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Vol. 20 • Issue 13

Sat., March 30, 2019

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Former mayor Hunter found not guilty again

A jury found former Crosby mayor, James Jesses Hunter, not guilty on two counts of unlawful gambling in Crow Wing County District Court on Friday, March 22.

This is the third time that a jury has found Hunter, 70, not guilty. In 2018, he was acquitted of theft by swindle and second-degree assault. A third felony of receiving stolen property—a firearm—was dismissed by Crow Wing County Attorney Don Ryan.

Elected in November 2016, Hunter was serving as the Mayor of Crosby, when the Crosby Police Department filed charges against him back in March 2017. After his arrest, he continued serving as the mayor until he resigned in August 2017.

Hunter's attorney Ed Shaw, said that both he and Hunt-

er were pleased to see this charge against him resolved with another not guilty verdict.

"The citizens of Crow Wing County have consistently rejected the accusations leveled against him by the leadership of the Crosby Police Department," said Shaw. "Tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars have been wasted in a politically motivated investigation of a law abiding citizen. The citizens of Crosby deserve fair and honest leadership in their police department. We hope that they will soon have it."

Hunter still faces two charges by the Crosby Police Department of selling vehicle financing without a license (gross misdemeanor) and falsely reporting a crime (misdemeanor).

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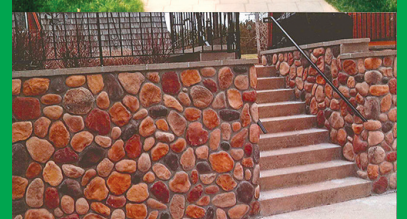
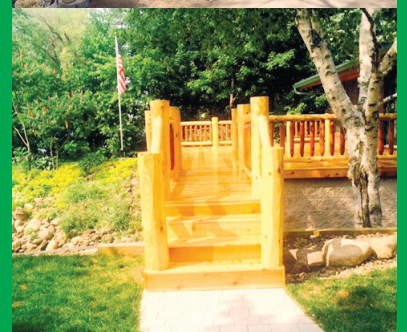
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Cuyuna Range economic revival: food, lodging, tunnel, splash pad and more



Formerly Crosby Super Valu — many decades ago — this building will be the home to Rafferty's Pizza on the ground floor and hotel rooms upstairs.

By ANN SCHWARTZ

The first revival on the Cuyuna Range was about 100 years ago when mining brought prosperity to the region. Immigrants from all over Europe came to the Range to work in the mines and the dozens of other businesses that supported the town.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, downtown Crosby and Ironton faded as one business after another closed their doors. Practical department stores and dime stores closed, while new antique and thrift stores started a mini-revival.

Now, with the popularity of mountain biking, tourism, brewed beer, thrift shopping and fine dining, the Cuyuna Range is experiencing a renaissance of development. Here are a few things in store for the near future:

New food coming

Rafferty's Traditional and Woodfired Pizza secured its wine and strong beer license recently from the Crosby City Council and hopes for a May 1 opening on Main Street and 1st Avenue Southwest in downtown Crosby.

The 1900 two-story brick building has been stripped to its brick walls and a second-floor deck lets diners enjoy views of Serpent Lake.

Victual and Rave Creamworks is a new business with two venues. Opening

on Crosby's main street this summer, Victual is a retail store that will sell artisan cheeses, cured meats and pates (charcuteri); packaged gourmet foods, specialty distilled liqueurs and fine wines; dinnerware, cocktail accessories and other gifts. Artisans, growers and distilleries in Minnesota and Wisconsin will be the source for many products.

Tasting and pairing classes, "pontoon party platters" and more will be featured.

Rave Creamworks, in the same building, will offer 16 flavors of ice cream that is lactose free. The space will also feature an outdoor patio for special events and ample parking with bicycle racks available.

Down the street, the Iron Range Eatery has already proven a popular spot for special and everyday meals. This summer, they will open a new patio with a fire pit for evening campfires.

Lodging

A lack of places for mountain bikers and tourists to stay in the Crosby area has led to the development of more lodging.

The Red Rider Resort, situated next to the Cuyuna County Recreation area in Crosby, has eight cabins and tent and RV sites on the Manuel Mine Pit Lake that boasts depths to 160-feet

and deeper. One can paddle-board, fish for rainbow trout, canoe or kayak. There is a short ride down to the access trail connecting to Cuyuna Recreational trails that are open year around for Fat Tire bikes, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Upstairs in the Rafferty's Pizza building, Cuyuna Hospitality will open the Crosby Lofts in May. The eight hotel rooms have in-suite bathrooms and highlight the features of the old building. Lodgers will also use the second floor deck. A secure place to store bikes, lockers and a bike wash are also provided.

