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## Aitkin to vote on \$68.5 million school referendum August 9

### New 5-12 school designed for total of 720 students at total cost over \$103 million with interest

By ANN SCHWARTZ

**John Chute votes no, David Burgstaler absent; rest of Aitkin School Board votes 'yes'**

With John Chute voting no, the Aitkin School Board, at its April 18 meeting, voted to put a \$68.5 million referendum before the voters on August 9, 2016.

If referendum passes at the primary election, Aitkin will build a new 5-12 school and community, athletic and auditorium space on a site yet to be determined. It also includes a \$9.8 million remodel of Rippleside Elementary in Aitkin.

John Chute, board member, said that he would not support the proposal.

"My position is going to make me friends and enemies," said Chute. "Sadly, this shows very little restraint in

spending."

Chute said the new school proposal contains "wishes, wants and desires," and little needs and the needs that exist can be handled with maintenance. He said a lot of what is needed is cosmetic, such as painting walls and fixing ceilings. He said the district has a healthy fund balance to use for maintenance and if they go to the public to get maintenance money "it wouldn't be hard to sell.... it will get some support."

Chute said the data shows that the school district has an older population and declining student enrollment. "A school isn't going get people to come here with no jobs to pay the way."

The resulting tax impact, he said is "pretty significant" as a lot of people are on fixed incomes. "The feedback I've

gotten from the public is an overwhelming 'no' to these proposals, so I'm going to do what my gut says to do....the right thing in my mind... I will not support it."

Board Member Cindi Hills made the motion to authorize the issuance of school building bonds and call for a special election. At the urging of Superintendent Bernie Novak she added an additional \$500,000 to tear down the high school building, if it isn't sold or re-purposed, putting the total at \$68.5 million.

Board Member Jeremy Janzen seconded the motion.

"I appreciate all the work that Task Force did and all the people who reached out to me either way," said Hills. "It's exciting to be at this point. A lot of work was put in. There are lots of passionate feelings either way [for

and against building!."

A Community Task Force held five meetings after which it came forth with a recommendation to build a new school and remodel Rippleside. Some Task Force members favor remodeling both the elementary and high school and not building new.

Board Member Pete Welshons said if he served on the Task Force he'd have gone in a different direction but: "As a school board member I'm not going to stand in the way of the Community Task Force to bring the vote to the community."

Board Member Kevin Hoge said: "Let the people vote it down or up." He said he was in favor of remodeling both schools, but had given his word to the Task Force to abide by its recommendation. Chair Dennis Hasskamp

said: "I support going to the community with it." He said if anyone wants his personal opinion, they can ask him for it.

**What will it cost me?**

New figures for tax impact: \$100,000 homestead home, increase of \$232; \$150,000 home, increase of \$409; \$250,000 home, increase of \$762 and \$500,000 home, increase of \$1,619. These increases are yearly for 20 years and are added on to the tax homeowners already pay.

Commercial property would pay \$486 more for a \$100,000 business; \$1,376 on a \$250,000 business; \$2,995 on a \$500,000 business and \$6,233 on a \$1 million business.

Ag homestead property would be taxed \$394 more on \$200,000 and \$718 on \$500,000. **Continued on Page 7**



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ing. Many people won't fish unless someone asks them to go," said Jenifer Wical, marketing coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources outreach section. "Before heading out, we have a fishing license to fit your need." Buy licenses at any DNR license agent, online with a mobile or desktop device at [www.mndnr.gov/buylicense](http://www.mndnr.gov/buylicense), or by phone at 888-665-4236. Mobile buyers receive a text or email that serves as proof of a valid fish

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# Guest Opinion: Crude oil pipeline delays risk public safety

By REPRESENTATIVE DALE LUECK (R) DISTRICT 10B  
 The Minnesota Department of Commerce recently reopened the public comment period and scheduled more public hearings involving the Sandpiper and Line 3 crude oil pipelines. The hearing in our area will be May 11 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the East Lake Community center near

McGregor. Online comments can be submitted at: <http://www.sandpiperline3.us/>.  
 I remain concerned that Minnesota's permitting process continues to unnecessarily put the general public at risk. Delaying moving as much crude oil as is reasonably possible off the rails and into modern safe pipelines increases the likelihood of

a serious accident that may injure or kill members of the general public.  
 GAO-14-667 Oil and Gas Transportation report of Aug. 21, 2014 states:  
*"Inherent safety risks: Transporting oil and gas by any means through pipelines, rail, truck, or barge—poses inherent safety risks. However, in January 2013, we found*

*that pipelines are relatively safe when compared with other modes, such as rail and truck, for transporting hazardous goods because pipelines are mostly underground.*

*For example, we found that large trucks and rail cars transporting hazardous materials, including crude oil and natural gas liquids, resulted in far more fatalities and incidents than pipelines."*

A major justification for delaying or stopping construction of oil pipelines in Minnesota continues to be the risk of environmental damage. However, many that raise environmental concerns remain silent on the risk to public safety, as it does not exist.

