

# SPRING GROVE HERALD



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Your trusted source for community and area news, school, sports and more!  
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One Section

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## Great MN Blizzard of 2019 wreaks havoc on roads, closes area



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

This photo taken on Nine Oaks Drive, just about a mile east of Spring Grove, shows the powerful wind gusts blowing already fallen snow around. The Weather Channel called it a "ground blizzard," where wind picks up snow and drifts it over roads.



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

Shortly after the first photo was taken, a maintainer came out to plow the road and bust open the drifts. But by 4:30 p.m., the road was drifted shut again. Many county and rural roads had to wait a long time before it was clear.

By Jordan Gerard  
Spring Grove Herald

Though Houston County was not officially included in the blizzard warning issued Saturday, Feb. 23, it certainly felt and looked like a blizzard ripped through the county and the rest of southern Minnesota.

Winter storm Quiana brought about three inches to Spring Grove and wind speeds of 20 to 30 miles per hour (mph) with gusts up to 50 mph.

Rain and sleet fell first, leaving a glaze of ice on roads, driveways and anything left outside. It quickly changed over to snow.

At first, the snow was wet and heavy, but with a temperature drop, turned to light and fluffy.

Then the winds came. If the wind was blowing while the snow was falling, it quickly deteriorated road conditions from "Seasonal" to "Travel Not Advised" and



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

Snow drifts packed tightly onto roads all over southern Minnesota, making them impassable in some places.

"Impassable." Even after the snow stopped fall-

ing, the wind still picked it up and blew it around, causing some roads

that had been plowed open to be drifted shut again.

Motorists caught in the blizzard were left stranded on roadways across southern Minnesota, waiting for help.

Snowplows had a tough time keeping up with snowdrifts that blocked roads.

Eventually plows in Houston County (and others) were pulled off at 3 p.m. on Saturday and resumed plowing at 4 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 24.

Travel was strongly discouraged for all, as rescues would not happen until hours later. Drifts, whiteout conditions and cold temperatures were the key dangers during the storm.

Gov. Tim Walz declared a state of emergency, allowing the Minnesota

BLIZZARD page 8

## Clear out the fire hydrants!

### Removing snow from fire hydrants saves minutes

By Jordan Gerard  
Spring Grove Herald

As one of the snowiest Februaries on record, we threw another snowstorm at Spring Grove over the weekend, the fire department is asking residents to clear out snow around the fire hydrants on their block.

Snap a photo of the cleared hydrant, post it on the Spring Grove Fire Department's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sfgdmm/) and a photo to the Spring Grove Fire Department's website and you could win a fire safety prize.

The deadline to submit photos is March 11. Firefighters will vote at that meeting and announce the winner shortly after, contacted via Facebook.

The effort is an idea from firefighter Pete Wennes, who said a cleared out fire hydrant saves "minutes and minutes to save lives."

Spring Grove Firefighter Pete Wennes



COURTESY OF SG FIRE DEPT.

The Stender family spent the better part of an evening clearing out the fire hydrant on their block. Submit your cleared fire hydrant photo to the Spring Grove Fire Department's website and you could win a fire safety prize.

The deadline to submit photos is March 11. Firefighters will vote at that meeting and announce the winner shortly after, contacted via Facebook.

The effort is an idea from firefighter Pete Wennes, who said a cleared out fire hydrant saves "minutes and minutes to save lives."

FIRE HYDRANTS page 8

## City Council appoints committee members for potential fire department expansion

By Jordan Gerard  
Spring Grove Herald

The Spring Grove City Council appointed Mayor Sarah Schroeder and councilmember Karen Folstad to a committee whose purpose will be to explore the feasibility, options and need for a potential fire department expansion.

In a special meeting on Jan. 29, the Spring Grove Fire Department discussed with the council the city's option to purchase the property next to the fire department building (the Bentley house). The council approved the purchase and the idea for an expanded department was born.

There will be six people on the committee, including two council members, two fire department

members, one ambulance member and one person from the community.

The committee will also invite a member of the Rural Fire Association to be part of the process, which was also approved by the council.

