided on Lehrke since she is also on the County EDA and may provide valuable insight with that in mind. Salaba was also interested in serving on the golf advisory board, so the council chose him for that position.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m. The next meeting will be January 13, 2025.

Camryn Lynch named to Dean's List at UW-Whitewater

WHITEWATER, WI (12/24/2024)—Camryn Lynch from Waseca, MN, has made the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Dean's List for the 2024 fall semester.

These students have demonstrated their academic abilities by receiving a grade point average of 3.4 or above in a single semester.

"Making the Dean's List is a tremendous honor. It is a recognition of our students' hard work and commitment to success," said John

Chenoweth, who serves as UW-Whitewater's provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. "We are proud of our students and hope to see their names on the list again. Congratulations to all who were recognized!"

The Registrar's Office reports 3,775 students were selected for the Dean's List for the fall semester. More than 11,700 students are currently enrolled at the university's Whitewater and Rock County campuses.

Waseca Band Booster all-you-can-eat chili feed

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

Jeannie Feldcamp, Anne Gerber, Rebecca Schimming and Wendy Dieker planned and operated the Waseca Band Booster Chili Feed on December 20. The Blue Jay’s basketball team also played Worthington that night, (Waseca won, 81-34.) Also accompanying the game was a performance by the high school band with a few alumni integrated in. The school’s ‘lunchroom’ was almost full, some of the people coming through the lines had trouble finding a seat.

Armed with a scoop spoon, Feldcamp was serving chili. She said she was happy with the number of people coming through the lines and finding seats in the Waseca Junior Senior High School’s lunchroom, which bordered the bleachers to the basketball court. Everyone dining on all-you-can-eat chili or hot dogs was also treated to the sounds of bouncing balls and cheering. But this wasn’t just for basketball spectators or chili lovers, this was also a night to honor alumni of the high school band. Said Feldcamp, “Upstairs for the alums we have mocktails, desserts, a photo booth with cash drawings and they will also join the pep band when they assemble and play during the game’s intermission.”

There was chili, hot dogs, cheddar cheese, crackers, cookies, chocolate and regular milk in small containers, some had to make two trips. According to organizers, hundreds of people attended the event in 2022 and 2023; 400 came the evening



Volunteering for the Waseca Band Booster all-you-can-eat chili feed on Dec. 20 were, from left: Olivia Hagen, Kim Hagen and Jennifer Frank.

Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

of Dec. 20. Feldcamp had to admit, “Some people are coming for the chili, some are coming for the basketball game, some are coming for both. Worthington visitors and players were also invited to participate.” Two of Feldcamp’s four children were linked to the evening’s event: ninth-grader Sam was performing with the pep band; twelfth-grader Isaac is a basketball player. All the people working, whether it was cleaning tables, selling tickets or scooping chili, were donating their time; there were about 20 volunteers working.

Hy-Vee in Owatonna donated the chili ingredients. Kwik Trip in Waseca donated the

cookies. Morgan’s Meats donated hot dogs. The American Dairy Association donated the milk and the cheese. Walmart in Waseca donated the crackers, Fritos and spices. The Waseca Junior Senior High School donated the space and janitorial support, they also printed tickets and helped the food service staff in the kitchen. There was enough activity Feldcamp said they will be planning on doing this again next year.

Anyone who could not make the chili feed but still wants to donate to the Waseca High School Band can mail their donation to: Waseca Band Boosters PO Box 203 Waseca MN 56093.

■ JWP

from Page 3

edging community service work done by school groups, including that the “JWP Service Learning and Community Leadership” class helped Janesville Matters decorate trees along Main Street, and students who participated in the Climb to Feed Kids fundraiser for the Backpack, Power Pack, and high school

pantry programs.

Dieker also mentioned Erica Eilertson who became 2024 Spelling Bee champion; Ava Place took second place; Asher Wagenbach took third.

A lengthy discussion regarding electronic communications and online distractions during the school day led to a commitment from principal David Rysdam to draft some potential policies or procedures and to collaborate with Superintendent Jeremy Erler before bringing it back to the board. Among the complications is that students can use smart

watches for communication even when their phones are not in their hands. It was also mentioned that students can currently access YouTube and other streaming services on their school-issued Chromebook laptop computers.

In other matters, the school board indefinitely postponed further discussion of how it should be handled when a student misses part of a school day, but then hopes to take part in an activity in the evening. Erler said the topic is “hot” statewide. Principal Rysdam speculated state-level leaders are leaning toward

■ NRHEG

from Page 3

those incidents has changed.” Where students were once expected to “lock down,” limit movement, and wait, he said the procedure has become one of sharing information freely including—if known—the suspected perpetrator’s name, physical description, and direction of movement. For any students away from the intruder’s path, the procedure is for adults to guide them in exiting the building and removing themselves from the grounds.

He assured board members that students and staff receive preparation by taking part in regularly scheduled “drills.”

Meihak also shared that the district expects a January 6 launch of an online “ap” which should be helpful to parents and families in keeping track of activities and events at the school. The ap will be separate from the JMC website which allows parents to access specific information about their own children’s attendance and academic progress.

District “workforce coordinator” Pam Krill reported regarding various events aimed at informing students about careers, career fields, and post-secondary education. Krill mentioned a cooperative venture which allows “Pro-Start” students—who earn food safety certification as part of their program—to collaborate with

local meat producers. She also mentioned “mock interview” practice offered to 28 upperclassmen and an upcoming Feb. 18 event with the Mayo School of Health Sciences.

The board approved a new policy

regarding overnight field trips. Meihak stated the new policy is “much more comprehensive” and provides stronger guidance for students, parents, sponsoring teachers and chaperones. One significant element of

the policy is that any overnight trips will be accompanied by a ratio of one adult for about every 10 students, and that the gender of chaperones will align with the male-to-female ratio of participants.

SWEET SOMMERS VFW POST 1642
JANUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 7pm HALL BINGO	3 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	4
5	6	7 Burger nite 5-7pm	8 pm BAR Bingo	9 7pm HALL BINGO	10 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm	11
12 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host, St. Paul Lutheran Church	13 7 pm Post & AUX. Meeting	14 Burger nite 5-7pm	15 pm BAR Bingo	16 7pm HALL BINGO Desert Strom began (1991)	17 WALLEYE or SHRIMP DINNER 5:30 to 7pm YOUR	18
19	20	21 Burger nite 5-7pm	22 pm BAR Bingo	23 7pm HALL BINGO	24 MEAT Raffle 5:30	25
26 ALL YOU can EAT Breakfast VFW 8:00am-Noon Your Host Relay for life	27 Vietnam War Cease Fire (1973)	28 Burger nite 5-7pm	29 pm BAR Bingo	30 7pm HALL BINGO	31 MEAT Raffle 5:30 Horse racing 6:30pm Panama Campaign Ended (1990)	

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Amy Nelson presented a sand, dirt, and clay tutorial for the children at Team Academy on Dec. 18, 2024.
Pioneer photo by Ben Revermann

Team Academy students get messy at Dirt Camp

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The audience was a little on the younger side, but there was a, “Dirt Camp,” soil presentation at Team Academy on Dec. 18. The youngsters were taught by Amy Nelson, Extension educator and 4-H Youth Development educator for Waseca County.

Nelson wheeled all the dirt supplies on a black wagon and set up clear plastic cups for the little ones to better help the hands-on learning they were to do. Riley McGire was monitoring his phone because his mother was on the way, he was sad he was going to miss it and said, “My mom is almost here so I don’t think I’ll be able to do it.” The rest of the 20 or so members of the group, however, were there for the whole show.

Nelson began by crumpling up pieces of paper to show the difference between sand, soil and clay. The children surmised there was the most air in sand, second in soil, and the least in clay. They were given clear containers of water and found the different ways water reacts with those materials. Children nodded along as they saw bubbles coming up from the sand when it was poured into the water. This was done again with soil, then again with clay, said Nelson to the students, “You see it takes a lot longer for the clay to push the air out.” Nelson shared that school-year sessions of “Dirt Camp” last around 45 minutes; those presented during the summer typi-

cally last about 90 minutes. Said Nelson of the class, “Because 4-H’s motto is ‘learn by doing,’ everything we do is hands-on. Last school year, I utilized one curriculum called ‘Art Lit to Go’ and another named ‘Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Lit to Go.’ Those were written by colleagues from Iowa State Extension - both of these curricula utilized children’s books. We would first read a book that related to the day’s activity, and then complete the activity. For example, one day we read the book ‘I Love Strawberries’ by Shannon Anderson, and then we extracted DNA from a strawberry using rubbing alcohol and dish soap. Another time we read the book ‘V is for Viking’ where we learned about different places in Minnesota, and then the students found those places on a map and built a track for a HexBug Nano Bot to travel to each place we talked about.”

