

# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

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## Editorial

### Election process

Tower City Council is failing to take the primary election breakdown seriously

As we reported two weeks ago, St. Louis County officials conducted an investigation into the handling of the Aug. 14 primary election in the city of Tower. Their findings were stunning, documenting fundamental failures in all aspects of the election process—from pre-election testing of equipment, to election administration and training, to election day process, to reporting of results, to post-vote handling of ballots.

These findings were included in an Aug. 24 letter to members of the Tower City Council from County Elections Supervisor Phil Chapman.

That letter did not appear on the council's Aug. 27 meeting agenda, nor did it appear on the council agenda during their Sept. 10 meeting earlier this week. Trivial correspondence to the city regularly appears on the city's agenda. Yet a detailed letter from the county elections supervisor detailing systematic failure in a recent city election, and which orders the city to pay for retraining of its city clerk, somehow fails to warrant the council's attention?

Citizens in Tower should be very concerned.

The county investigation revealed a failure of duty on the part of the city's election administrator that is unacceptable. It reflects disregard for her sworn obligations and an unwillingness to own up to her failures. And the only reason we know about these failures is because, in this instance, we had an outside authority who actually looked into it. The city council had no intention of investigating the matter, nor does it believe anyone should be held accountable for a fundamental breakdown of a constitutional process.

The city clerk has attempted to blame the county for the election disaster, which is ridiculous. It wasn't St. Louis County that failed to conduct the pre-election testing of the city's vote-counting equipment and auto-mark machine as required by law, and then certified that the testing had been conducted properly. It wasn't St. Louis County that forced

the city clerk to process absentee ballots contrary to state law. It wasn't St. Louis County that reported 345 ballots in the city's ballot box at the end of the primary voting on Aug. 14, when only 131 voters had signed-in to obtain a ballot. Those numbers were reported by the city clerk, and as far as we know, no one on the city council has inquired as to how such a number was reported to the county. Rather, it appears the council is content to sweep the whole matter under the rug.

By failing to address the results of the county investigation publicly, the council has done nothing to demonstrate that they take this matter seriously. Which means city residents have real reason to question the conduct of the upcoming general election. The city can't rely on the county to do the city's job. Ultimately, it is the city of Tower that is responsible for the administration of its elections and we have real concerns about whether a day of retraining for the clerk, as ordered by the county, will make much difference. The rules of election procedure are readily available to all election officials, as they are to the public. In reality, the conduct of the Aug. 14 primary suggests that officials in Tower simply did not care enough to do their jobs properly.

The city has an obligation to its residents to guarantee that the general election is run properly—which is why they should arrange for a qualified outside observer to monitor and offer guidance on the administration of the general election in Tower this year.

Yes, this will cost money, just as it will cost city taxpayers money to send the city clerk for elections retraining. But voting is a constitutional right and the city cannot allow a repeat of last month's disaster. What's more, some of the races on the ballot this year could be very close contests, and the last thing the city of Tower wants is to have its balloting procedures become central to recount litigation. Just ask the folks in Florida.



## Letters from Readers

### Ely should welcome the CC's new owners

I have been active during the last six years trying to find a reason for the Ely Community Center to exist and to ensure its survival, so I have some history to share. In 2012 a small group of us worked to convince the City to keep the Community Center and upgrade it rather than to vacate it and build a new building for the library. We were not successful. Nor was a similar group that worked to finance upgrades in the 1990s.

The year 2012 would have been a great time to save the building as a community center because it could have had the City's backing. But as we all know, that didn't happen. Since that time the building has been vacated, had the heat turned off and suffered some damage. The City has made good faith efforts to maintain the building, but empty buildings are not easily maintained.

Without the city's interest in using the building, a sale to an interested party becomes the only possible alternative short of demolition. Ely's Heritage Preservation Commission has supported the sale of the building.

Since 2014, the City has entertained multiple proposals for the Community Center. In the past year, the City has had eight. Generally, these proposals fell into two categories. There were proposals from big money people who thought that a 30,000 square foot building for \$85,000 (the asking price), was a good deal and they figured they could make some money off of it. These people had no business plan, and as far as I could tell, no interest in Ely. None of these people ever even came to town to see the building. Then there were several proposals to restore the building to a community center, but although the intentions may have been good, we never saw a plan. These people have had more than ample time to create business plans.

The Yoons' proposal was the first proposal with a legitimate business plan that I have seen (it's available at City Hall if you are interested)—their plan included a

description of their business, their strategy, projected incomes and expenditures, an analysis of the competitive environment, and a market analysis. It's a 40-page document that describes it all. They really want to do something with the building and they have spent considerable time planning for it.