Though the potential expansion is in the early stages of forming a plan, the building could be solely a fire department, or a multiuse building that could house the city hall offices.

Once the committee is formed and has its first meeting, the council will allocate funds to hire an architect. That person will work with City Engineer Tim Hruska and the committee to find the best options and present them to the council.

"It's a fantastic idea," council-

member Chad Rohland said. He is also a member of the fire department.

The Herald will have more information as it becomes available about the potential expansion.

### Year-end reports

The Corner Store Bar manager Joe Kessler submitted his year-end report to the council. In that report, he said he would bring the profits amount to the council later, as the accountant didn't have it ready yet, but he predicted a profitable year.

His goal for 2018 was to reduce the amount of overhead they had and reduce dead stock. It worked and at the end of the year, The Corner had less stock than 2017.

CITY COUNCIL page 2

## Button design contest, foot races for Syttende Mai

By Jordan Gerard  
Spring Grove Herald

It may only be three months away and there's still snow on the ground, but the Syttende Mai committee is hard at work planning events for the annual Syttende Mai celebration, May 17-19.

The celebration seems as though it's already set to kick off with the new button design contest for all ages. The deadline to submit designs is March 1, with winners announced shortly after.

The winner will receive two VIP tickets to Musikk Fest, featuring Tyler Farr, Mark Chesnutt and Kimberly Dunn.

The template for the design can be downloaded from the official Syttende Mai website at <http://sgsyttendemai.com/button-drawing-contest/>.

The button must have the words



COURTESY OF KIMBERLYDUNN.COM

Kimberly Dunn was announced as the third music act for Musikk Fest 2019.

"Syttende Mai 2019" and "May 17th-19th." The rest of the design is up to the artist!

Email digital copies to [patrick-longmire@gmail.com](mailto:patrick-longmire@gmail.com) or mail physical entries to Syttende Mai, ATTN: Art Contest, 500 E. Main St., Spring Grove, MN 55974.

You can even drop the entry off at Red's IGA. See the website for full rules, copyright and permissions.

The button raffle will also happen again this year. Numbers will be printed on the buttons and randomly drawn at Musikk Fest before headliner Tyler Farr takes the stage.

Committee President Patrick Longmire said the cash prizes for the button raffle are bigger this year. Buttons will be \$10 and available by April 1. Purchase them at Red's IGA, Spring Grove Communications and The Corner Store.

SYTTENDE MAI page 2

## Seniors, juniors honored with prestigious awards

Submitted

On Feb. 19, 2019, two seniors and two juniors were awarded the ExCEL award and Triple A award.

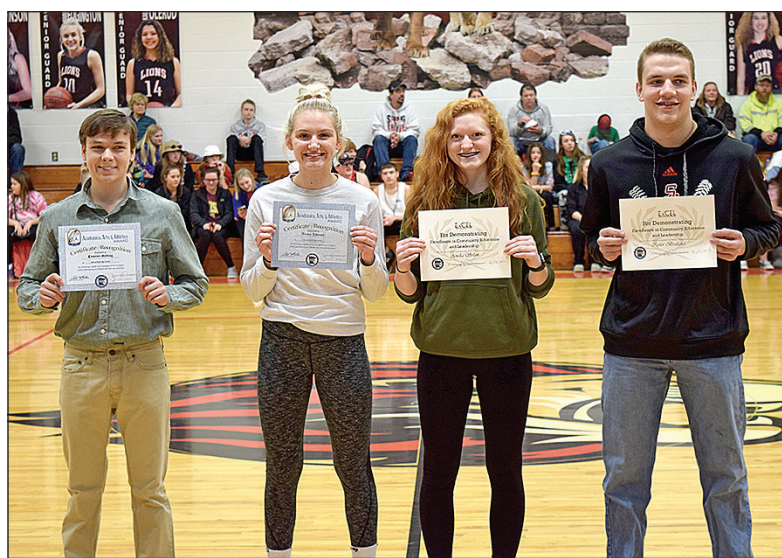
It was the 23rd year that the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) has sponsored the ExCEL Award. Wells Fargo also joined as a new sponsor this year. Principal Nancy Gulbranson said at the basketball game Tuesday night.

