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Free entrance to Minnesota state parks and recreation areas



Most state park offices and visitor centers will be minimally staffed on Nov. 24, so visitors are encouraged to plan ahead and arrive prepared for their visit.

Check visitor alerts and find directions on state park webpages (mndnr.gov/park-list).

Check the weather forecast before leaving home, and

dress appropriately for the conditions. Be sure to pack water and snacks.

For more information, visit the free park day webpage (mndnr.gov/freeparkdays).

Here are the fee-free dates in 2024:

- Monday, January 15
- Saturday, April 27
- Saturday, June 8
- Friday, November 29

Donations sought

Bridges of Hope coordinates a Thanksgiving meal program each year as a part of its mission to build bridges of support, anchored in Christ's love, between families in need and the community assets that can help them thrive and gain hope. This year, Bridges of Hope matched 205 families in need with generous individuals, clubs, businesses, and churches. The project has operated at Bridge of Hope for more than 15 years and is a community favorite.

Sponsors shop for, pack, and deliver meals during the week of Thanksgiving, to ensure that these households do not go without a Thanksgiving meal. In addition, individuals who are interested are direct-

ed to other resources such as community meals if that social interaction is desired. The goal is to share compassion with our neighbors in need while streamlining and coordinating with other agencies offering similar meal programs to reduce duplication.

If you would like to help Bridges of Hope assist more community members in need through Resource Connection Services, Operation Sandwich, or our shelter, The Bridge on 7th, donations can be sent to PO Box 742, Brainerd, MN 56401 or made online at www.bridgesofhopemn.org.

Bridges of Hope has been serving the Lakes Area for more than 20 years.

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YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR GOAL

Call Eric at
218-821-1393

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is waiving entrance fees to all 75 state parks and recreation areas on Friday, Nov. 24 – the day after Thanksgiving. This "Free Park Day" is one of four days each year when the DNR waives the requirement for a vehicle permit at state parks and recreation areas. The goal of Free Park Days is to encourage Minnesotans to get outdoors and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of spending time in nature.

"During the hustle and bustle of the busy holiday

season, Minnesota state parks and recreation areas are the perfect places to enjoy the tranquility of nature," said Ann Pierce, director of the DNR Parks and Trails Division. "We encourage people to get outside with friends and family after Thanksgiving gatherings to enjoy the calming sights and sounds of nature."

Many published studies show the positive physical and mental health benefits of spending time in nature. According to the American Psychological Association,

the calming and restorative qualities of nature help lower cortisol levels, which leads to reduced stress and improved cognitive function.

Some state parks will offer naturalist programs on Nov. 24. Among the programs planned on Free Park Day are guided nature walks at White-water, Wild River and Split Rock Lighthouse state parks. Most naturalist programs are free, but sometimes require advance registration. Check the parks and trails event calendar webpage (mndnr.gov/ptcalendar) for details.

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Minnesota author Cary Griffith to discuss his book "Killing Monarchs"



Author Cary J. Griffith

Monday, Dec. 4, 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. Minnesota author Cary J. Griffith will discuss his novel, "Killing Monarchs: A Sam Rivers Mystery." In this outdoors mystery, there are two dead bodies and too many coincidences to ignore—special agent Sam Rivers must stop a murderous conspiracy. As a special agent for the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Rivers has researched and studied a variety of animals. He's visiting sixth graders at Hopkins Elementary to share photographs of the monarch butterfly, and he's brought along his drug-sniffing wolf-dog, Gray, to give students a demonstration of his partner's remarkable skills. Gray finds a sample drug packet, hidden by Sam, but that's not all. The

wolf-dog keeps following his nose, leading Sam to a utility room where they discover the school's janitor, dead. Local police write it off as a

drug overdose, but Sam is no stranger to crime scenes. He suspects foul play. Attendees are free to bring a sack lunch or to just enjoy

the light refreshments provided. No registration is required, and all are welcome. For more information, contact the library at 218-829-

5574 or visit the Friends of the Library's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Friendsofthebrainerdpubliclibrary.