Although Nelson hasn’t heard much feedback from parents, she has heard good things from the teachers and staff at Team Academy. Nelson says she plans to continue offering “Dirt Camp” and other curricula. “Now that the Waseca County Board of Commissioners voted to add an additional 4-H Extension Educator at half-time capacity, once we have that new position filled, we will be able to do more 4-H afterschool programs with additional partners in the Waseca County community.”



The Concert Choir directed by Megan Kreinbring, piano by Melissa Shulz performing "Calypso Cradle Carol," during the Dec. 16 concert.
Pioneer photos by Ben Revermann

Cold December Flies Away, a choir concert at Waseca Performing Arts Center

By BEN REVERMANN
Staff writer

The Waseca Vocal Music Department presented, “Cold December Flies Away,” at the Waseca JHHS Performing Arts Center on Monday, Dec. 16. Director of Choirs was Megan Kreinbring, Collaborative Pianist was Melissa Schulz.

The first to perform was the Concert Choir: the group’s first number was “Calypso Cradle Carol,” which included instrumental elements from Nathanael Andrs, Collin Dettmer, Alex Dickerson, Olivia Eaton, Eryn Harrison, Charley Kietzman, Leah Scheffert, Robbyn Wilson and Mya Yokiel. After that were “Under Winter Moon” and “Candlelight Canon.” The descant was performed by Nathanael Andrs, Olivia Eaton, Amber Hagen and Robbyn Wilson. Last was “All I want for Christmas is You” with the solo by Eryn Harrison.

The State Street Singers were next; they performed “Christmas Bells are Ringing” and “Carol of the Bells.”

Next were the sextets. The boys’ group performed first with “Star of Wonder.” The girls came after and performed “Veni, Veni Emmanuel.” The two groups combined for their last song, “White Winter Hymnal.”

Next the Select Choir took to the stage to sing “Cold December Flies Away,” “My Song in the Night,” and “Come and See the Baby” with percussion by Ryan Yoder. “This Little Light of Mine” included solos by Layla Keith and Andres Vasquez-Neigebauer. “Stille Nacht/Silent Night” featured solos by Collin Dettmer, Nathanael Andrs and Sophie Chawra. The audience was encouraged to sing along with part of “Silent Night.” The evening’s finale was “Hallelujah!” from Handel’s Messiah; choir alumni were invited to the stage to perform alongside the students.

Choir organizers extended gratitude to the Waseca School District



The Select Choir directed by Megan Kreinbring performing "My Song in the Night" during the Dec. 16 concert.



The boys' and girls' "Sextets," directed by Megan Kreinbring, performing "Christmas Bells are Ringing" during the Dec. 16 concert.

and administration, the Waseca custodial staff, Melissa Shulz, Chuck Pollock, Daniel J. Johnson Accounting, Waseca Choir Boosters, Waseca Music Department staff, Waseca

teachers for allowing students to attend music lessons, parents and guardians for supporting musical education and of course, the students.

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Janesville



In 1998, JWP first graders learned about holiday customs around the world. Jon Sprengeler (right) presented Sonja Swanson with a small gift following her presentation of a typical Christmas in Norway.

1924

- More than \$21,000,000, the largest amount ever raised in a single year for local road purposes in Minnesota, was spent on county and town roads over the state during 1924. County, township and cityvillage road and bridge taxes for the year exceeded \$17,000,000, state aid added \$2,000,000, and local bond issues, notably in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, ran the total over the \$21,000,000 mark. The outlay on local roads was more than twice the net income for state trunk highway purposes, although the trunk routes are serving four out of five road users in Minnesota.

- The Janesville high school team put in a strenuous week. They played two games – one with Morristown at Morristown on Friday night, and the other with Owatonna on Saturday night. The first game resulted in an 18-4 victory for the locals, while the second game went to Owatonna by a score of 29-20.

- Contrary to what everybody anticipated, the weather changed sometime during the night between Wednesday and Thursday. What was wanted was a period of real old fashioned winter, storm and wind, followed by snow and cold. Then there would be the impulse of renewed trade under the activity of human desire. But we were destined to mild weather, simpering of rains on Friday, with a very slippery surface that was anything but agreeable.

- The Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America is preparing to launch a year long drive against game and fish law violators, which will extend to every corner of the state. This was the announcement today of Fred. H. Doellner, secretary of the state division, who is in active charge of the work. The campaign will be carried out along two lines, according to Mr. Doellner. First, through active cooperation of all chapters of the league in actually stopping violations, and second, through a program of legislation to be pushed this winter.

1949

- Open Letter to our Citizens: “I would like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens of Janesville and surrounding community for the all-out support that they showed when they were called upon by members of the High School to donate to the various drives that the school had. I refer to the Band Booster’s Card Party, the Band Tag Day, and the Magazine drive, all of which were for uniforms for either the band or the Cub-ettes. Thanks to you, they were all very successful drives and have enabled us to see how we can better serve the students and the community of Janesville. I hope that you will lend your continued support to our future drives as they may occur. Many thanks again for everything! -Sincerely yours, J. Perry Watson, Bandmaster.

- Roy Kinlund, formerly of Marshfield, Wisconsin, has made arrangements with Lawrence’s Hatchery to take over the Produce operation of that concern the first of the year. The new operator will make his headquarters in the old hotel building where he will be pleased to be of service to all of the old produce customers of Lawrence’s Hatchery, as well as to welcome business relations with new customers. Mr. Kinlund has bought the Leis Tamo home and will occupy the same with his wife and three children. Kinlund will operate the business under the name of the Janesville produce company.

- Lauding the efficiency of those whose efforts made possible the enviable record made by Waseca County veterans of World War II in applying for the Minnesota State Bonus, Ethan Allen, Waseca County Service Officer said, “I would like to thank all the service organization of the county, the people who donated typewrites, business firms who gave of their employees time, Mrs. Gyda Engebretson and her assistants who prepared the certified copies of discharge papers for veterans so quickly, and all others who helped in the task.”

1974

- It took two and a half hours of “rapping” Saturday afternoon, but by the time the meeting adjourned, the air was considerably cleared between the Creamery patrons present and the board of directors of the Janesville Creamery Association. One hundred sixty six of the 401 Creamery patron-stockholders turned out for the meeting at Janesville High School which was held as a result of a petition signed by at least 20 percent of the association’s stockholders. The purpose of the special meeting was to clarify circumstances surrounding the discharge of Manager Warren Johnson and the subsequent resignations of William Vogler and “Beets” Born.

- Janesville Cagers eaked out an important 55-53 victory over the Medford Tigers Friday at Medford. The win gave the Bears a 3-0 conference record and a 5-0 season record. For Medford, expected to be a conference power, it was the second conference loss. The game was hard-fought all the way with the Bears holding a two to five point lead most of the way. “This was a big win to beat a tough Medford team on their floor.” So said Coach Dave Tonolli after the Bears brought home a two-point win over the Medford Tigers Friday night.

1999

- There is always something new to write home about when Tanja Ochantel, German exchange student, logs onto the internet. Email makes it possible for Tanja to keep up-to-date with her friends and family back home in Weiden. Tanja, and exchange student with the Academic Year in America (AYA) program, arrived in Minnesota Aug. 29 and will stay until June 30. She is spending the year with the Jerry and Diane Roker family of Smiths Mill.

- The Janesville-WaldorfPemberton girls’ basketball team got a confidence booster Friday. The Bulldogs used a 45-point first half to cruise to a 75-40 Gopher Conference victory over Medford at Janesville. “This was a good confidence builder for us,” said JWP coach Mike Meihak. “Now we know we can score a lot of points, even without Heidi (Johnson).” JWP evened its conference record at 1-1, and improved to 3-2 for the year. The Bulldogs, who defeated Medford twice a year ago, evened its home court record at 2-2.

Waseca

25 Years Ago

-Dreaming of a white Christmas? – Ralph Fell, 213 10TH Avenue NE, works Monday morning to clear the first lasting snowfall of the winter season. Temperatures are forecasted to remain low throughout the week and Sunday’s snowfall is expected to remain through the Christmas holiday.



-Chuck Manthey, Waseca Co. Dairy Association (left) and Randy Kruse of Waseca Hy-Vee (right) presented checks to the Waseca Neighborhood Service Center’s Director, Vicki Staloch, for Santa Anonymous.