I was able to meet the Yoons when they came to Ely to see the building. I offered to provide them with my standard driving tour of Ely (it's available at no cost during the summer). They asked questions about the educational system (they have three small children), they asked about crime in Ely (they want a safe environment for their family), and they wanted to meet the guy in the jeep, which didn't actually happen, but they were interested. We completed the tour with a stop at Semer's Park where their kids played on the neighborhood.

So we have the Yoons, who have made what I consider the first legitimate offer the City has seen. There are no guarantees. Starting and running a small business is always hard. In Ely it's harder. I don't have to tell the people of Ely about that. But I think these people have a shot at it and deserve a chance. If they don't meet the terms of the purchase agreement which requires progress on the building, the building will revert back to the City.

So I welcome our new neighbors, not just because they are nice people, although that should be reason enough, but also because I think they might be able to make their project a success and the Community Center a vital building once again. I hope you will welcome them too.

Celia Domich  
Ely

### When will government start to really regulate big business?

The newest crisis in industrial pollution illustrates how often government passes the buck and lets corporations get away with criminal chemical trespass.

Dicamba is an herbicide made for applying to genetically altered soybeans. It kills the weeds but not the bean plants. The problem arises when humidity and rising temperatures cooperate to make the Dicamba vaporize and then travel to a neighbor's garden, commercial orchard or vegetable farm, even state parks. The Dicamba destroys every plant in its path that is not bred to be resistant, which is most trees and other vegetation.

Applicators and farmers are not held responsible because they claim to spray according to label. Government agencies pass the buck back and forth because they fear the powerful chemical companies and cannot decide jurisdiction. The makers of Dicamba claim their research shows that their newer versions do not vaporize or travel. Small victims have little or no legal recourse with few financial resources.

This is similar to the events that transpired when Reserve Mining was dumping its tailings and other illegal pollutants into Lake Superior. The DNR and Reserve's parent companies denied, lied and obfuscated until the commercial fishermen brought evidence to bear and the MPCA stepped in with a lawsuit. You can read about it in Grant Merritt's new book, "Water and Iron."

Proponents of Cu-Ni mining say that Minnesota has the most strict environmental laws in the nation. Yet, the mining industry states that they cannot comply with the sulfate mandate restrictions because it is too expensive. Minntac's unlined tailings pond has leaked for decades with no end in sight, and the Sand River and Dark River are its depositories. Records of abundant wild rice in the Sand River system are just that, a past occurrence.

Often it seems that we live in a corporate-ocracy, not a democracy, if even agencies assigned to govern cannot make industries do what they are supposed to do. That's why I have no enthusiasm for the claims of proponents of Cu-Ni mining in our water-rich environment.

Mark Roalson  
Hoyt Lakes

## Copper-nickel? The data say it's bad economics

The ongoing debate about the pros and cons of copper-nickel mining near Ely has been cast by many as the stereotypical clash between jobs and the environment. It's a familiar means of framing the issue, but I believe it overlooks a critical component—namely that the fundamental



MARSHALL  
HELMBERGER

argument against copper-nickel mining near Ely is economic, not environmental.

By saying so, I don't mean to give short shrift to the environmental concerns, which are significant. Anyone who believes that the environmental impacts of a copper-nickel mine will

bear any relationship to the effects of Ely's Pioneer Mine, or even modern-day taconite mining, is badly misinformed. Due to the geological differences, sulfide-based ore mining is inherently far riskier, and those risks are heightened dramatically in a water-rich environment. Given the incalculable value of the wilderness resource that a copper-nickel mine in the Rainy River watershed puts at risk, it can credibly be argued that this is the worst place on the planet

for such a mine.

Supporters argue that the risks are worth it for the economic boost they believe such a mine would bring.

Yet there is a remarkable amount of economic data and research, as we reported on our front page last week, that suggests that a new mine will not bring the economic benefits that its supporters believe. Ely, over the past few decades, has made considerable progress pursuing amenity-based economic

development, which is a well-established and widely-pursued model for economic growth in the U.S. Far from boosting the economy, there is considerable economic research, including the study recently produced by a pair of Harvard economists, that predicts a new mine will simply disrupt the progress Ely has made and leave the local economy weaker overall within just a few years.

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## ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD

# And then there were two

### Voters narrow a full field in county board race

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL - Bernie Mettler, of Embarrass, and Ely's Paul McDonald emerged as the winners of Tuesday's primary contest for the St. Louis County Fourth

District Commissioner's seat being vacated by the retirement of Tom Rukavina. The two men will face off in the general election set for Nov. 6. Six candidates had sought one of the two slots, including Mike Forsman Jr., Paul

Kess, Daniel Manick and Christine Schlotec, in addition to McDonald and Mettler. Kristin Larsen had filed for the election but dropped out early on. Mettler and McDonald stood out in the crowded field, each winning over 1,900

votes, or about a quarter of the total votes cast in the sprawling Fourth District. McDonald drew significant support in the Ely area and in pockets throughout the district where his long