The Friends of the Brainerd Public Library Brown Bag Lunch Author Series meets in the large meeting room of the Brainerd Public Library on the first Monday of each month at 12:00 noon. The next meeting will be

CONSERVATION TIP OF THE WEEK

NOVEMBER 21-27, 2023



SWITCH TO CLOTH PAPER TOWELS

Instead of using paper towels, switch to cloth. Since cloth towels are reusable, they are more long-lasting, economical, and eco-friendly than paper towels. Buy natural fabrics like cotton & linen because they are compostable if they are not contaminated.

Nature Notes:

- Weasels have turned white for the winter. The short-tailed and long-tailed weasels have a black-tipped tail, the least weasel is all white. The short-tailed weasel, when in its white winter coat, is called an ermine.
- Raccoons stay active as long as temperatures remain in the upper 20s Fahrenheit.
- Listen for the hooting of the great horned owls.

STARGAZING NOTES, provided by the Minnesota Astronomical Society

What's happening in the starry sky this week?

- Saturn appears low in the south at nightfall. Below Saturn is Fomalhaut, dubbed "the loneliest star" because it's the only bright one in its patch of sky. Fomalhaut's constellation—Piscis Austrinus, the southern fish—is one of the dimmest of all.
- Nov. 18: Leonid meteor shower peaks. Best viewing between midnight and dawn.
- Nov. 27: Full moon



As part of its ongoing mission to educate the public about wise use of natural resources, Long Lake's team of Environmental Educators will share simple, everyday Conservation Tips that everyone, including kids, can do. If everyone makes the effort to consume resources more wisely, we can help ensure a brighter future for the planet and make life better TODAY!

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- Free compost of lawn and garden material (please separate brush and branches)
- 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, and scrap metals can be disposed at the site for a nominal fee for recycling.

The landfill is open only to residents of Crow Wing County for recycling and disposal needs.

For more information, please call 218-824-1010.

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Wed., Nov. 29
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Mille Lacs Energy is moving from east Aitkin to about 13 miles south along Highway 169.

Mille Lacs Energy's new headquarters taking shape south of Aitkin

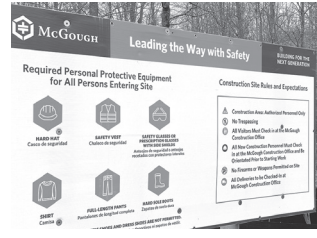
By ANN SCHWARTZ
Among the lakes and woods south of Aitkin, a new, huge complex is being constructed.

A 51,000-plus square foot headquarters for the Mille Lacs Energy power and tech company is on a previously undeveloped 31-acre parcel at Hwy. 169 and 430th Avenue about 13 miles south of Aitkin. It is slab on grade and includes precast exterior walls and a steel joist roof. Spaces include multiple garage bays, a mechanic's bay,

wash bay, mezzanine, office space, board room and utility spaces. Outside will be a secure pole yard, public and employee parking and green space.

Because the project is taking place in a woods and water area, much attention was paid to the sewer and pump system. There will be a mound sewage system with two holding tanks and a pump. The type 1 commercial mound is set at 1,300 gpd, along with a type II commercial holding tank at 300 gpd.

McGough Construction Company, St. Paul, is the general contractor. They have 60 years of experience building major commercial projects, according to their website.



McGough Construction is building the new headquarters for Mille Lacs Energy. Ann Schwartz photos

READER RIBBETS

Democrats sky-high renovation cost

State officials recently indicated plans to renovate a government office building will cost state taxpayers an astronomical \$730 million, with interest alone calculated at \$275 million.

This is an egregious insult to taxpayers, many of whom are just now learning about this glaring abuse of their dollars after Democrats put the project's wheels in motion on a party-line vote late last year. Democrats formally introduced and approved the project in just one day, without the public debate, scrutiny or transparency a \$730 million proposal warrants.

Such shameless Democrats actions come at a time Minnesotans continue to struggle with higher prices for everyday essentials in this Biden-Walz economy. Maybe some of the price-point taxpayer pain could have been offset by providing meaningful tax relief for all Minnesotans with the state's \$17.5 billion surplus, but Democrats failed to do so.

They blew the surplus and spent \$730 million on the State Office Building, home to offices of House members and staff. By comparison:

The massive state Capitol renovation completed in 2017 was about \$310 million, less than half of the SOB project's cost.