Pipeline leaks do cause environmental damage, but rarely injure or kill a member

of the public. The July, 2013 accident at Lac-Megnatic, Quebec, involving a train load of Bakken crude oil intended for a Canadian east coast refinery, is an example of a major rail accident.

One crude oil train accident resulted in 47 deaths, 30 buildings destroyed and another 36 requiring demolition due to contamination. Over 2,000 people were evacuated. Unlike many of our area schools that are located relatively close to the rail tracks, the Lac-Megnatic high school was far enough away to allow safe sheltering of the evacuated.

Lac-Megnatic lost 47 of its 5,900 residents. It took several days to fully to extinguish the fire. Delaying building pipelines increases the potential of crude oil unit trains rumbling through



Representative Dale Lueck (R) District 10B

the towns of Brainerd, Deerwood, Aitkin, McGregor and Tamarack.

We can disagree on which presents the greater risk, a pipeline leak or a crude oil train accident. However, we should have that discussion with a clear understanding of the consequences of a major crude oil-related rail accident. I encourage everyone with an interest in this matter to participate.

## Aitkin to vote on \$68.5 million school referendum August 9 | Continued from Page 1

\$400,000 property.

Ag non-homestead land would be taxed from \$6.48 to \$19.43 an acre. Seasonal property owners would pay \$324 on a \$100,000 property; \$486 on \$150,000; \$648 on \$200,000; \$810 on \$250,000 and \$1,619 on \$500,000.

Novak commented on April 18 that new data shows that seasonal property would pay higher rates. He said that with interest of about \$33 million, the entire project will cost about \$103 million plus.

A community member reported (after the meeting) that several people spoke against the new school proposal during the comment portion at the end of the meeting. He was concerned that the board hadn't pinned down the site yet and that it may need to be annexed into the city of Aitkin. Others spoke about not being able to afford the high taxes.

In other business, the board approved Mac laptop computers for all 7-12 graders. They also heard that some longtime teachers are resigning and Hills said she is very concerned that good teachers are staying in the area but choosing to work elsewhere.

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\$27,987

**2014 HONDA CR-V EX-L**

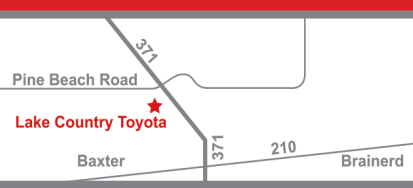
AWD LEATHER HEATED SEATS

**LAKE COUNTRY'S LOW PRICE**  
\$21,987

**2014 TOYOTA VENZA XLE**

AWD LEATHER HEATED SEATS

**LAKE COUNTRY'S LOW PRICE**  
\$22,997



**LakeCountryToyota.com**

7036 Lake Forest Road  
Baxter, MN 56425

**218-454-2200**

# HOUSTON FORD OF PINE RIVER



**2012 Ford F-150 4x4 SuperCab XLT**

**\$24,999**

Max Trailer Tow  
Heavy Duty Payload  
ONE OWNER!

Mileage: 49,700 • 3.5L EcoBoost • BackUp Camera • SYNC • Power Seat • Max Trailer Tow • Box Liner • Brake Controller • Aluminum Wheels • ONE OWNER • 8' Box #55441a

**2015 Ford F-150 4x4 Crew Cab Lariat**

**\$41,558**

3" Lift  
20" Wheels

Mileage: 18,242 • 5.0L V8 • Rear Sensing • BackUp Camera • SYNC • Heated & Cooled Seats • Dual Temp • 10-Way Power Seat • Tow Package • Tailgate • Keyless Entry #55447a

**2012 F-250 4x4 CrewCab King Ranch**

**\$37,499**

ONE OWNER!  
Hiniker Plow

Mileage: 42,054 • Backup Camera • SYNC • Heated/Cooled Leather Seats • Dual Temp • Power Pass. Seat • Soft Tonneau Cover • Tow Pkg • Spray-In Liner • Brake Controller • Remote Start • Keyless Entry #55330a

## BIG SELECTION OF PRE-OWNED VEHICLES

**2005 Ford Escape XLT 4x4**

**\$6,617**

Mileage: 86,857 • 3.0L V6 • Power Seat • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • Tow Package • Luggage Rack • Keyless Entry #71659

**2010 Chevy Equinox LTZ AWD**

**\$15,705**

Mileage: 82,708 • 3.0L V6 • AWD • BackUp Camera • Heated Seats • Power Seat • Tow Pkg • Aluminum Wheels • MoonRoof • Remote Start • Keyless Entry #55396b

**2006 Ford Explorer 4x4 XLT**

**\$6,999**

Mileage: 142,368 • 4.0L V6 • 3rd Row Seating • Power Seat • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise • A/C • Aluminum Wheels • Running Boards • Remote Start • Power Lift Gate #55381b

**2008 Ford Edge AWD Ltd**

ONE OWNER!