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Bernie Mettler



Paul McDonald

## MENTAL HEALTH

# 'The Improvised Life'

### Concert details mental illness struggles

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK- Local musician Sam Miltich brought his story of struggle with schizophrenia to an audience at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook last Friday. The concert series headlined by Miltich and his band is entitled "The Improvised Life" and details Miltich's struggle with mental illness and how his love and talent for jazz music helped him recover. "The message I want to get across is that recovery can happen," Miltich said. "There is a sense of hopelessness that the life you envision isn't possible. Whatever life you envision for yourself, there is



Cook jazz musician Sam Miltich tells the story of how music has helped him in his struggles with mental illness. photo by Marcus White

no reason why mental illness should get in the way." Miltich has played since the age of four, when he was introduced to the piano by his parents. He would go on to

learn guitar at age 13, but an episode of psychosis at the age of 22 nearly derailed his ambition to play his beloved

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**More online**  
View a brief video of Sam Miltich at [www.timberjay.com](http://www.timberjay.com)

## ELECTION 2018

# Some votes in Tower likely won't be counted

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER & MARCUS WHITE  
Timberjay Editors

TOWER— Nearly one-in-five voters here could have their votes disqualified after election officials handed out the wrong ballots to a number of city residents on Tuesday. The snafu left erroneous vote totals on the Secretary of State's website and created an administrative headache for election officials from Tower to St. Paul. The problem arose when election officials handed out ballots to residents of Tower's first precinct that were printed for the city's second precinct. Tower's Precinct 2, which is currently uninhabited, is distinct from the rest of Tower because it lies within Legislative District 6B while the populated portion of the city lies in District 3A. And therein lies the rub, since the ballots for the second precinct are different from the ones used elsewhere in the city. And District 6B had a primary contest on the DFL side of the ballot, in which residents of Tower should

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## U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# Radinovich, Stauber set to face off for 8th District

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL- Former DFL state Rep. Joe Radinovich and St. Louis County Commissioner Peter Stauber will face off in the November election for the Eighth District Congressional seat currently held by Rick Nolan. Both men emerged the winners from Tuesday's primary— Stauber in a blowout over former Duluth School Board member Harry Welty and Radinovich with a clear plurality in a hotly-contested five-way race.

Stauber's win was no surprise, as Republicans have rallied round his well-funded effort to flip the seat held by the DFL for the past six years. Stauber, who has tied himself closely to Donald Trump, has already garnered campaign visits from both President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence



Joe Radinovich



Peter Stauber

in support of his candidacy, and he won with just under 90 percent of the vote. On the DFL side, Radinovich won with 44 percent of the vote, drawing voting strength from across the district, and particularly on his home turf in the Brainerd lakes area, where he consistently won large major-

ities in the five-candidate field. He also did well on the Mesabi Iron Range, handily winning in Hibbing, and running a strong second in Duluth to former KBJR anchor Michelle Lee. Radinovich won St. Louis County as a whole, with 36.7 percent to Lee's 33.3 percent. "I'm humbled by the outpouring of support from people across the district," said Radinovich in a statement that took note of his Iron Range roots. "I value hard work. I won't stop fighting for the values

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A DOG'S LIFE

# Downtown Tower goes to the dogs

## Many businesses are home to canines

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Ort Editor

**TOWER** – You probably expect a “hello” when you walk into most local businesses.

But in Tower, you just may be welcomed with a bark and a furry animal begging you for a treat. Many businesses along Tower’s Main Street are home to dogs or are dog-friendly.

It might be a pair of excited puggles helping you pick up your next home purchase at Nordic Home North or Ruckus, a lab/retriever mix welcoming you to the old train depot and museum.

You may even be greeted by Emily and Axel on the front lawn at Sulu’s before you make it to the door for your morning cup of coffee.

Several other businesses in town have dogs as well.

And of course, there is Loki, the paper-dog right

here at the *Timberjay*. He’s occasionally joined by his new friend Luey.

Dogs at businesses have become a way of life in town.

“We all have dogs,” Napa Auto Parts Manager Trish Nelson said. “We’re used to seeing them around, it just seems friendlier.”

Customers at Napa Auto Parts are greeted by two Great Danes, Denali and Yukon.

“For the most part, people say, ‘Oh my God, there’s a horse in here,’” Nelson said. “I tell them, no, it’s just a moose.”

Nelson began bringing the dogs to work when Denali was a puppy and couldn’t stay home by herself. The other dogs soon followed.

It was quickly found the dogs helped drive business to the store. Customers would walk by and see the two dogs poking their heads out of the baby gate at the front

door. They’d come inside and take a look around.

Nelson said when the store is quiet, the dogs make for good company on the slow days.

