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Roundabout meeting

Crow Wing County is hosting a public information meeting to discuss the intersection improvement project at the junction of State Highway 210 and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 31 in Crosby. at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday Nov. 9 at the Crosby City Hall (2 2nd St SW, Crosby, MN 56441.) Improvements will consist of a roundabout intersection and lane reconfiguration along CSAH 31. Project construction is scheduled for the summer of 2023.

This project will seek to improve a variety of well documented challenges that are located at the existing junction. This will be accomplished by using current safety design standards, best management environmental practices, and working cooperatively with State and Local Agencies.

The meeting will begin with an introduction to the project, followed by public comment. Maps and other pertinent information relating to this project will be available for public view.



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Carving out time for fall fun



The Hamilton and Johnson family and friends enjoyed pumpkin carving on a sunny autumn afternoon in rural McGregor.



Lillian Johnson and Eiley Kaehler finish the day as pumpkin heads. Sarah Hamilton Johnson photo

Gobblers trounce Pequot Lakes

By ANN SCHWARTZ
The Aitkin Gobbler football team and Coach Alan Hills soundly defeated the Pequot Lakes Patriots 32 to 0 in Section 7A quarterfinal action this week in Aitkin.

Early in the first quarter, Zack MacDonald set the stage by scoring on an interception. A two-point conversion sealed the deal for the 8 to 0 early lead.

There was a series of great plays by the Gobblers and

misfires by the Patriots, who turned over the ball on downs deep in Gobbler territory and failed to score in the first half. The teams took the halftime break with the Gobblers' lead at 16 to 0.

In the second half, Jackson MacDonald pulled off a second interception and there were many spectacular running plays by the Gobblers. Once again, Pequot fell apart when coming anywhere near the goal line. The Gobblers'

ended up killing time for the last two minutes, with the roaring crowd brought on by Jack MacDonald. The Aitkin Quarterbacks supplied free tickets to all Aitkin 7 to 12th graders to fill the stands. The ending score was 32 to 0 in favor of the Gobblers.

The Gobblers play Saturday, October 30, at 2 p.m. at Aitkin's Veterans' Field. It should be a great match-up, with #2 Gobblers facing the #3 Two Harbors.

Famous Phenologist highlight of Long Lake Fish Fry Fundraiser

Long Lake Conservation Center is hosting Phenology Fish Fry with John Latimer on Saturday, November 13.

The event includes an hour and a half nature hike through Long Lake, including our sphagnum bog, led by John Latimer, one of the region's best and most beloved phenologists. After the nature hike, guests can enjoy comradery with other nature lovers before sitting down for a classic Minnesota fall feast: fried Red Lake walleye with locally harvested wild rice, plus salad, bread and dessert. The hike begins at 4 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m.

Admission is \$40 per person and is limited to the first 125. All proceeds will go towards scholarships so students can attend nature school at Long Lake. The event is made possible thanks to support of the Long Lake Conservation Foundation, a 501(C)3 that supports Long Lake Conservation Center.

For nature lovers, or outdoor enthusiasts, Latimer



Phenologists John Latimer will be featured at the Long Lake Conservation Center's Phenology Fish Fry Fundraiser on Saturday, Nov. 13.

needs no introduction. As a mail carrier in rural Grand Rapids, Minn., for 35 years, he has passed the time by observing and recording seasonal changes in nature, learning everything he could about the area's weather, plants and animals, and becoming an icon among area naturalists. Latimer hosts a popular weekly Phenology show on KAXE radio.

The Phenology Fish Fry with John Latimer is part of Long Lake's autumn fundraising campaign that also includes the Nature 4 Kids Scholarship Fundraiser.

For more information, go to <https://www.longlakecc.org/phenology-fish-fry>, or contact Dave McMillan at 218-768-4653 or dave@longlakecc.org.

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- A small fee for recycling of used oil filters and anti-freeze.
- Free oil recycling at the landfill and several drop-off locations within the County. Visit our webpage for drop-off locations: www.crowwing.us and search "oil"
- Demolition materials may be disposed in the demolition landfill for a fee
- Large appliances, electronics, tires with or without rims, scrap metals, glass, and plastic can be disposed at the site for a nominal fee for recycling.

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READER RIBBETS

Aitkin schools capital projects levy

The 2021-22 school year is in full swing with students back in class and participating in a wide range of activities. Like the rest of our community, I wish the threat of the pandemic was behind us, but we will continue to manage as effectively as we can to keep our students safe and in the classroom for the full year.

