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\$1.25



Sappi invests \$25 million
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THE VAPE DEBATE



These are just a few of the many e-cigarette and vaping devices that Cloquet High School officials have confiscated from students over the past school year. The vaping epidemic reaches all social classes and student groups, said principal Steve Battaglia, adding that kids don't seem to understand that there are health consequences to using e-cigarettes. The school is holding an educational event for parents from 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday. Find more on Page 20. Photos by Jana Peterson / Pine Knot News



Wrenshall schools superintendent Kim Belcastro talks with School Board member Janaki Fisher-Merritt while they wait for results Tuesday night. Jana Peterson / Pine Knot

Voters say 'no' to school levy rise

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There was no "third time's a charm" for Wrenshall referendum supporters, as 55 percent of school district residents who voted Tuesday rejected a \$14.4 million bonding request for school facility improvements. With 513 "no" votes to 418 "yes" votes, superintendent Kimberly Belcastro pointed out that 48 more "yes" votes would have meant a different result.

But that's not what happened.

School board vice chair Janaki Fisher-Merritt announced the results just before 10 p.m., after a group of nearly 40 supporters had waited nearly two hours in the school commons area. It was a difference of 95 votes, he said.

"But we're still here," said the longtime board member, stoically. "We're a strong school, and a good community ... I know the district will be fine."

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Schools sound alarm on e-cig use

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Cloquet High School principal Steve Battaglia has no doubt in his mind which generation is being targeted by e-cigarette manufacturers.

He has only to rattle off the flavors — Fizzy Lemonade, Arctic Air, Blue Razz Lemonade, Iced Pink Punch, Really Berry and Straw Nanners Ice — of the many confiscated products to make his point.

Then there is the appearance factor. Very few look like cigarettes. Instead, they look like pens or pencils, lipstick containers, compacts, key chains, chargers,

highlighters, flash drives ... one company even sells hooded sweat-shirts with the mouthpiece built into the string ties.

It is a problem with real consequences — physically, mentally and legally — that's increasing exponentially because kids who were raised to disdain cigarette smoking now think it's cool to vape with devices that look like something out of a spy movie and smell like lip gloss.

"I think we dealt with a total of five [vaping] incidents last year," said assistant CHS principal Tim Prosen, who handles most of the disciplinary issues at the school. "I dealt with five in the first week [of school] this year. And sometimes

I find five in a day now."

According to a 2018 Minnesota Health Department survey, Minnesota youth tobacco use is going up for the first time in 17 years, with 26 percent of high school students using some form of nicotine or tobacco, up from 24 percent in 2014. Youth e-cigarette use is up 50 percent during that same timeframe.

A 2016 Minnesota Department of Education study focused in even further and found that more than one in three Cloquet juniors had used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.



This bottle was confiscated at Cloquet High School after students became ill. "This is the scary stuff," Principal Steve Battaglia said. It's still unknown what is in the vape.

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Disabled American Veterans & Auxiliary Chapter 18 Carlton County

BURGERS & BRATS

Thursday & Friday, May 23rd & 24th

9 a.m. - 6 p.m. ~ In the Premiere Theatres parking lot by L & M

Proceeds Benefit Carlton County Veterans - Thanks for supporting our Veterans!