Construction of an entirely new Minnesota Senate Building within the last decade was \$90 million, one-eighth of the

SOB price tag.

The cost for the SOB project equals \$5.4 million PER House member.

This fiscal mismanagement would be bad enough if it were isolated, but it's not. Look at the light-rail project south of the Twin Cities that is years behind schedule and a billion dollars over budget. It was scheduled to be completed by 2018 for \$1.25 billion. Now, it sits at \$2.75 billion and is scheduled to be finished in 2027. There's also the renovation of the governor's mansion, which has grown from a \$7 million proposal to a \$12 million taxpayer bill.

This is just a sliver of the spending abuse; we haven't even gotten to actual fraud under lax Democrat watch. It begs the question: When will Minnesotans hold Democrats responsible for promising popular things like tax relief and support for law enforcement, only to break those promises – including failing to fully eliminate the tax on Social Security – despite public support?

Instead of making life more affordable for all Minnesotans, Democrats this year raised taxes by nearly \$10 billion and increased state spending by 40 percent despite a \$17.5 billion surplus. Gov. Tim Walz promised to provide Minnesotans huge \$2,000 rebate checks from the state's historic surplus. Then, he and fellow Democrats spent the money themselves instead of returning it to over-

charged taxpayers.

The small rebate some Minnesotans did receive was temporary, but Democrat tax hikes are permanent. Minnesotans are paying even more to get their car tabs renewed, register their boats, buy gas, order online, buy a car and more. And workers face added taxes for an untested paid-leave system that eliminates private paid-leave benefits many workers already had and liked.

Which brings us back to the \$730 million worth of fiscal insanity Democrats exhibited with the House's office renovation. In fairness, the 90-year-old State Office Building needs security upgrades, improvements to the HVAC system, and better public accessibility. That said, alternatives were available to adequately renovate the SOB at a lower cost to respect Minnesota taxpayers. Instead, Democrats refused to consider reasonable options to contain costs and plowed ahead with extravagant blueprints reportedly prepared by Manhattan architects with a main office on Park Avenue.

This is just one stark example of how Democrats are siphoning dollars from hardworking Minnesotans to fuel their own gluttony. It's time to stop feeding the ever-growing beast of big government. We must draw a hard line and let the Democrats know enough is enough!

Representative Ben Davis
Minnesota House
District 6A

Veterans Day celebrations abound

Veterans Day was stretched out over several days as area groups found ways to honor current sol-

diery and veterans. Many restaurants served free meals to veterans. Schools put on programs. Veterans

clubs hosted vets and their families for free meals, such as here at the Aitkin American Legion.



The colorguard salutes the colors at the American Legion in Aitkin.



Muriel Kingsley and Roberta Elvecrog work in the kitchen dishing up spaghetti. Ann Schwartz photos



The colorguard enjoyed the homemade spaghetti lunch that was provided free to veterans at the American Legion in Aitkin.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

November

- 18th - Hunting for the Holidays Craft Show, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Deerwood American Legion located at 23659 Forest Road in Deerwood. A sloppy joe lunch is available.
- 20th - Free Meals for Seniors, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Deerwood Auditorium
- 20th - Grief Support Group, 5 p.m. Heartwood Senior Living in Crosby
- 21st - Red Cross Blood Drive 12-5 p.m. in the Deerwood Auditorium, sponsored by Garrison Bay Lake Area Lions
- 21st - Weight Loss Support Group, 6 p.m. Cuyuna Regional Medical Center - Virtual
- 22nd - Walk with a Doc, 4:30 p.m. Hallett Community Center
- 24th - Aitkin's "World Famous" Fish House Parade - Visit Santa, run the 5k, check out the vintage snowmobile display and buy a Fish House Parade raffle ticket. Catch the parade at 1pm in Downtown Aitkin.
- 24th - Love & Dreams at the Ripple Center, at approximately 2 p.m. after the World Famous Fish House Parade in downtown Aitkin. This 10 piece multi-singer ensemble is a tribute to Captain & Tennille & Linda Ronstadt.
- 25th - Getting Loose on the Moose trail ride hosted by Over The Hills Gang ATV Club.
- 27th - Grief Support Group, 5 p.m. Heartwood Senior Living in Crosby
- 28th - IOU Mental Health Support Group, 2-3:30 p.m., 6-7:30 p.m. Cuyuna Regional Medical Center - Free
- 28th - Dementia Caregiver Support, 1 p.m. Cuyuna Regional Medical Center Super One Conference Room
- 29th - Walk with a Doc, 4:30 p.m. Hallett Community Center in Crosby
- 30th - Dec. 2 - Cuyuna Christmas, cuyunachristmas.com