-Kids helping others – The elementary students of New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) this month raised a total of \$598 in pennies that will be used to buy toys for children in need this holiday season.

-Spreading cheer – These Waseca High School German students sang a variety of German Christmas carols to the residents of Lake Shore Inn Nursing Home on Saturday.

50 Years Ago

-JOY TO THE WORLD, it’s Christmas! Also hark the herald angels sing and hallelujah – it’s very definitely Christmas. If you want to really feel it, listen to the songs of Christmas Thurs. evening 8 p.m. at the High School Gym offered by the h.s. choruses.

-In the know – FLAWLESS performances on their snowmobile safety course final tests drew praise for these 25 Waseca youngsters at course graduation ceremonies Thursday night. They all scored 100 per cent on the quiz.

75 Years Ago

-BROWNIE SCOUTS OF TROOP 6 dropped in on elderly shut-in Edward Weckwerth last Wednesday afternoon to sing Christmas carols and the photo above catches them in the act. Leaders Mrs. Herb Streitz and Mrs. George Guyer are in the background with the Brownies, garbed in their red hoods, grouped around Mr. Weckwerth. Not to be outdone, Mr. Weckwerth had treats for the Brownies when they arrived.

-Waseca’s free parking for the busy Christmas Shopping days got under way Monday and will continue through Saturday this week. Some few people in the business area abused the free offer meant as a convenience to Waseca’s shopping customers, but they were relatively few. The council previously asked that both employers and employees cooperate in the free parking trial.

-Sgt. Chester Hrdlicka, son of Mrs. Al Hrdlicka of Elysian, returned last week from 11 months service in Korea. Sgt. Hrdlicka has been honorably discharged from the army. Sgt. Hrdlicka left for service in October 1950 and has seen 14 months service. He had been in the thickest of the Korean fighting for 11 months, during which he was wounded and hospitalized three times.

-Sacred Heart’s scrappy basketball team won its third victory in four starts last Friday night when it overtook Bethlehem Academy of Faribault in the final quarter to tie up the count in regular play and then scored five points to the BA’s three in overtime. Final score was 45-43 for the Scarlets to give them two wins in the De Smet conference race.

100 Years Ago

-Taxes collected in Waseca county in five months, from June 1ST to November 1ST, 1924, amounted to nearly a half-million dollars, according to figures compiled by County Auditor Panzram this week.

-An examination for rural mail carrier to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Ed Stevens on Route No 2 out of Waseca, was held last Saturday at the new high school. Miss Hulda Peters, money order clerk in the post office, had charge of the examination. There were 30 applicants for the position.

WILTON TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF TOWN
OFFICERS TO BE
ELECTED

One (1) SUPERVISOR -Term of 3 Years One
(1) TREASURER - Term of 2 Years

Filings begin Thursday, January 2, 2025
and CLOSE at 8:00 p.m. Tuesday,
January 16, 2025.

Candidates for Town Office may file
Affidavits of candidacy with the Town
Clerk at Wilton Town Hall with \$2.00 filing fee.
Deadline is 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 16,
2025.
Annual Meeting will be held in March.

Derrick Sommers
Wilton Township Clerk

New Richland

25 Years Back

-The wish/sharing tree will again be up for those in the area wishing to help a family have a happier Christmas. The wish tree is located at the First NAtional Bank in Ellendale. Many hours are put into helping make others Christmas better.

-Timothy Coyer of New Richland is one of more than 500 St. Olaf College students who participated in the world renowned St. Olaf Christmas Festival Concert, December 2-5. Coyer, a tender in the St. Olaf Viking Chorus, directed by Robert Scholz, performed in the 88th annual concert, “Immanuel ... Our Hope Forevermore.” More than 15,000 people attended the four performances of the concert, a service of corals, hymns, choral pieces and orchestral selections celebrating Christ’s birth.

-Dakota, Dominic and Jasmine, the triplets of Francis Panos and Deanne of Medford were born August 14, 1999 and baptized on Sunday, November 21 at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Owatonna.

- The NRHEG Gymnastic Team begins its second season with Coach Steph Luger, who has coached since 1990. Assistant coach is Serina Davis who has been coaching for one year. The NRHEG team competed for the first time last year at sectionals. Coach Luger looks for the team to finish in the top six in the conference and sections if they work really hard.

37 Years Back

- Dr. Dale Johnson, son of the late Neil and Luella Johnson of Ellendale, now of the University of Washington, WA, has one priority. He and his colleagues at the UW Center for Bioengineering want to improve methods of rapid freezing and freeze drying. Not for the benefit of astronauts and backpacker cuisine, but to increase our understanding of such medical challenges as cystic fibrosis and heart disease.

-Mrs. Stieglbauer’s third grade students receiving the Principal’s Honor Diplomas for taking part in the ‘Book-It; program were: Sarah Bosshart, Scott Brekke, Tammy Haddy, Lori Ingvaldson, Jamie Johnson, Jenny Johnson, Shane Johnson, Krissy Kloeck, Tiffany Mischke,Brooke Reese, Summer Schember and Heather Snow.

- Duane A. Mangskau, Janice M. Nelson and Rick T. Pelzl were all included on Austin Community Colleges Deans List for the winter quarter. The announcement was made by Roger Boughton, Dean of the college.

-Mrs. Kermit (Violet) Jensen, former school teacher in CLarks Grove, has retired from teaching and still lives in Albert Lea. Last fall she suffered a serious accident resulting in a broken bone in her leg. This leg has now been amputated due to lack of circulation and an artificial leg fitted for her. She is making progress and is looking forward to the warmer weather and getting outside.

■ Auction
from Page 1

Johnson; Miss Waseca County Sleigh and Cutter Teen 2024, Aadhavi Natarajan; Miss Southern Minnesota, Morgan Mohler; and Miss South Minnesota’s Outstanding Teen, Kylee Gorsha.

- A fire occurred Thursday night at the home of Trent Bramer in Otisco Township. The house is located off County Road 5 and was deemed a total loss. No one was injured. Unofficially the structure fire appears to have originated in the garage before spreading to the rest of the house.

- Six community awards recognizing outstanding local accomplishments were presented during a Waseca Area Chamber banquet at the Starfire Event Center in Waseca on January 22. Recipients were: Anna Pollock, Distinguished Young Professional Service Award; Joe Isder as the area Boss of the Year; the Waseca Area Food Shelf earning the Community Development Award. Tom Sexton received the Exchange Club “Book of Golden Deeds.” Ann Fitch was honored with the Rotary “Service Above Self” title, and Ed Frederick received the Don Eustice Community Service Award.

February

- Two Republican candidates, Mick Ditlevson of Owatonna and Taylor Zinkle of Waseca, have thrown their hats in the ring for Minnesota State House District 19B representing parts of Waseca and Steele Counties.

-The Waseca County Pioneer and its writers took home ten awards during the Minnesota Newspaper Associations annual awards banquet February 1, 2024 at Marriott North in Brooklyn Park.

As a newspaper, in its first year of eligibility, the Pioneer earned second place in General Excellence, second in General Reporting and third place in Sports Reporting. Judges comments included, “Always find great reporting in the Pioneer ... a close second.”

- Two candidates are running for the open Waseca County Commis-

sioner seat in District 3, vacant since the death of longtime commissioner Blair Nelson in May 2023. Brad Milbrath and Ann Fitch will all be on the ballot Tuesday, February 13. Whoever wins the election will serve the remaining three years of a four-year term representing citizens in the City of Waseca Wards 1A and 2A. Voting booths for those Wards are at Christ Community and Faith United Methodist Churches. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- The Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School celebrated Snow Week...without the snow... starting with a coronation ceremony on Monday, Feb. 5. Queen Lydia Sack and King Austin Quast were chosen to take the throne.

- Brad Milbrath, 57, will be the newest member of the Waseca County Board of Commissioners. Milbrath defeated fellow candidate Ann Fitch in Tuesday’s special election to fill the seat left unoccupied by the May, 2023, death of longtime commissioner Blair Nelson. Milbrath now represents District 3, covering the majority of the city of Waseca. He defeated Ann Fitch with 283 votes to 70 with 2 write-ins. He will serve the remaining three years of a four-year term.

- Snow week royalty gathered in the Waseca High School gymnasium the morning of Thursday, Feb. 8, to find out who among them would be king and queen.