You may have noticed that the school board and administration have been addressing a number of important decisions impacting the financial future of the Aitkin school district. This has been part of a year-long effort to stabilize our finances, invest in needed facility improvements and make a long-range plan for the district.

Most rural school districts in Minnesota are facing the same challenge as Aitkin. With the overwhelming majority of funding for school district operations coming from the State of Minnesota, we are forced to adapt when enrollment drops or when other state priorities impact education funding. Our school district receives \$1 million less each year from the state than we did three years ago, and inflation has worsened that gap. Since a school district cannot deficit spend, we have to roll up our sleeves and balance our general fund every year, no matter how much state funding has declined.

During my time as superintendent, we have annually cut programs and/or staff positions. I believe that a fundamental part of my job is to manage the budget well. However, I am also certain that continual cuts will threaten our mission of empowering students to be life-long learners and successful in their careers. A plan to stabilize our budget issues is critical for our district's future.

We now have that plan. Thanks to federal COVID-relief grants, we can address the financial impact of the pandemic on our schools with investments in improved HVAC and temporarily restoring a few staff positions. These funds are one-time grants, so we need to be careful that our investments won't simply delay difficult budget decisions for a few more years.

We have also proposed a 10-year capital projects levy, which will be decided by voters as a November referendum. The capital projects levy will allow us to make needed repairs in our schools, update technology, invest in career and technical education and return to a regular bus replacement schedule. You can learn more about this plan at allfor1aitkin.org.

Why a capital projects levy? Two reasons. First, we can use this levy for some expenses that would often require funding from our general fund, which will reduce the chances of a future deficit. Second, a capital projects levy spreads the property tax impact more evenly across more types of property. The tax impact on homeowners will be 60% less than with an operating levy, which is the most common type of general fund levy used by school districts.

If approved, the owner of an average-valued home in the city of Aitkin will see a \$3.00 per month increase from this referendum, while those in the remainder of Aitkin County will see a \$6.00 increase, primarily because of the higher value of homes in those areas.

Local voters will decide whether to approve this levy on Nov. 2. With approval, we believe we will have a financial

plan in place that can sustain us for the next several years. If voters reject the referendum, significant budget cuts will be necessary next year to avoid a deficit, which would likely mean losing eight to 12 teaching positions.

But this financial plan isn't the end of our work. Over the next few years, the school district needs to implement plans to stabilize and increase enrollment. We have a great story to tell, and working with our community leaders, we are confident we can help attract new families and businesses to this area once our budget is stabilized.

Finally, the school board is working on a long-term master plan for the property the school district owns just southeast of the city of Aitkin. I believe it was wise for the district to have made the land investment, but I also agree that the uncertainty about any future use of this land has been confusing to residents. The board has spent the past six months looking at preliminary versions of a plan for that land, but any final land-use decisions will not be made without extensive community input. If that land is to be used for school buildings down the road, it will require voters to approve a plan through another referendum.

There are a number of issues being discussed by the school board and the administration. All of this work is focused on one goal—provide a great education for the students who live in this area. If you have questions about any parts of this plan, please call me at dstifter@isd1.org or at (218) 927-7100.

Thank you.
**Dan Stifter, Superintendent
Aitkin Public Schools**

Your voice matters

It is with great appreciation and humility to everyone supporting the letter campaign against Walz and others. Thank you. It is wonderful you're like minded, but that is not enough. Your voice needs to be heard; it can't come from one source. There is zero productivity when you attend meetings and the meeting becomes your only involvement, you must act outside the meeting and have the confidence like-minded people are acting too. Sadly, most are not acting outside of the meeting. It's like filing anonymous complaints or sending anonymous letters

hoping someone else will stick their neck out for you. If it is important to you, your neck must be on the line. Using anonymity is cowardly, weakens the soul, and turns your cause to worthless whining.

Stand up, speak up, we the people are in charge and if our elected officials refuse to listen, we get louder, not violent, but louder, that is when your voice matters. Elected officials are afraid of public opinion, they know when it's bad, the chances of remaining in office are dramatically reduced, even hopeless, and most resign their position.

Your frustration is real, it needs to be heard, tell those you are frustrated with, don't hand off your issues, deal with them, write your own letter, make your own demands. The intention is to fix things that are broken, stop the abuse of power, loss of integrity, and make sure the public trust works for all. If by chance we don't agree with the issues, or the methods, it is not a deal breaker. We must stand united against all forms of abuse of power, violation of the public trust, and hold elected officials accountable or remove them from office..