The city of Crosby's Memorial Park Campground on Serpent Lake has been improved. This popular campground quickly fills up each summer and there is a sandy beach and boat launch on the lake.

Retail

Crosby has a hardware store again. Ace Hardware is open at 5 West 3rd Avenue and stocks paint, lawn and garden, tools and everything you need to fix and repair your home – along with helpful staff.

A Dollar General Store recently opened in Deerwood. And the former Abbey House/Skogmos Department Store building in Crosby was remodeled with all new electrical, plumbing, bathrooms, insulation, paint, vintage features and huge display windows. It is listed on LoopNet. The owner is also renovating a second property on Main Street that will also be available for rent.

Deerwood

The city of Deerwood will be a hopping place this summer. In addition to the new Dollar General, Deerwood Bank is undergoing a complete remodeling with an updated lobby and a pneumatic tube systems installed at the drive-up lanes with monitors for customers to interact with

the staff. This building was last remodeled in 1974.

This summer, when Hwy. 210 between Brainerd and Ironton is under construction, traffic will be detoured through Deerwood to Hwy. 18. A mini roundabout will be built in Deerwood in mid-

project will be let this month (March 2019) while the highway will be closed from July 8 to August 28 to construct the tunnel. The detour will follow County Roads 30 and 31.

Health Care

Cuyuna Regional Medical Center is doing extensive re-

April 9, for Chamber of Commerce members from Cuyuna Lakes, Brainerd and Nisswa.

All members are invited to meet staff and tour the new clinic and pharmacy located at 30833 North Star Drive, just across County Road 11 from the Breezy Point Sports Center, from 4:30-6 p.m. Refreshments and beverages will be provided by Breezy Point Resort and everyone will get an outdoors safety and first aid kit. There will also be live entertainment and drawings for door prizes.

The clinic and pharmacy are anchors of the new North Star Center complex named after the Breezy Point North Stars USA Hockey-sanctioned junior ice hockey team being developed on 20 acres by White Birch, Inc.

Services immediately available at CRMC's new clinic include laboratory and diagnostic imaging. Specialty surgery and orthopedic services will also be available on certain days of the month. Future services planned include obstetrics/gynecology and reflux and heartburn. In addition to medication, GuidePoint will gifts, cards and home décor. Pharmacist Lisa Iverson will staff GuidePoint.

CRMC's \$3 million, 10,000 square-foot facility includes nine exam rooms, a procedure room, laboratory, X-ray room, central nurses' station, registration and welcoming patient area. Dr. Mark Bertson leads the medical staff which also includes nurses, laboratory technologists, phlebotomists, diagnostic imaging technicians and receptionists. Eventually, the clinic will employ 16 staff. The clinic will also be open on Saturday mornings.

While we have covered an exhaustive list of projects and improvement here, no doubt some project or improvement was missed. Hurrah for that as we can do another article in six months about the explosion on the Cuyuna Range.



Deerwood Bank in Deerwood is undergoing its first extensive remodeling since 1974. Ann Schwartz photos

June with the highway set to close after the 4th of July. The detour will stay in place until October or November.

The long-awaited Splash Pad fun feature in Deerwood in the park behind the auditorium will be constructed this year. The city council entered into a contract with Vortex. The project is expected to cost \$125,555, of which \$108,500 is already raised. The city will explore Iron Range Resource grants.

Transportation

In addition to the reconstruction of Hwy. 210 this summer, the highway will also be reconstructed through the cities of Ironton and Crosby in 2021. A local committee is in place and working on plans for that huge project.

North on Hwy. 6 a tunnel will be drilled underneath for bikers and walkers to stay safe on trails. The pedestrian tunnel will connect the paved Cuyuna Lakes State Trail between Portsmouth Mine Lake and Croft Mine Historical Park in Crosby.

The project is led by the city of Crosby in partnership with MnDOT and MnDNR, and will improve motorist and pedestrian safety, according to MnDOT. The bids for the

modeling at the main hospital site in Crosby. According to information from CRMC, the two-year \$13 million project includes a new state-of-the-art outpatient clinic and interior remodeling to expanded orthopedics and pain management services and to house a new spine surgeon.

"To make room for the new clinic expected to open in fall 2020, underutilized areas of the Care Center will be consolidated and the Cancer Care Center and Rehabilitation departments will be relocated for patient convenience," CRMC reported in a news release.

The Care Center's nursing home population continues to decline, with the average daily census falling from 113 to the low 80s. The Care Center will be updated and reorganized to accommodate a future population estimate of 75 beds. Growth in assisted living had led to this decline.

During construction, several services for patients will be moved.

CRMC and GuidePoint are celebrating the opening of their new Breezy Point locations with a Business After Hours social on Tuesday,

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