**\$12,827**

Mileage: 108,737 • 3.5L V6 • AWD • SYNC • Heated Leather Seats • Dual Temp • Power Seat • Power Pass. Seat • 20" Chrome Wheels • MoonRoof • Power Windows & Locks #55427a

**2012 Ford F-150 4x4 Ext.Cab**

ONE OWNER

**\$22,650**

Mileage: 48,850 • 5.0L V8 • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise Control • AC • Soft Tonneau Cover • Tow Package • Box Liner • Brake Controller • Keyless Entry #55354b

**2010 Ford Edge FWD SEL**

ONE OWNER

**\$11,499**

Mileage: 119,670 • V6 • Heated Leather Seats • Dual Temp • Power Seat • Power Pass. Seat • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise • A/C • Tow Package • MoonRoof #55344b

**2005 Chevy Suburban LT**

ONE OWNER

**\$7,499**

Mileage: 168,000 • Rear DVD Player • Heated Seats • 3rd Row • Rear Air Conditioning • Tow Package • MoonRoof • Leather • Luggage Rack #55286a

**2011 F-150 4x4 CrewCab Fx4**

**\$24,690**

Mileage: 83,045 • 3.5L EcoBoost • BackUp Camera • Soft Tonneau Cover • Tow Package • Spray-In Liner • Remote Start #55369a

**10 Mustang V6 Convertible Premium**

**\$12,216**

Mileage: 70,278 • 4.0L V6 • Heated Leather Seats • Power Seats • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • Aluminum Wheels #55431b

**07 Mercury Grand Marquis LS**

**\$6,878**

Mileage: 104,684 • Power Seat • Power Windows • Power Locks • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • Remote Start • Leather #55339a

**2015 Ford Taurus Limited**

**\$26,499**

Mileage: 9,259 • Navigation • BackUp Camera • Heated Leather Seats • Steering Wheel • 20" Chrome Wheels • MoonRoof • Remote Start #71657

**2014 Ford Escape FWD SE**

ONE OWNER

**\$15,999**

Mileage: 49,873 • 1.6L EcoBoost • FWD • Rear Sensing • BackUp Camera • SYNC • Keyless Entry • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • Power Locks/Windows #55439a

**2013 Ford Edge AWD Ltd.**

**\$23,456**

Mileage: 56,485 • Navigation • BackUp Camera • Leather • SYNC • Heated Seats • Tow Package • 20" Black Aluminum Wheels • MoonRoof #71656

**2015 Dodge Journey Crossroad**

**\$25,415**

Mileage: 12,227 • 3.6L V6 • BackUp Camera • BlueTooth • Heated Seats • 3rd Row Seating • Power Seat • Power Windows • MoonRoof • Remote Start #55325a

**2012 Nissan Rouge SV**

ONE OWNER

**\$15,499**

Mileage: 30,869 • 2.5L • FWD • Power Seat • Power Locks • Power Windows • Cruise Control • A/C • Aluminum Wheels • Keyless Entry #71645a

**2014 Ford Fusion SE**

ONE OWNER!

**\$16,299**

Mileage: 29,658 • 1.5L EcoBoost • Heated Leather Seats • SYNC • Power Seat • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • Keyless Entry #55431a

**2013 F-150 SuperCab 4x4**

**\$29,999**

Mileage: 33,639 • 5.0L V8 • 4x4 • BackUp Camera • SYNC • Heated Leather Seats • Spray-In Bed Liner • 18" Chrome Wheels • Remote Start #55456a

**03 F-450 XL Flatbed w/Holst**

ONE OWNER

**\$14,500**

Mileage: 165,840 • 7.3L Diesel • Automatic • Cruise Control • Air Conditioning • ONE OWNER #55258a



**www.HoustonFord.com**

Sales: 218-818-4419  
Service: 218-818-8204

Sales: Mon-Fri: 8am - 6pm  
Sat: 8am - 4pm

Service: Mon-Fri: 7:30am - 5pm  
Sat: 8am - 1pm

