



Singing for  
a cause  
Hazelfest  
features The  
Voice area  
finalists.  
Page 9



Swim,  
bike, run  
Locals  
complete  
Chisago  
Lakes Tri.  
Page 10

# Forest Lake Times

August 1, 2019 | Volume #117

Issue #11 | 651-464-4601 | ForestLakeTimes.com | \$1.00



Amber (left) and Laurie Scherf look at the damage to the Scherfs' house. Amber's wedding reception was supposed to be held on Saturday in her parents' back yard.  
Photos by Hannah Davis

## Wyoming changes mayoral term length

Road projects  
also get a look

Amy Doeun  
Wyoming Reporter

At its July 16 meeting, the Wyoming City Council voted to increase the term of mayor from two years to four.

The council chambers were filled and several residents commented on the proposed move, which changes the position's length to match the four-year terms served by council members. The change will be in effect for the next mayoral term. The next mayoral election in Wyoming is set for November 2020.

After community members commented – including former Mayor Neil Gatzow, who said keeping the term at two years allowed residents to have a voice in the path the city takes – Councilwoman Linda Nanko-Yeager criticized the proposal.

"I believe this diminishes the people's right [to choose]," she said.

Mayor Lisa Iverson ultimately abstained from the vote but said that as a mayor, "it takes a while to catch your stride. Having a four-year-term mayor allows them time. [It] gives a chance for continuity. This is one of those things that I have talked to many people about." She added that she hopes any mayor would go out and talk to residents more than just during an election cycle.

Councilman Dennis Schilling pointed out that even with the change, the council will still change regularly with the will of the people, as the staggered election cycle results in at least two seats being up for election every two years. He added that residents need to stay involved, pointing out that if the public really wants to make a change in the middle of an official's term, they can advocate.

"People can resign and can get pushed out," he said. "The people solved the problem. ... You will always be able to flip it."

Iverson abstained from the vote, and Councilman Joe Zerwas was not present. Yeager voted against the change, but Schilling and Councilwoman Claire Luger voted in favor. According to city staff, only a simple majority of those voting was required to pass the measure, as it is an ordi-

Wyoming see page 3

## 'It happened so fast'

### Tornado hits Forest Lake area

Hannah Davis  
Community Editor

Fifteen seconds is all the time it took for a tornado to topple trees, toss decks and docks, and shred and warp housing structures as it roared through Forest Lake and the surrounding area on Sunday, July 28.

The tornado was initially spotted roughly 2 miles southwest of Forest Lake at 4:29 p.m. by local law enforcement. The tornado wreaked havoc on a path from Lake Keewahtin in Forest Lake and past Bone Lake in Scandia, later traveling into Chisago County, causing structural dam-

age, uprooting trees and tossing them hundreds of yards away.

Representatives from the National Weather Service were on site Monday, walking through the storm damage to assess how strong the tornado was. National Weather Service Meteorologist James Taggart confirmed an EF-1 tornado touched down just southwest of Lake Keewahtin in Forest Lake. The tornado appeared to lift up and drop down again near the corner of Highway 97 and Manning Trail in Scandia. It traveled northeast towards Lofton Avenue, where it "really intensified" as it hit homes along Bone Lake in Scandia, where wind speeds topped out at 90 mph.

### 'All the trees started coming down'

Bill and Jannette Wittrock were at their home on Keewahtin with their son Casey and his girlfriend Emily Hedlund. Hedlund, who was in the house with Jannette as Bill and Casey were working in the garage, saw the tornado watch alert on her phone.

"She went out to the garage to tell them, so they started shutting all the equipment off. By the time she got back from the garage to the house, it had hit," Jannette recalled. "We were on our way to the basement — didn't even make it all the

Tornado see page 2



A lawn chair is wedged in between two trees at the home of Lynne Haslach on Bone Lake.

## YPA celebrates 20 years with 'Newsies'



### Production crew views shows as creating community

Ryan Howard  
News Editor

Youth Performing Arts is celebrating two decades engag-

ing Forest Lake children in the arts with a toe-tapping musical about the power of working together – a story not dissimilar from the ethos of YPA itself.

From Aug. 9 through 11 (with a preview show Aug. 8 featuring an American Sign Language translator), YPA will present "Newsies," the Broad-

way musical based on the Disney film of the same name depicting a fictionalized version of the Newsboys' Strike of 1899, at Forest Hills United Methodist Church. Vanessa Novak, who took part in the first YPA production in 1999, has transitioned in adulthood to a directing role, working with fel-

low alumni from that first year: Shalee Dunaski-Palmquist, Kristi Jacoway, and Novak's husband, Chad Ruter. She's excited to show the public what the youth cast of 23 kids can do.

"Newsies' is a beast of a show," she said. "We wanted a

YPA see page 4