December

- 2nd - Aitkin County Historical Society Cookie Walk at the museum, 20 Pacific St. SW Aitkin starting at 9:00 a.m., going until sold out. Cookies are \$6.00 per dozen. Varieties of cookies will be pre-wrapped in 1, 2, 3, and 4 doz. packages. If you would like to pre-order cookies, call 218-927-3348 or email ACHS@aitkincohs.org. Pre-ordered cookies must be picked up by 11:00 a.m. on the day of the sale! Proceeds support the Historical Society.
- 2nd - Cuyuna Christmas Lunch with Santa at the Deerwood Auditorium from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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- Must have a clean driving record.
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Please contact Michelle Alcox, Transportation Supervisor, with any questions at 218-831-0824. w45-46

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Delivery Driver and Warehouse Team Member in Brainerd MN. Requires lifting and moving furniture throughout the 30,000-square-foot building and into customers' homes so the right candidate is able to lift and carry 100 pounds or more. Must have a valid driver's license with the ability to drive a box truck over 10,000 lbs. Contact 218-828-3020 for further information. w46

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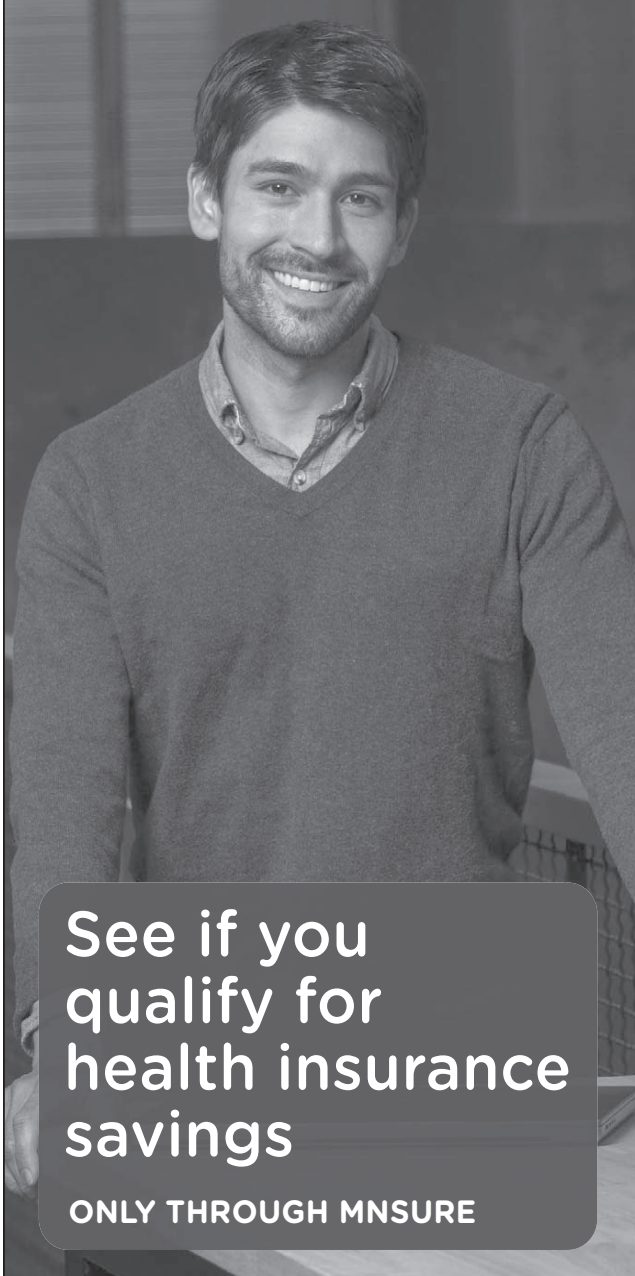
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WANTED: ALL 1970S MOTORCYCLES Running or not. Titled or not. Will pick up. Cash in exchange. Sell now before prices fall. Call Dan at 612/720-2142