Last year’s Snow Week King, Korbin Schumacher, had the honor of crowning this year’s royal couple, Preston Miller and Ali Mumme. Serving as emcees were Tristin Gross, Josie Madson and Trista Stinehart.

- “Thank you to all of you for being here,” announced Sleigh and Cutter planning committee member Scott Roemhildt. “With cold temperatures and that south wind, we know how easy it would have been to just stay home.”

More than 20 animal-drawn units and dozens of mounted riders arrived at the Waseca County Fairgrounds the morning of Saturday, Feb. 17, to take part in the annual Sleigh and Cutter parade. The biting wind had participants sheltering behind their vehicles and trailers while pulling together the equipment and decorations to be used in the parade.

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Wasca boys still unbeaten

Basketball team improves to 10-0

By **JIM LUTGENS**
Sports Editor

It was obvious the Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Knights came to town with upset on their minds. The Waseca Bluejays rather quickly put an end to such non-sense.

After falling behind early as the Knights hit from long range, the Bluejays responded and the final outcome was never in doubt as the Waseca High School boys' basketball team blew out visiting LCWM 85-42 Tuesday, Dec. 17.

"We held them to very few points in the second half and played well," said WHS coach Seth Anderson.

Deron Russell led the Bluejays with 21 points. Damaruis Russell scored 16, Carson Ohnstad 15, Caden Danner 8, Isaac Feldkamp 6, Brandyn Jascha 6, Max Howard 5, Ethan Hiller 4, William Mansfield 2 and Logan Reger 2.

The Bluejays went on to win the Myron Glass Holiday Tournament in Rochester.

In the opener, they dispatched Randolph 80-63, rallying from nine points down in the first half. Waseca led 39-33 at halftime.

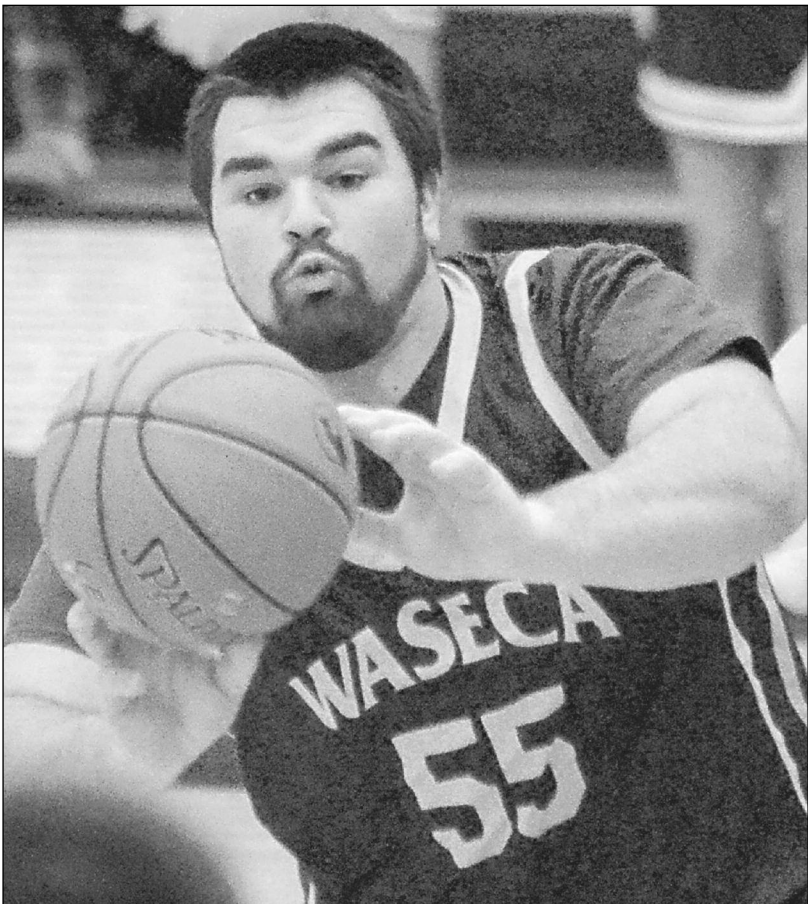
"We played very well," said Anderson. "Lots of kids went in and played well."

Individually: Deron Russell 35P, 6 rebounds; Damarius Russell 18P, 7R, 5 assists; Ohnstad 17P, 6R, 6A; Hiller 5P, 5R; Feldkamp 1P, 10R.

"Randolph handled our pressure very well and hit some tough shots," said Anderson.

The Bluejays blew out Mayer Lutheran 97-56 in the championship game.

"We jumped on them very early



NOT TONIGHT – The WHS boys' basketball team rallied from an early deficit and cruised past Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial Dec. 17. Above left, the Bluejays' Brandyn Jascha passes from the lane. Above right, Wyatt Hager shoots a reverse lay-up. Below, Isaac Feldkamp battles for a rebound.

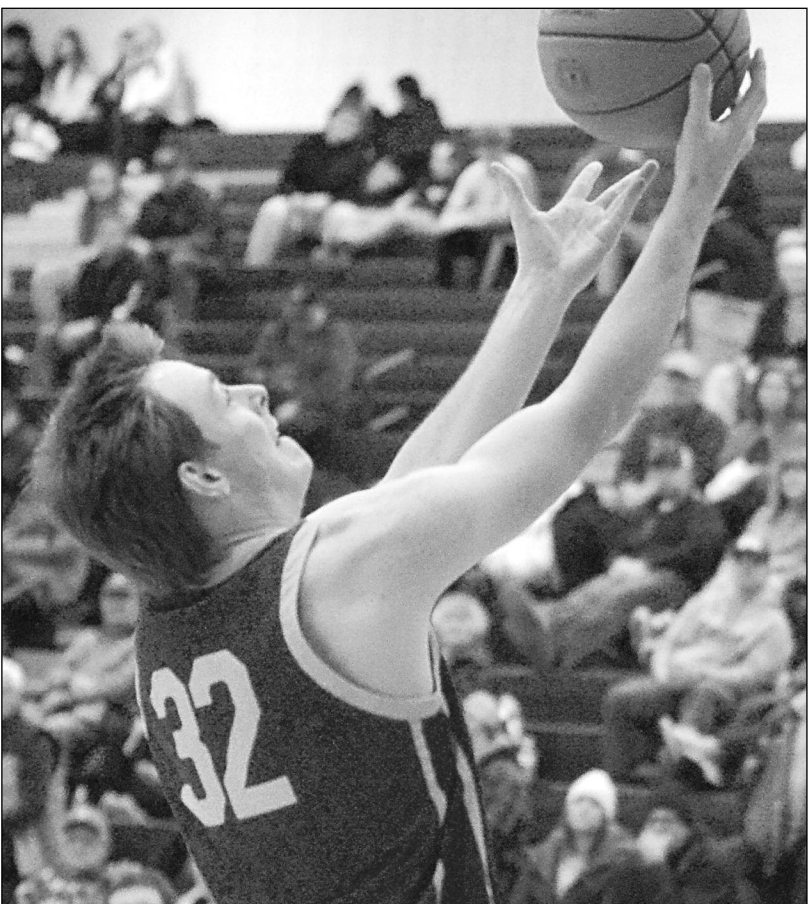
and cruised," said Anderson. "Our defense was very good and we shot well early."

Deron Russell finished with 17 points, 11 rebounds and 6 assists. Others: Hiller 13P; Damarius Russell 13P; Ohnstad 12P; Danner 10P, 5A; Feldkamp 10P, 7R; Jascha 8P; Owen Honstad 4P.

The Bluejays, rated No. 3 in the state in Class AA in the most recent rankings, improved their season record to 10-0.

The Bluejays come out of the holiday break Saturday at 2:20 p.m. at Marshall. They host St. Clair Jan. 7.

Big South East		
	W-L	Overall
Jackson Co. Central	3-0	6-0
Waseca	2-0	10-0
Belle Plaine	1-1	4-2
Blue Earth Area	1-1	6-2
Fairmont	0-1	6-3
Tri-City United	0-4	0-7



Waseca basketball girls notch win No. 1

The Waseca High School girls' basketball team broke into the win column Dec. 20 with a 46-43 victory at Worthington.

Scoring for the Bluejays were Callie Dufault with 16 points, Reese Rodriguez 12, Mia Kanewischer 7, Gracie Morgan 4, Maren Schimming 4, Lexi Kanewischer 2 and Lily Owens 1.

The Bluejays lost twice in a holiday tournament at Winona State University Dec. 27-28, falling 36-24 to Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial and 51-31 to Plainview-Elgin-Millville.