The ExCEL award stands for "Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership," and a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota high school juniors who are active in school activities, show leadership qualities and volunteer in their communities.

They also must participate in a MSHSL fine arts and/or athletic activity.

Award winners were announced via the League website on Feb. 4, 2019. Each recipient will be recognized on KSTCTV (Channel 45) during the broadcasts of the 2019 winter tournaments. This year's Spring Grove Public Schools' nominees were:

Amelia Solum - daughter of Mike and Deanna Solum  
Carter Bratland - Son of Darren and Sarah Bratland



LEE EPPS/SGH

The students pictured above were honored with awards on Tuesday, Feb. 19 at the basketball game for the Minnesota State High School League. Seniors Camron Sylling and Alyssa Johnson were honored with the Triple A award, and juniors Amelia Solum and Carter Bratland were honored with the ExCEL award.

MSHSL also sponsors the AAA Award. This Academics, Arts and Athletics Award is offered to one boy and one girl representative from each school.

It is an award to recognize and honor HS Seniors who have excelled in the classroom, on the athletic field, in the fine arts as well as extracurricular achievements.

Selections for this year's recipients of the 2019 AAA have been made

recently at Region Meeting across the state and those students will be announced at the Triple A banquet which will be held in conjunction with the Boys' State Basketball Tournament in March.

This year's Spring Grove Public Schools' nominees were:

Alysa Johnson - daughter of Jeff and Leanne Johnson  
Camron Sylling - son of Myron Sylling and Lesa Johnson

## Red's IGA offers new, natural pet food in remembrance of man's best friend

By Jordan Gerard  
Spring Grove Herald

Four-legged furry friends leave paw prints on our hearts and impressions to last a lifetime, and for one special pit-bull, a new mini pet store at Red's IGA.

Sadie was an extension of Red Longmire's family, a friend for each human. She also had food allergies that plagued her, and confused the humans about which dog food would suit her best.

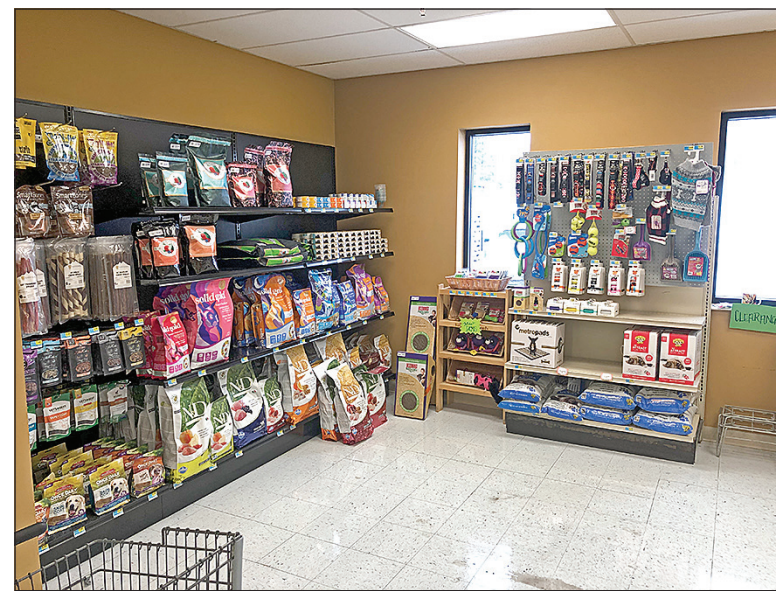
"We started looking into natural pet food and feeding it to her about six months before she passed away," Longmire said. "The allergies had taken over her so much."

After that, Longmire decided access to natural pet food for rural-living humans and their four-legged friends should be an option.

Enter Sadie's Natural Pet. Longmire found pet food suppliers that sell to specialty stores, like Sadie's that is located in Red's IGA.