Kelly Avelsgard, Deerwood

COMMUNITY EVENTS

October

- 30th - Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo Holiday Bazaar and Raffle, 9am-1pm, along with a cookie walk, bake sale and lunch: creamy turkey sandwiches, chips, bar, and a drink (available to go too!)
- 30th - Downtown Brainerd! Spooktacular! Monster Mash Flash Mob Dance led by Spirit Movement Dance Studio at 11am. All costumed children are welcome to learn how to Monster Mash in the ally adjacent to Bargains on 7th, then at 11:30am, groove down south 7th St. along to the Monster Mash to kick off trick or treating. Kids can stop by the Spooktacular Kids Activity Area on south 7th St. to paint pumpkins, play in a pumpkin sensory zone, decorate cookies, drink hot apple cider plus more, and enjoy live music by Bruce Archer from noon-3pm.
- 30th - Trunk or Treat with Prizes 4-6 p.m. Jacobson Park and Recreation Area
- 30th - Northland Arboretum Low Scare Trail 4-6 p.m. \$5 per person.
- 30th - Nisswa Fire Department Haunted Barn and Hayride 5-7 pm Not So Scary and 7-9pm Scary; bonfire, games and concessions
- 30th - **Aitkin Moose Lodge 1060 at 7:30pm, live music by Electric Steel, costumes encouraged. Moose members no charge/public \$5 cover.**
- 31st - Halloween Trunk-or-Treat in Ironton 2-4 p.m. outside the Ironton Fire Hall located at 309 Third Street in Ironton sponsored by the Ironton Fire Department Auxiliary. Then return for the Halloween Spooky Maze 5-8pm. Travel through the maze until you reach the end for free cookies and beverage.
- 31st - Halloween Trunk-or-Treat at First Lutheran Church, Aitkin, 2-6pm with 4pm brats and hot dogs.
- 31st - Lions Halloween Trick-or-Treat 2-4 pm at Schaefer's Food Parking Lot, 3962 Smiley Road, Nisswa, free hot dogs and candy given out to those 12 and younger.
- 31st - **Trick or Treat at the Aitkin Moose Lodge 1060 at 3-6pm free hot dogs, chips and candy.**
- 31st - Hill City Community Trunk-or-Treat 4-7pm on 204 Main Street, Palisade
- 31st - Palisade Trunk-or-Treat 4 p.m. on Lake Avenue, Hill City
- 31st - Light of the Cross Lutheran Church in Garrison Trunk & Treat event from 4-7pm. Come and see the goblins and witches and get some goodies.
- 31st - Members of the Cuyuna Fire Department and the Cuyuna Police Department will hand out candy at the Cuyuna Fire Hall to trick-or-treaters 4-8 pm. The fire hall is located at 24849 Minnesota Avenue in Cuyuna.
- 31st - Trick or Treat at the Deerwood Fire Hall 4-8 pm.
- 31st - Trunks for Treats at Salem Lutheran Church parking lot in Deerwood 4:30-6 p.m. There will be decorated trucks and hot dogs and treats. The event will also include an "All Saints Day" area for remembering loved ones who have passed away.
- 31st - Trunk-or-Treat at the Emily Fire Hall on County Road 1. Walk along the decorated "trunks" for candy, and enjoy a hot dog, chips water, hot cocoa, bonfire, games and prizes. Treat bags are provided by the Outing Area Chamber.
- 31st - Crosslake Lutheran Church Trunk 'n Treat at 5pm. There will also be a bounce house and there will be games inside in the church Fellowship Hall.
- 31st - Zion Lutheran Church Trunk-or-Treat 5-7 p.m. 220 N 8th St #3402, Brainerd
- 31st - Hot chocolate and candy at the Crosby Fire Hall 5-8 pm.
- 31st - Halloween at CRMC in Crosby. Children can roam along the Spooktacular Candy Trail at 5 p.m. up to the main entrance of CRMC's Care Center in Crosby. Children age 10 and younger are welcome to trick-or-treat outside of each resident's room and greet them through their festively decorated windows.
- 31st - Trick or Treat at the Crosby Police Station starting at 5:30 pm.

November

- 5th - Cromwell Hunter's Supper at the Cromwell Area Community Club 4-7pm at the Cromwell Park Pavilion: turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, roll and pumpkin pie. Tickets for this event are \$12 for adults; \$5 Ages 5-10; and 4 and under free. All proceeds go towards Cromwell community improvement. Remember - you don't have to be a hunter to attend!
- 5th & 6th - Friends of the Aitkin Library Book Sale 9-3 All hardcover books are \$1 each, and everything else is \$.50 each. Bag sale on Saturday afternoon - all you can fit in a bag for \$3.