Scoring against LCWM: Dufault 13, Morgan 4, Rodriguez 3, Mia Kanewischer 2 and Hannah Sommers 2.

Sommers led the Jays against PEM with 8 points. Mia Kanewischer scored 6, Rodriguez 5, Morgan 5, Dufault 3, Owens 2 and Ava Miller 2.

The Bluejays, 0-2 in the Big South East and 1-10 overall, return to action Saturday at 2:30 p.m. against Marshall. They host St. Clair Jan. 7 at 6 p.m. and play Jan. 9 at 7:15 at United South Central.



The JWP girls' basketball team defeated visiting Maple River 69-58 at Janesville Thursday, Dec. 19. Above left, Presley James (10) goes to the hoop for two of her 16 points. Below left, Lily Strauss has her shot blocked by Kelsey Jaeger. Above right, Katelyn Olson, who led the Bulldogs with 24 points, brings the ball up the court.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

JWP girls top Maple River

WEM/JWP wrestling

WEM-JWP 37.0 Lakeville North 34.0 Dec. 19, 2024

107: Chase Pederson (LANO) over Anaelyse Skidmore (Fall 0:48) 114: Brenden Masso (WEJW) over Max Flen (Fall 2:33) 121: Asher Thomas (LANO) over Bre' Ana Masso (Fall 1:01) 127: Tristan Tieu (LANO) over Trey Richards (TF 17-1 2:24) 133: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Hayden Roy (TF 15-0 2:59) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Noah Schoenbauer (Fall 0:53) 145: Parker James (WEJW) over Connor Lilla (MD 14-4) 152: Zach Quast (WEJW) over Tyson Holberg (Fall 1:30) 160: Riley Forar (LANO) over Lucas Morsching (TF 18-2 4:46) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Gavin Casey (MD 18-5) 189: Tyler Ruff (LANO) over Avery Fall (Fall 2:12) 215: Blake Krause (LANO) over Dakota Blaisdell (Fall 2:31) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Carter Crawford (Fall 0:47)

New Prague 41.0 WEM-JWP 24.0 Dec. 19, 2024

107: Charlie Wagner (NEPR) over Anaelyse Skidmore (Fall 1:29) 114: Danny Davis (NEPR) over Brenden Masso (SV-1 10-7) 121: Elijah Lofton (NEPR) over Bre' Ana Masso (Fall 0:45) 127: Lawson Eller (NEPR) over Trey Richards (Fall 1:34) 133: Cody Thompson (NEPR) over Isaac Miller (Fall 2:52) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Isaac Pumper (MD 11-2) 145: Zach Weeman (NEPR) over Parker James (MD 18-8) 152: Andrew Bauer (NEPR) over Zach Quast (MD 12-0) 160: Lucas Morsching (WEJW) over Beck Swanepoel (MD 9-0) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Patrick Sullivan (MD 8-0) 189: Avery Fall (WEJW) over (For.) 215: Reven Tietz (NEPR) over Dakota Blaisdell (Fall 3:19) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Luke Herder (Fall 1:18)

WEM-JWP 59.0 Mankato West 10.0

107: Logan Lund (MAWE) over Anaelyse Skidmore (TF 15-0 4:27) 114: Maverick Baker (MAWE) over Bre' Ana Masso (TF 19-3 4:00) 121: Brenden Masso (WEJW) over (For.) 127: Trey Richards (WEJW) over (For.) 133: Carson Petry (WEJW) over (For.) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Robert Wicks (Dec 5-0) 145: Parker James (WEJW) over Soren Ehmke (Dec 13-6) 152: Zach Quast (WEJW) over Asher Valimont (TF 17-1 3:25) 160: Lucas Morsching (WEJW) over Lincoln Lundgren (Fall 4:29) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Michael Hoag (Fall 0:42) 189: Trenton Huber (WEJW) over James Engelen (Fall 1:38) 215: Avery Fall (WEJW) over Christopher Squires (Fall 1:39) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Eli Ahmann (Fall 0:44)

WEM-JWP 39.0 Westfield Razorbacks 29.0 Dec. 20, 2024

107: Bentley Miller (WERA) over Anaelyse Skidmore (Fall 0:37) 114: Brenden Masso (WEJW) over Peyton Lembke (Fall 4:19) 121: Isaac Fort (WERA) over Bre' Ana Masso (Fall 0:49) 127: Trey Richards (WEJW) over Derek Miner (Fall 5:37) 133: Carson Petry (WEJW) over Wyatt Naylor (Fall 0:29) 139: Brady Murphy (WEJW) over Cayden Maly (Fall 0:14) 145: Parker James (WEJW) over Jaxon Meier (Dec 5-1) 152: Bo Zwiener (WERA) over Zach Quast (TF 15-0 3:43) 160: Cannon Wacek (WERA) over Lucas Morsching (Dec 9-3) 172: Maddox Moreno (WEJW) over Gage Mullenbach (Fall 1:47) 189: Alex Lea (WERA) over Avery Fall (Dec 5-1) 215: Vincent Hernandez (WERA) over Dakota Blaisdell (Fall 1:30) 285: Keegan Kuball (WEJW) over Wyatt Arndt (Fall 1:27)

WHS icemen improve to 9-0-1

The 2024 trip Up North was a successful one for the Waseca High School boys' hockey team.

The Bluejays kept their unbeaten record intact, winning 7-4 at Thief River Falls last Friday and 8-4 at Crookston Saturday. The WHS boys, coached by Chris Storey, improved their season record to 9-0-1.

Brayden Hesch-Priem scored a hat trick against Thief River Falls while Hunter Anderson scored once and tallied four assists. Also scoring were Jackson Tesch, Lucas Groll and Griffin Storey, with additional assists going to Storey, Henry Huttemier, Jackson Dahl and Jude Gehring.

In goal for Waseca was Josiah Schmidtke, who totaled 20 saves.

Waseca outshot Thief River Falls 30-24, drawing five penalties to the home team's four.

Storey produced a hat trick at Crookston. Otto Schoenrock scored twice, with one goal apiece by Dahl and Anderson. Assists went to Jayden Gehring, Jude Gehring, Schoenrock, Tesch, Dahl, Lucas Groll, Huttemier, Anderson and Hesch-Priem.

Carter Martens was the Bluejays' goalie, making 18 saves.

Shots on goal were 25-22 in favor of Waseca, which was whistled for four penalties to Crookston's two.

The Bluejays hosted LaCrescent-Hokah (Wis.) Dec. 21 and prevailed



ANOTHER WIN – The Waseca High School boys' hockey team dominated LaCrescent-Hokah (Wis.) 9-1 Dec. 21, outshooting the visitors 47-11. Above, the Bluejays' Brayden Hesch-Priem (33) puts the puck past Charles Wieser (30). Below left, Otto Schoenrock (10) races to the puck against Owen Webinger. Below right, Jude Gehring (34) shoots.

Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

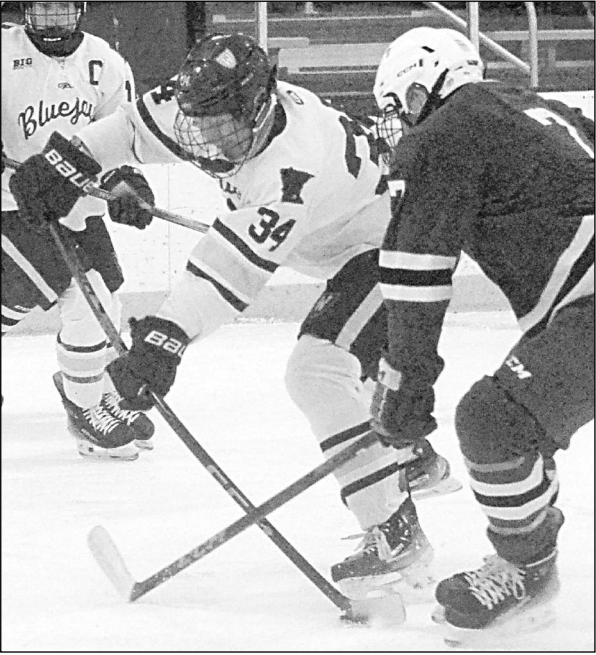
9-1, outshooting the visitors 47-11.

This time, Hesch-Priem and Jude Gehring netted four goals, with Gehring adding an assist. Schoenrock scored once, with additional assists by Anderson, Avery Selvik and Groll.

Schmidtke was in the net.