The brands of food have limited ingredients, grain-free and allergy-aware options - and some of the brands are made in the Midwest.

Natural pet food is dog and cat food that does not have grains, byproducts and other ingredients



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

Pictured above is the new addition to Red's IGA called "Sadie's Natural Pet." The mini specialty pet store offers natural pet food and treats for rural pets and their owners. They also offer toys, leashes and accessories for pets.

pets can be allergic to. It's a healthy option for pets.

"Everyone's looking for healthier options for their family, and the next extension of the family is their pet," Longmire said.

Some of the most common allergies in pet food can be beef, dairy products, chicken, wheat, soy, lamb,

corn, egg, pork, fish and rice for dogs; and for cats it could be beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey and eggs.

Signs of food allergies in dogs could be excessive itching, scratch-

SADIE'S PET page 8



## BLIZZARD

Continued from the front



National Guard to be mobilized in several counties.

Troops used heavy military equipment to make about 50 rescues in Freeborn and Steele counties.

However, one military tank ended up getting stuck in the deep snow when it tried to rescue stranded travelers, the Wabasha County Sheriff's Office said on Facebook.

Finally, area law enforcement called on local snowmobile clubs for the use of the trail groomers, which can travel over snow much easier.

The Mabel Canton Trailbusters Snowmobile club groomer drove down Highway 43 north of Mabel to rescue two people stranded.

Clubs from Spring Valley, Lewiston and Winona were also reported as helping out. Some clubs even had a rare chance to drive the groomer on Interstate 90.

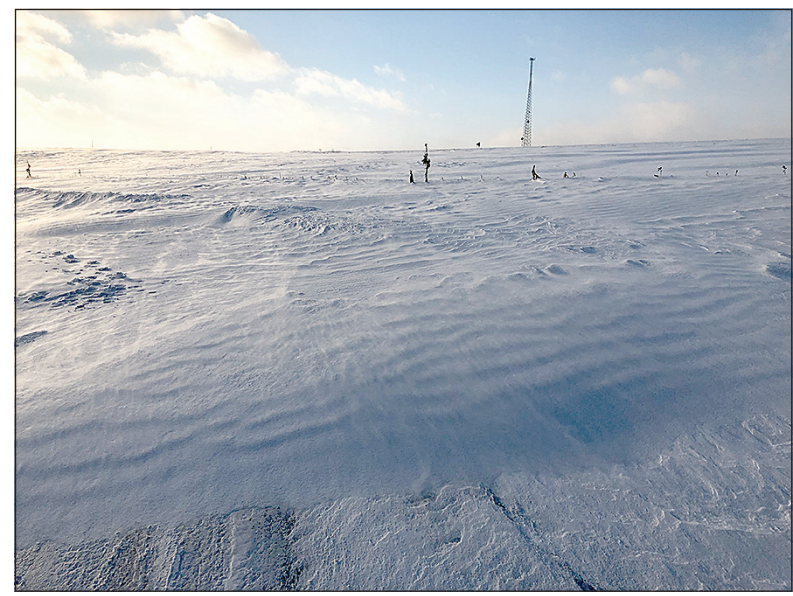
On Sunday night and through

Monday morning, Feb. 25, travel was still not advised throughout the area, as crews needed time to clear the roads.

Particularly challenging for some road crews was navigating around stranded cars that had been left behind when the owners were rescued.

Throughout the weekend, a drift over Highway 52 near Fountain was reported and subsequently closed, Highway 43 was closed, roads leading into Iowa were closed and I-90 to Albert Lea from La Crosse, Wisconsin was closed due to the blizzard conditions.

Many other county and rural roads were impassable, with residents waiting well into Monday afternoon for the busy snow plows or road maintainers to bust open snow drifts.



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

The photo on the left shows how fast the wind was blowing Sunday morning. Highway 44 was barely visible across the field. The photo above shows the height of the snowdrifts that blew in Sunday afternoon, after the road was cleared earlier in the day.