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FREE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET for those that qualify. Government program for recipients of select programs include Medicaid, SNAP, Housing Assistance, WIC, Veterans Pension, Survivor Benefits, Lifeline, Tribal. 15 GB internet service. Bonus offer: Android tablet FREE with one-time \$20 copay. Free shipping & handling. Call Maxsip Telecom today! 866/433-5324

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SAFE STEP North America's #1 Walk-In Tub. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our FREE shower package and \$1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 833/966-3882

MISCELLANEOUS
DONATING YOUR VEHICLE? Get more! Free towing. Tax deductible. Plus, a \$200 restaurant voucher and a 2-night/3-day hotel stay at one of 50 locations. Call Heritage for the Blind to donate your vehicle today 844/220-9501

MISCELLANEOUS
SWITCH TO DISH and get up to a \$300 gift card! Plus get the Multisport pack included for a limited time! Hurry, call for details: 855/562-4309

Advertise here statewide in 210+ newspapers for only \$279 per week! Call 800-279-2979

Get started at Mnsure.org



NEWSHOPPER Classified Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____


All ads must reach our office no later than **Noon on Monday with payment.** Please type or print clearly. Your ad will be printed as you write it.

Classified Rates

of issues _____

- 75¢ per word one issue (10 word minimum)
- 70¢ per word, per week for two issues (10 word minimum)
- 65¢ per word, per week for three to twelve issues (10 word minimum)
- 55¢ per word, per week for thirteen or more issues (10 word minimum)

Add \$1.00 each for bold type and/or CAPITALIZED type, whether one word or all words in your classified ad. Add \$12.00 for your logo, artwork or photo! (1/2" tall x 1 1/2" wide printed maximum size)

Add \$2.00 for one of our sixteen eye catching graphics: 

Add a photo for \$12.00 per issue

As Low as \$5.50 per issue for 13 or more issues (10 word minimum)

To Figure the Cost of Your Ad

Number of Words _____

Rate per Word x _____

Additional Costs + _____

Total Per Week _____

Number of Weeks x _____

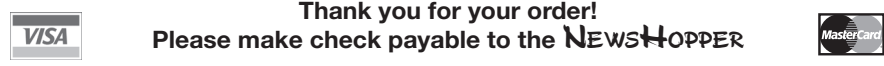
TOTAL COST OF AD _____

We are not responsible for error due to illegible copy or missing punctuation. Punctuation does not count as a word. Each phone number, e-mail and web address counts as one word.

send to: NEWSHOPPER™
PO Box 562
Ironton, MN 56455

www.NewsHopper.net • hopper@crosbyironton.net

Thank you for your order!
Please make check payable to the **NEWSHOPPER**



Aitkin County Habitat for Humanity Positive Impacts on the Area Economy

- Payroll \$40,000 a year
- Property taxes \$36,000 a year
- Home insurance premiums \$28,800 a year
- Develops blighted property
- Installs new sidewalk used by pedestrians
- Lined Aitkin sewers and extended gas line
- Brings tourists to venues, hosts booths at events, parades; Youth Build, rain gardens, donates to other nonprofits, repair projects help low-income homeowner stay in homes

Givers not takers



- Administered CHAPS that brought in over \$42,000 for local rent, mortgage and utility payments during pandemic
- Refers residents to other resources
- Habitat homeowners work in needed industries: health care, construction, road construction, truck driving, hair styling, nurse's aide, county services, school districts, restaurants, manufacturing
- In last three years, Aitkin Habitat for Humanity did business with 17 local retailers, 13 restaurants, venues: 16 local services, 9 local media, 3 banks, 8 non-profits, 20 building-related businesses, 9 tech. creative businesses, federal, state, county and city governments
- Spent nearly \$200,000 on the last home (the majority of it local)



Aitkin County
Habitat
for Humanity®

For More Information or
to Donate or Volunteer
Call 218-927-5656 or

Email: aitkinhabitat@gmail.com

www.habitatforhumanityaitkincounty.org

In the words of the late Phil R., "We are givers, not takers."

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