The Bluejays host Worthington Friday at 7 p.m. They play Jan. 7 at 7 at Red Wing and Jan. 9 at home against Minnesota River at 7:15.

Big South Standings			
	WLT	PTS	Overall
Luverne	6-0-1	13	8-2-1
Waseca	5-0-1	11	9-0-1
New Ulm	3-2-0	6	5-5-0
Minn. River	2-1-0	4	4-6-0
Worthington	2-1-0	4	3-8-0
Marshall	2-4-0	4	4-9-0
Windom	1-4-0	2	2-8-1
Fairmont	0-4-0	0	0-6-0
Redwood V.	0-5-0	0	1-9-0



Waseca gymnasts edged by New Ulm

The Waseca High School gymnastics team hosted New Ulm Tuesday, Dec. 17 and was edged 131.975-131.9.

The Bluejays' Bella Wikan won the all-around with 35.9 points. She also finished first on the uneven parallel bars with a score of 9.475 and the floor exercise with a 9.25. She was fifth on the balance beam at 8.45 and third on vault at 8.725.



Wikan

Katelyn Weber was fourth in all-around at 32.025, Brooklyn Flatau fifth, 31.875; Hannah Parks seventh, 30.875; and Avery Carda eighth, 29.7.

On vault: Flatau, first, 8.95; Weber, second, 8.8; Parks, seventh, 8.2; Carda, ninth, 7.925. Bars: Weber, third, 7.85; Carda, fifth, 7.125; Flatau, ninth, 6.775; Parks, 10th, 6.025. Beam: Parks, sixth, 8.45; Flatau, seventh, 7.8; Carda, ninth, 7.4; Weber, 10th, 7.27. Floor: Parks, fourth, 8.525; Flatau, sixth, 8.35; Weber, ninth, 8.1; Carda, 10th, 7.25.

The Bluejays compete Saturday at Fairmont at 10 a.m. and Jan. 7 at 6:30 at Austin.



LOP-SIDED WIN – The NRHEG girls' basketball team dominated United South Central 64-30 at Wells Dec. 20. At left, the Panthers' Savannah Farr looks to make a pass. At right, Chloe Stork does the same.



Pioneer photos by Jim Lutgens

NRHEG girls upend United South Central

The NRHEG High School girls' basketball team ended its pre-holiday schedule on a high note, defeating United South Central 64-30 at Wells on Dec. 20.

"Tonight was a great team win," said NRHEG coach Onika Peterson. "The girls came out strong, moved the ball well, made the extra pass, and found their open teammate. They were very unselfish. Defensively, they moved and anticipated exceptionally well, taking risks, getting key touches, and creating turnovers."

Individually for the Panthers: Gabby Schlaak 5 points, 2 rebounds, 1 steal; Ezra Boerner 1P, 3R; Quinn VanMaldeghem 19P, 6R, 8S, 4 assists, 1 blocked shot; Izley Boerner 15P, 3R, 1A, 1S; Clara Buendorf 7P, 1A, 1S; Camryn VanMaldeghem 11P, 5R, 2A, 3S, 3B; Chloe Stork 6R, 3A, 2S; Kylie Olson 6P, 2R, 1S, 1B.

The Panthers improved their

"Tonight was a great team win."
— NRHEG coach
Onika Peterson

record to 2-1 in the Gopher Conference West Division and 4-3 overall.

After a holiday tournament at Norwood-Young America, the Panthers host Kenyon-Wanamingo tonight at 7:15 and play Friday at Goodhue at 5:30. They face WEM at home Jan. 7.

Gopher Conference West		
	W-L	Overall
JWP	1-0	8-2
NRHEG	2-1	4-3
WEM	1-0	6-4
Medford	0-2	0-7
United South Central	0-2	3-5

NRHEG boys humbled by powerful Maple River

It's been a tough season for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School boys' basketball team, and it didn't get any easier when the Panthers traveled to Mapleton Dec. 17.

They came home still looking for their first win of the season, falling 65-32 to Maple River.

"It was another tough match-up for us," said NRHEG coach Dan Schmidt.

The Eagles just had too much firepower. "Maple River has some dominant scorers at each level on the court," said Schmidt. "They have a very strong post player and an absolute sniper from behind the arc."

The Panthers, according to Schmidt, defended those players well.

"I felt that we hung in there," he said. "We played a little different strategy defensively against their shooter."

The Panthers limited him to one three-pointer on three attempts.

"He has a tendency to destroy

"When I fried my first doughnut I knew I wanted to do this for the rest of my life."
— Nancy Jane Klecker

teams out there," said Schmidt. "I felt we did well in that regard. We also handled their press, which was similar to Randolph's, only much better. We showed more patience in breaking it and getting up the court. We're still a work in progress, but I saw little improvements from Friday to Tuesday, and that's exactly what we're looking for as we move along."

Individually for the Panthers: Greyson Schaefer 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal, 1 blocked shot; Owen Wayne 3 points, 2A, 1S; Brendan Schmidt 3R, 1A, 2S; Justin Beauvais 1S; Lavon Jewison 2P, 2R; Dom Olson 6P, 1A; Hudson Chrz 14P, 2R; Gavin Lewison 1E, 2A; Jase Knudson 5P, 2R, 1A, 3S; Jordan Brouwers 2P, 2R, 1A, 3S.

The Panthers kept it closer in a 67-50 loss to United South Central in New Richland two nights later. They fell 79-29 at LeSueur Henderson Jan. 20.

The Panthers play tonight at Kenyon-Wanamingo, Jan. 3 at WEM and Jan. 10 at home against Hayfield. Game time for all is 7:15 p.m.

Gopher Conference West		
	W-L	Overall
United South Central	1-0	2-6
JWP	0-0	5-3
WEM	0-0	3-4
Medford	0-0	0-4
NRHEG	0-1	0-7

JWP boys second in holiday tourney

The JWP boys' basketball team finished second in the Kwik Trip Holiday Classic at Mankato's Bethany Lutheran College Dec. 26-28.

After defeating Minnesota

Valley Lutheran 82-65, the Bulldogs reached the finals with a 74-56 victory over Maple River. They couldn't hold onto an early lead against Fairmont in the title game and lost 66-59.

The Bulldogs, 5-3, play Friday at Bethlehem Academy. They host Medford Jan. 7 and Triton two nights later.

Forfeits cost NRHEG matmen at Blue Earth

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School wrestling team traveled to Blue Earth for a dual meet Dec. 19 and dropped a 37-31 decision.

"We showed improvements in several of the areas we have been training on," said Panthers coach Shawn Larson. "Our inability to

fill the lineup was a big part of our loss tonight, and our efforts show we are able to be competitive."

Winners for the Panthers were Owen Schlaak at 107 pounds, Graham Jacobson at 114, Eli Hendrickson, 139, Harbor Cromwell, 172, Wyatt Larson, 189, and Ryan Schlaak at 215.

"Unfortunately, we just needed a couple more people in the lineup," said Larson.

After wrestling in the Redood Riot, the Panthers return to the mat Jan. 9 against Westfield in Blooming Prairie.

Waseca wrestling

Triton (TRIT) 42.0 Waseca (WASE) 33.0 Dec. 17, 2024

107: Adriana Kunz (TRIT) over Zander Rahe (Fall 0:58) 114: Kaiden Adreon (TRIT) over Kaiya Stagman (Fall 0:31) 121: Theo Kispert (TRIT) over Archer O'Brien (Fall 0:18) 127: Jaxon Jensen (TRIT) over (For.) 133: Jacob Knutson (WASE) over Alexander De La Merced Ortiz (TF 18-1 0:00) 139: Deven Parpart (WASE) over (For.) 145: Oden Board

(WASE) over (For.) 152: Sam Selthun (WASE) over Isaiah Selthun (Fall 3:34) 160: Slade Barnett (WASE) over Hunter Garness (MD 16-6) 172: Cole Kodada (TRIT) over Ton Bethke (Fall 3:31) 189: Wylie Deml (TRIT) over James Quade (Fall 2:23) 215: Christian Schrom (TRIT) over Michael Victorino (Fall 1:44) 285: Ben Hagen (WASE) over Craig Knutson (Fall 1:38)



XCEL ENERGY MINNESOTA ELECTRIC RATES

INTERIM CHANGE IN ELECTRIC RATES

Starting January 1, 2025

Xcel Energy’s rate increase request

Xcel Energy has asked the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) for permission to increase its electric rates over a two-year period beginning Jan. 1, 2025. The requested increase for 2025 is approximately 9.6% or \$353.3 million. Xcel Energy requested an additional 3.6% or \$137.5 million for 2026. The total increase requested for the two-year period is approximately 13.2% or \$490.7 million.