## FIRE HYDRANTS

Continued from the front

"When we come to hook up the hoses in case of an emergency and find it completely covered, we have to clean it out ourselves," he said. "That takes about four or more minutes and a fire doubles in size every five minutes."

The department asks that three feet of snow be cleared all the way around the hydrant. Snow should also be cleared out after every snowstorm.

With the incentive, firefighters hope to see more cleared hydrants around town.

It's also an opportunity to practice fire safety with kids, including where to meet during an emergency.

Though the department does have a map of where each hydrant in town is located, it's pretty tough to search in the dark through snow banks in the wee hours of the morning.

Southeast Minnesota has generally caught a break with previous winters because there hasn't been as much snow, making hydrants



JORDAN GERARD/SGH

Left: This hydrant would cause firefighters to pause their firefighting efforts because they would have to clear out three feet around the hydrants. Right: In case of an emergency, firefighters would have easy access to this hydrant. Darren Donlan and his family cleaned out this hydrant on Main Street.

easy to spot or had little to no snow around them.

Still, it's imperative to clean out three feet of snow all the way around the hydrant after every snowstorm, not because an emergency is expected but because preparedness is key.

"It's invaluable to have it cleared out for the safety of the public and the firefighters," Wennes added. "It makes our job a lot quicker and easier."

It's also important to make sure

dryer vents, gas meters and natural gas vents are not blocked by snow or ice build-up, as that could cause fires or a build-up of carbon monoxide.

Submit your photos to the SGFD's Facebook page!

## SADIE'S PET

Continued from the front

ing, biting fur, vomiting, diarrhea, skin issues and behavioral problems. For cats, you might see persistent scratching, emergence of skin lesions, loss of hair and general deterioration of the coat.

Always consult your veterinarian if you have concerns about your pet or their diet. Always check the ingredient label on food to ensure the food is truly natural.

In addition to natural pet food, the store also offers toys, treats, collars, leashes, grooming brushes and shampoos.

If you have questions about the products, talk to Longmire, or Patrick and Jayme Longmire.

"Sadie's is about taking care of not only our pets, but our community's pets," he added. "Prioritizing your pet's nutrition is something we can help with by answering questions about ingredients, allergies and digestion."

## MCGA launches scholarship for future ag leaders

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) is proud to announce its first-ever statewide scholarship for college students aspiring to become future agricultural leaders.

MCGA will be offering two \$5,000 scholarships to college students who are currently enrolled or will be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student during the fall 2019 semester. Students have until March 8 to apply.

The statewide scholarship will supplement scholarships long offered through local county corn organizations.

It will also give students who many not have access to a local county scholarship the opportunity to apply.

"Our county organizations are excellent at helping students in their backyard achieve their dream of attending college so they can make an impact in our state's ag sector," MCGA President Brian Thalmann said.

MCGA scholarship applicants must be a Young Adult member of MCGA who is working toward a degree in an agriculture-related field.

The Young Adult membership, available to ages 16-24, was launched last year for future agricultural leaders who would like to participate in grassroots advocacy today.

Along with reduced member dues, Young Adult Members stay up to date on the latest in Minnesota's corn sector, as well as have access to great networking and leadership opportunities. County scholarship applicant requirements vary county to county.

Both the MCGA scholarships and scholarships offered by local county organizations are available at [mncorn.org/scholarships](http://mncorn.org/scholarships).

At the website, users are able to select their home county and apply for both scholarships offered by their county organization and the MCGA scholarship.

By launching [mncorn.org/scholarships](http://mncorn.org/scholarships), MCGA strives to more effectively promote scholarships offered at the county level and streamline the application process for students.

County organizations are encouraged to contact their district field manager to have their scholarship featured on the website.