Combined polling places for school district elections for the Aitkin School District capital projects levy on Tuesday, Nov. 2 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. are as follows:

Journey North Community Church, 810 2nd Street NW, Aitkin-
Aitkin, Farm Island, Hazelton, Morrison, Nordland, Spencer Townships and unorganized territory in Aitkin County; and Dean Lake, Deerwood, Rabbit Lake, and Ross Lake Townships in Crow Wing County.

Palisade Fire Hall, 109 1st Avenue NW, Palisade-
City of Palisade, Fleming, Libby (West), Logan, Verdon, Waukenabo, and Workman Townships and Com.unorganized territory in Aitkin County

Glen-Kimberly Town Hall, 32631 Dam Lake Street, Aitkin-
Glen, Kimberly, Lakeside, Lee, Malmo and Wealthwood Townships in Aitkin County

Computer program

After reading the Kelly Avelsgard letters every week for the last month or two, I might be wrong but I think that Kelly Avelsgard is a pseudonym for a computer programmer could write a program that would turn out a letter comparable to the Avelsgard letters without

breaking a sweat. For example:

- Who = (Goddard, Walz, CRMC, CDC, etc)
- What = (evil, greedy, biased, incompetent, etc.)
- Should = (retire, quit, be fired, get sued, etc.)
- Connectors = (is, and, also, therefore, etc.)
- and so on.

Most first year programmers could write a short program that would choose one (or more) from each category and flesh them out with appropriate statements. There you'd have your typical Avelsgard letter.

What do you think folks?
**Jim Lease,
Deerwood**



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Warm cheerful attitudes at Ruttger's Oktoberfest despite cool temps



Friends Diane Toner and Sarah Cheny were pretty in pink plaids and "Best Weekend Ever" hats. Ann Schwartz photos

classy carved walking stick. Another group of four related women: Vicki from Elgin; Lisa, Aitkin; Kensey, Elgin and Kay, Plainview, were resplendent in buffalo plaid. So much so that Jimbo from St. Louis Park wanted to meet the women and show off his own plaid duds.



The buffalo plaid gals: Vicki, Lisa, Kensey and Kay celebrate Ruttger's Oktoberfest in style.



Jimbo from St. Louis Park must have gotten the buffalo plaid "memo" too.

By ANN SCHWARTZ
The autumn day dawned bright, nippy on Tuesday, Oct. 23 with no wind or rain in sight.

my friend is from Little Rock and we have been dear friends for a long time," said Diane Toner and Sarah Cheny.

Karen Novak of New Brighton, came up especially for this fall tradition in Minnesota. She carried a unique and



Paul Trevy from Bay Lake was enthusiastic.

Paul Trevy from Bay Lake was one of the few in full costume.

sporting a Tyrolean hat. "I am Weston Hershey, 25, Edina. I drove to my friend's cabin to attend Oktoberfest," said Hershey, visiting a jewelry booth.

Michael Dowe, 26, was also at a buddy's cabin in the Bay Lake area. "Everything is beautiful," Dowe enthused. "I love the camaraderie of all the folks and fall in Minnesota. The pop-up shops are great and the cold beer is an extra bonus."

ent types to be seen along with young parents and toddlers and small children. However, middle-level children like my 9-year-old granddaughter were scarce and even more so teens like my 14-year-old grandson.

However, the kids enjoyed people-watching, treats and a snapping bonfire.

There is a special feeling in the air to have seasonal festivals revived—giving us time to make memories with friends and family once again.



Weston and Michael enjoyed a weekend away from the Twin Cities.

People responded in droves and descended on Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort for the Oktoberfest Weekend. For many, meeting up with particular friends and family is a special part of this autumn tradition. Cries of greetings were heard and hugs witnessed.

In speaking to some fest-goers, it was apparent that locals were in short supply and many made the trip from Twin Cities or further afield to drink beer in the open air, listen to polka dance music, mingle, and visit pop-up stores and sales in the Bay Lake Village.



Kim Novak of New Brighton was excited to spend the day with family members. Her artistic walking stick helped her navigate the grounds.



Jack Ruttger was festively dressed including his Tyrolean hat.

Jack Ruttger, 91, made his way around greeting folks and

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Sandy Judge, of "Never Surrender Inc" is shown accepting a donation of \$715 from Lori Croaston, Paula Bellin and Barb Jones. The funds were raised during the 16th annual fall bus tour sponsored by the Aitkin American Legion.

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