State law allows Xcel Energy to collect higher rates on an interim (temporary) basis while the MPUC reviews Xcel Energy’s request. The interim rate increase for 2025 is 5.2%, or \$191.9 million, over current rates. Because this increase only applies to the base rate- which includes the basic service charge, demand charges and energy charges- portion of customers’ bills exclusive of fuel costs and certain rate riders, the interim rate request is uniformly billed as a 7.14% increase of that portion of the bill, or \$5.39 per month for an average residential customer. This increase appears on your bill as an Interim Rate Adjustment.

Typically, final rates are approved and become effective within 10 months of the date of the Application, unless the review period is extended by the MPUC. If final rates are lower than interim rates, Xcel Energy will refund customers the difference with interest. If final rates are higher than interim rates, Xcel Energy will not charge customers the difference.

Xcel Energy’s last request for a rate increase was in 2021, when it received approval for its current multiyear rate plan. Under that plan, Xcel Energy’s base electric rates increased in 2022 through 2024.

Why is Xcel Energy asking for an increase?

Xcel Energy has continually invested in strengthening the energy grid and enhancing the reliability of the service our customers count on while expanding clean energy. These projects are key to meeting our customers’ needs today and in the future, as we work toward Minnesota’s goal of providing 100% carbon-free electricity to customers by 2040.

How will the rate change affect monthly bills?

The proposed rate increase will affect individual monthly bills differently, depending on electricity use and customer type. The proposed rate increase affects only those charges that recover the cost of providing service to our customers – approximately 73% of your total bill. This rate increase request does not affect the Fuel Cost Charge, which is passed on to you directly without markup. Your monthly bills will continue to vary due to changes in the wholesale cost of fuel and individual electricity use.

The typical residential electric customer uses 600 kWh per month. On average, the proposed \$353.3 million rate change for 2025 would increase the bill for a typical residential electric customer by \$9.89 per month or about \$119 annually. On average, the proposed incremental rate change of \$137.5 million for 2026 would increase the bill for a typical residential electric customer by \$3.90 per month or about \$47 annually.

Proposed changes for monthly electric rates

The following charts show the current and proposed electricity base rates for each customer class with average electric use.

MONTHLY CUSTOMER CHARGES

Customer type	Current	Proposed
Residential		
Overhead line	\$6.00	\$11.00
Overhead line – electric heating	\$6.00	\$11.00
Underground line	\$6.00	\$11.00
Underground line – electric heating	\$6.00	\$11.00
Small Commercial		
Small General	\$6.00	\$11.00
Small General Time-of-Day	\$6.00	\$11.00
Commercial and Industrial		
General	\$25.98	\$27.50
General Time-of-Day	\$29.98	\$31.50
Peak-Controlled	\$60.00	\$60.00
Peak-Controlled Time-of-Day	\$60.00	\$60.00

ENERGY (PER KW) AND DEMAND (PER KW) RATES

Customer type	Current	Proposed 2025	Proposed 2026
Residential			
Energy: Summer (June-September)	13.069¢	14.130¢	14.803¢
Energy: Winter (Other months)	11.364¢	12.351¢	12.977¢
Energy: Winter - electric heating	8.215¢	9.202¢	9.828¢
Small General			
Energy: Summer	11.799¢	12.830¢	13.334¢
Energy: Winter	10.094¢	11.050¢	11.508¢
Small General Time-of-Day			
Energy: On-Peak Summer	19.782¢	21.091¢	21.962¢
Energy: On-Peak Winter	16.020¢	17.164¢	17.934¢
Energy: Off-Peak	5.182¢	5.982¢	6.182¢
General			
Energy	4.765¢	5.414¢	5.516¢
Demand: Summer	\$16.49	\$18.88	\$19.86
Demand: Winter	\$11.90	\$14.29	\$15.27
General Time-of-Day			
Energy: On-Peak	6.538¢	7.427¢	7.507¢
Energy: Off-Peak	3.441¢	3.909¢	3.951¢
Demand: Summer	\$16.49	\$18.88	\$19.86
Demand: Winter	\$11.90	\$14.29	\$15.27

AVERAGE MONTHLY BILLS

The chart below shows the effect of the interim and proposed rate change on monthly bills for customers with average electric use.

Customer type	Average 2026 monthly kWh usage	2025 Current monthly cost	2026 Current monthly cost	2025 Interim monthly increase	Proposed 2025 monthly cost	Proposed 2026 monthly cost	Proposed 2025 monthly increase	Proposed 2025 monthly increase (Cumulative 2025 + 2026)
Residential – Overhead line service	505	\$85.89	\$84.91	\$4.79	\$95.06	\$97.45	\$9.18	\$12.54
Residential – Underground line service	742	\$123.40	\$121.95	\$6.84	\$134.53	\$138.02	\$11.14	\$16.07
Energy-Controlled (Dual Fuel)	905	\$93.86	\$93.02	\$4.30	\$108.86	\$109.75	\$15.00	\$16.73
Small General Service	730	\$112.39	\$111.11	\$6.06	\$122.58	\$124.85	\$10.19	\$13.74
Small General Time-of-Day Service	1,015	\$138.48	\$136.93	\$7.16	\$150.18	\$152.83	\$11.70	\$15.90
General Service	14,395	\$1,879.21	\$1,851.58	\$96.53	\$2,060.66	\$2,093.23	\$181.45	\$241.64
General Time-of-Day Service	138,269	\$12,963.49	\$14,484.29	\$614.82	\$14,041.08	\$16,027.15	\$1,077.60	\$1,542.86
Peak-Controlled Service	60,290	\$9,101.98	\$8,985.08	\$492.22	\$10,156.45	\$10,423.80	\$1,054.47	\$1,438.71
Peak-Controlled Time-of-Day Service	527,241	\$66,232.50	\$65,460.20	\$3,364.76	\$73,074.48	\$74,485.04	\$6,841.98	\$9,024.84
Small Municipal Pumping	536	\$82.47	\$82.87	\$4.47	\$91.50	\$94.40	\$9.02	\$11.53
Municipal Pumping	9,115	\$1,270.25	\$1,274.27	\$67.26	\$1,399.89	\$1,451.00	\$129.65	\$176.73

What is Xcel Energy doing to control costs?

- Providing energy conservation options. This helps customers manage energy use and save money on their bills. This also helps to delay generation investments.
- Reviewing and monitoring our business to minimize operating and maintenance cost increases.
- Operating power plants efficiently.
- Using a variety of fuel sources to manage costs and protect the environment.

Help with bills

If you are having trouble making regular payments on your Xcel Energy account, contact us as soon as possible. We’ll work with you to arrange a payment plan and connect you to other resources that can help.

What is the process for reviewing Xcel Energy’s rate increase request?

The MPUC, the Minnesota Department of Commerce – Division of Energy Resources, the Office of the Attorney General – Residential Utilities and Antitrust Division, public interest groups, and large commercial and industrial customer groups will investigate our proposal.

The MPUC will hold public hearings and accept written comments about our rate increase request. Customers and others will be able to comment on our rate request at the public hearings. You may add verbal comments, written comments, or both into the record. Notice of the public hearing dates and locations will be published in local newspapers, included in monthly bills, and at:

[xcelenergy.com/company/rates_and_regulations/filings/minnesota_electric_rate_case](#) (Make sure “Minnesota” is selected in the top left-hand corner.)

More information

Xcel Energy’s current and proposed rate schedules are available at:

Xcel Energy Web: xcelenergy.com/company/rates_and_regulations/filings/minnesota_electric_rate_case Phone: 800-895-4999 414 Nicollet Mall Minneapolis, MN 55401	Minnesota Department of Commerce Web: www.edockets.state.mn.us/documents In the “Docket #s” field, type in “24-320” and click search to see a list of documents. U.S. Mail: 85 7th Place East, Suite 280, St. Paul, MN 55101 Phone: 651-539-1500 or 800-657-3602
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Citizens with hearing or speech disabilities may call through their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.

Submit comments

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is asking customers to comment on Xcel Energy’s request for a rate increase. Send comments to, or contact the MPUC’s Consumer Affairs Office for assistance with submitting comments:

Online: [mn.gov/puc/get-involved/public-comments/](#)
Be sure to reference docket number 24-320

U.S. Mail: 121 7th Place East, Suite 350,
St. Paul, MN 55101

Phone: 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782

IMPORTANT

Comments will be made available to the public on the MPUC’s website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The MPUC does not edit or delete personally identifying information from submissions.