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2009 Chevy Avalanche LT w/2LT CNG Bi-Fuel i3	97K	\$14,897
2014 BMW i3	14K	\$15,714
2015 VW e-Golf Limited Edition	29K	\$16,829
2014 Honda Accord Plug-in Hybrid	59K	\$17,559
2014 Subaru XV Crosstrek Hybrid Touring	53K	\$18,953
2017 Nissan Leaf S	1K	OWNED
2017 Ford Fusion Energi Titanium	13K	\$20,913
2014 BMW i3 Range Extender L3	13K	\$21,213
2014 Benz B-Class	37K	\$20,937
2010 Dodge Ram 1500 4WD SLT Bi-Fuel CNG	70K	\$21,570
2010 Honda Odyssey Touring	31K	\$22,931
2016 Lexus CT 200h Hybrid	11K	\$23,911
2017 Kia Optima Plug-In Hybrid ED	4K	\$26,504
2015 Ford F-150 XLT	27K	\$25,904
2012 RAM 2500 SLT 4WD CNG Bi-Fuel	28K	\$34,228
2017 BMW i3 w/Range Extender L3	7K	\$38,807
2017 BMW 3 Series 330e iPerformance Sedan	12K	\$39,912
2015 Toyota Sequoia Platinum	43K	OWNED

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### Get Sales Moving in the Right Direction

Newspaper advertising is a highly effective way to steer more customers your way, and our themed Spring On the Road special section makes it easier than ever to attract the right audience of car buyers and drivers as they gear up for spring travel and vehicle maintenance. To learn more about this opportunity to market your business to more than 8,000 local readers, please contact our ad rep today!

**SPRING... ON THE ROAD**  
A Special Section From Bluff Country Newspaper Group

Better step on it – Friday, March 1 is the last day to reserve your spot in Spring On the Road. Contact Kathy Simpson at 507.498.3868 or [ksimpson@bluffcountrynews.com](mailto:ksimpson@bluffcountrynews.com) today to advertise! This section will publish in print and online the week of March 15, 2019.

Spring Grove Herald | 115 W Main St | 507-498-3868 | [www.bluffcountrynews.com](http://www.bluffcountrynews.com)

**Monday, March 4 | 4-7 p.m.**  
Please join us for an open house as we celebrate 10 years of business and say thank you to our customers!

# OPEN HOUSE

Door Prizes - Food - Beverages

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# INCOME TAX GUIDE

Schedule your appointment soon with one of these tax professionals!

This tip provided by IRS.gov

**TAX DAY is April 15, 2019**

### WHERE'S MY REFUND? TOOL LETS TAXPAYERS CHECK STATUS OF THEIR REFUND

The best way for taxpayers to check the status of their refund is to use the Where's My Refund? tool on IRS.gov. This tool gives taxpayers access to their tax return and refund status anytime. All they need is internet access and three pieces of information:

- Their Social Security number
- Their filing status
- The exact whole dollar amount of their refund

Taxpayers can start checking on the status of their return within 24 hours after the IRS received their e-filed return, or four weeks after they mail a paper return. Where's My Refund? includes a tracker that displays progress through three stages: the IRS receives the tax return, then approves the refund, and sends the refund. Where's My Refund? Updates once a day, so taxpayers don't need to check more often.

Taxpayers on the go can track their return and refund status on their mobile devices using the free IRS2Go app. Those who file an amended return should check out the Where's My Amended Return? tool.

Generally, the IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days, but some may take longer. IRS phone and walk-in representatives can research the status of refunds only if it's been 21 days or more since a taxpayer filed electronically, or more than six weeks since they mailed a paper return. Taxpayers can also contact the IRS if Where's My Refund? directs them to do so.

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## Busta Tour & Travel – Trips in 2019

Hosted by Jim & Mary Lou Busta  
Note: All bus trips have pickups in Spring Grove

**Tennessee Bus Trip: April 22 – 30**  
\$1,540 due: March 20  
Many shows – Pigeon Forge; Nashville; Indy 500 Speedway; Corvette Museum

**Eastern Europe Trip: July 15 – 24**  
\$3,495 due: April 12  
Poland, Slovakia, Austria, & Hungary

**Baseball Trip: July 28**  
Cubs vs Brewers \$130/ \$100 child

**Christmas in Branson: November 4-7**  
\$670/Double

**Mollie B Christmas Special: December 7**  
(Reedsburg, WI)

**Information: to download brochures & registrations**  
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