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ALTON TOWNSHIP
FILING NOTICE
ELECTION MARCH 11, 2025

TO ELECT:

1 – SUPERVISOR – TERM OF THREE YEARS

1 – TREASURER – TERM OF TWO YEARS

Filings open January 2, 2025 and closes at 5:00pm on January 16, 2025.
Those wishing to file must do so with:

Deb Westphal, Clerk
1711 370th Ave
Janesville MN 56048
507-461-3245

Filing must be done prior 5:00pm on January 16, 2025 with the \$2.00 filing fee.
A copy of this notice will be posted in the office of the clerk.

Deb Westphal, Clerk
Alton Township

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF WASECA

Notice is hereby given that the City of Waseca will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 7th, 2024, at 7pm at the City Hall Council Chambers located at 508 State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the progress and performance of the grant that the City of Waseca received from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Small Cities Development Program for funds to rehabilitate low to moderate income, owner occupied, single-family households. The public hearing is intended to provide citizens with an update about the program. All persons who may have an interest in the program are encouraged to attend the public hearing.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer January 2, 2024

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

To Whom It May Concern: Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Waseca will meet at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, to consider Municipal Project No. 2025-02 – 4th Street SW (CSAH 4) Rehabilitation, a street improvement project in the following location:

4th Street SW (CSAH 4) from 5th Avenue SW to Johnson Avenue

The total estimated cost of the project is \$485,469, a portion of which is proposed to be assessed to adjacent properties. A reasonable estimate of the impact of the assessments will be available at the hearing. Such persons that wish to speak in reference to the merits of the proposed project will be heard at the meeting. Questions may be directed to the City Engineer, Nathan Willey, at 507-835-9716.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on January 2, 2025

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

To Whom It May Concern: Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Waseca will meet at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, to consider Municipal Project No. 2025-01 – 2nd Street NW Reconstruction, a street and utility improvement project in the following location:

2nd Street NW from Elm Avenue West to 7th Avenue NW

The total estimated cost of the project is \$5,842,370, a portion of which is proposed to be assessed to adjacent properties. A reasonable estimate of the impact of the assessments will be available at the hearing. Such persons that wish to speak in reference to the merits of the proposed project will be heard at the meeting. Questions may be directed to the City Engineer, Nathan Willey, at 507-835-9716.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on January 2, 2025

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENT**

Waseca County will conduct a public hearing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 469.1812 to 469.1815 for the purpose of receiving oral and/or written comments for a proposed Residential Tax Abatement (Resolution 2025-07) for the County portion of property taxes for a new residential structure to be built on property within the City of Waseca, as described as follows: Lot Ten (10), Block Two (2), Fox Meadows 2nd Addition. The Parcel Identification number is 17.285.2100.

The public hearing will be held at approximately 9:30 A.M., Tuesday January 7, 2025, in the Waseca County Board Room, 300 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

The County’s abatement term cannot exceed 75% of the County’s share of annual taxes for up to six years. The total abatement of the County’s share of taxes on this parcel described above shall not exceed \$6218.92 in total.

Waseca County held a hearing on and approved the City of Waseca and Waseca County Residential Tax Abatement Program on May 16, 2023.

Pertinent information is on file at Waseca County Planning & Zoning. Any person wishing to make a written comment may do so by mailing them to Waseca County, 300 North State Street, Waseca MN 56093. Waseca County.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Thursday, December 26, 2024 and Jan. 2, 2025

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENT**

Waseca County will conduct a public hearing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 469.1812 to 469.1815 for the purpose of receiving oral and/or written comments for a proposed Residential Tax Abatement (Resolution 2024-05) for the County portion of property taxes for a new residential structure to be built on property within the City of Waseca, as described as follows: Lot Six (6) Block Five (5) Pondview of Waseca, Waseca County, Minnesota

The Parcel Identification number is 17.535.0340.

The public hearing will be held at approximately 9:30 A.M., Tuesday January 7, 2025, in the Waseca County Board Room, 300 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

The County’s abatement term cannot exceed 50% of the County’s share of annual taxes for up to ten years. The total abatement of the County’s share of taxes on this parcel described above shall not exceed \$8,342.40 in total.

Waseca County held a hearing on and approved the City of Waseca and Waseca County Residential Tax Abatement Program on May 16, 2023.

Pertinent information is on file at Waseca County Planning & Zoning. Any person wishing to make a written comment may do so by mailing them to Waseca County, 300 North State Street, Waseca MN 56093. Waseca County.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer on Thursday, December 26, 2024 and Jan. 2, 2025.

CITY OF WASECA PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Waseca **Economic Development Authority (EDA)** will consider a **FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM** at their meeting to be held at **12:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 8, 2025**, in the **COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL**, located at 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN.

Purpose:

The Waseca Economic Development Authority (EDA) was created in 1997 to promote economic growth within the City of Waseca. The EDA has also been given Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) duties for the City. A key function is the further development of business and industry in the City of Waseca, and being able to provide housing for the owners and employees of these businesses, including the availability of affordable housing.

The EDA also recognizes that the construction of multiple-unit housing developments provides for the creation of short-term construction jobs. The Waseca Economic Development Loan Program for the Creation of Multiple Family Housing is designed to stimulate private investment in high-quality housing that will be attractive and affordable. Therefore, this funding program is being established by the Waseca EDA to assist private business owners in their efforts to address the housing needs of Waseca businesses and residents, and enhance the overall economic prosperity of the community.

A complete copy of the Forgivable Loan Program is available in the office of the City Clerk, Waseca City Hall, 508 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

Published in the Waseca County Pioneer 12/19/24 and 1/2/25

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENT**

Waseca County will conduct a public hearing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 469.1812 to 469.1815 for the purpose of receiving oral and/or written comments for a proposed Residential Tax Abatement (Resolution 2025-06) for the County portion of property taxes for a new residential structure to be built on property within the City of Waseca, as described as follows: Lot Four (4) and the East 37.50 Feet of Lot Three (3), Block Two (2), Fox Meadows 2nd Addition. The Parcel Identification number is 17.285.0240.

The public hearing will be held at approximately 9:30 A.M., Tuesday January 7, 2025, in the Waseca County Board Room, 300 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093.

The County’s abatement term cannot exceed 50% of the County’s share of annual taxes for up to ten years. The total abatement of the County’s share of taxes on this parcel described above shall not exceed \$11,348.90. in total.

Waseca County held a hearing on and approved the City of Waseca and Waseca County Residential Tax Abatement Program on May 16, 2023.

Pertinent information is on file at Waseca County Planning & Zoning. Any person wishing to make a written comment may do so by mailing them to Waseca County, 300 North State Street, Waseca MN 56093. Waseca County.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) is considering a request for Federal assistance from Waseca County to construct a workforce development center in Waseca, MN for the purpose of promoting economic growth in the community by connecting job seekers with employers, providing resources for pre-employment training, and supporting individual career advancement. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, EDA is conducting an environmental assessment (EA) of the proposed project.

The proposed project includes remodeling the basement of the Waseca County Community Services Building, dividing the space into three classrooms, a larger meeting space, bathrooms, a break room, and an administration area. In addition to the remodel, a small (528 sq. ft.) above-ground addition will be constructed to provide the working space for a computer numerical control (CNC) machine. The project will be located at 1000 Elm Avenue West, Waseca, MN 56093. The purpose of the project is to assist residents with career planning, skills development, and job search strategies. Project information is available for review at Waseca County Economic Development Authority, 300 North State Street, Waseca, MN 56093, phone number: (507) 835-0538.

If you have any information regarding potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed project, please provide it in writing to:

Kyle Darton
Environmental Protection Specialist
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
Chicago Regional Office
KDarton@eda.gov

A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request at the above EDA Regional Office.

Comments received in the EDA Regional Office by 5:00 pm on January 17, 2025 that will be considered.

LET'S RAISE ONE TO 2025!

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Hours:

Mon - Thu:
8 am - 4 pm
Fri:
8 am - 12 pm

I'm Daniel J. Johnson. For the past 13 years, I've proudly served our community by offering personalized accounting services for you and your small business. From tax preparation and bookkeeping to financial planning, I'm here to provide you with professional, trustworthy, and reliable assistance. Let's work together and make your financial dreams a reality!

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• Estate and Trust Planning & Tax Preparation

• Financial Planning • Accounting Services

• Bookkeeping • Payroll Services