Many businesses that don’t have dogs, still welcome them. At Embarrass Vermillion Credit Union, dogs can get a treat while their owners do their banking.

“We give them treats whether they are in the lobby or in the drive-thru,” Branch Manager Sunday Young said. “We welcome all family members (whether furry or not) to visit the credit union.”

Young added that the credit union did not have special accounts for dogs. She did say, however, that one dog used to escape his nearby home on occasion and make his way to the branch to get a treat from the staff.

The branch sees dogs come through the lobby about three to five times



Loki and Luey can usually be seen at the Timberjay office in Tower. photo by Marcus White

per week.

For shoppers who may not want to interact with the furry sales dogs, Nelson said to just ask, and

most business owners will gladly bring their helpers behind the counter.

Luey and Loki assisted in the writing of this

story with constant interruptions for treats. They did manage to sit and stay for their photos to be taken.

## TOWER...Continued from page 1

not have been able to vote.

Tower City Clerk-Treasurer Linda Keith blamed St. Louis County election officials for the snafu, claiming on Tuesday that the county had sent the ballots to the city without clearly separating the precincts. County Auditor Donald Dicklich called that claim “disingenuous,” and said the ballots that the city should have used came in separate, marked packages, sealed in plastic, which is how they were delivered by county staff. Instead of using the sealed ballots, Dicklich said it appears that the election officials in Tower added loose ballots that the county also provides for testing purposes ahead of the election to the official ballots after they were opened on Tuesday.

If the ballots had been mixed, as Keith claimed, Dicklich said she never reported the problem. Nor does it appear that election officials in Tower made any effort to separate them.

Indeed, election officials appeared unaware of the situation on Tuesday, when a voter expressed concern that he might have received the wrong ballot. Steve Wilson, who had attended his caucus, been a delegate to the Third District convention, and attended a number of candidate forums, said he was

surprised when his ballot listed the 6B DFL contest between Dave Lislegard and Shaun Hainey. “When I came out of the voting booth, I asked why I was being asked to vote on that race. I told them Rob Ecklund is our legislator,” he said.

According to Wilson, the election officials appeared unsure of the situation and he wasn’t confident they were going to look into it. “They just kind of shrugged their shoulders,” he said.

Wilson then walked to the *Timberjay* office in hopes of confirming his belief that he had been given the wrong ballot. While there, he was able to confirm that he resides in District 3, at which point he went back to the polling place to let the election officials know.

“I thought if they had

the wrong ballot, it had to be nipped in the bud,” he said.

Meanwhile, the *Timberjay* reached out to election officials with St. Louis County, who subsequently contacted Keith, who is in charge of election administration in Tower. At that point, election officials in Tower took steps to address the problem.

But the damage was done, and as of Wednesday election officials in St. Paul and St. Louis County were scurrying to decide how to address the issue.

Dicklich said Keith had suggested that the election officials in Tower could disregard the votes cast in the Lislegard-Hainey race, while counting the votes on the rest of the affected ballots. But Dicklich said legal counsel from the Secretary

of State’s office have indicated that state law provides no authority for local election officials to make such a determination. He said the ballots will likely be designated as excess ballots and will not be counted.

“I’m not happy about it,” said Dicklich. “I don’t like to see anybody disenfranchised,” he said.

Wilson, who says he spent considerable time informing himself about the candidates and took his vote seriously, said he’s incredibly frustrated that an error by local election officials have likely rendered his efforts meaningless.

“Disenfranchising voters should be the last resort,” he said. “Here, the voter intent is clear.”

Perhaps the only saving grace, is that none of the races on the ballot were close enough that the 18 votes could have made a difference. But that’s slim comfort, notes Dicklich, who said the training that election officials receive is supposed to prevent such mishaps, because sometimes every vote can be critical in an

election. “A person who has been involved in elections for a while should have known that you don’t take loose ballots and use them on election day,” he said.

**KELLY KLUN**  
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# the Ely TIMBERJAY



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## VIOLATIONS

# County orders elections re-training for Tower clerk

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

Investigation reveals multiple failures stemming from Aug. 14 primary

TOWER— St. Louis County officials are requiring that Tower City Clerk-Treasurer Linda Keith undergo elections re-training in Duluth, at city expense, after a county investigation revealed a host of significant errors, violations of state law, and failures to follow

election procedures during the Aug. 14 primary election here.

“The additional training is necessary due to the severity and number of issues identified during the investigation,” wrote St. Louis County Deputy Auditor Phil Chapman, who supervises elections for the county.

Those errors and failures go well beyond providing erroneous ballots to 25 voters in the city, as the *Timberjay* has previously reported. The election issues are detailed in an Aug. 24 letter to city officials in Tower along with the Minnesota Secretary of State.

Among the most serious findings was that Keith, on Aug. 7, had certified that the city’s pre-election voting machine testing had been completed accurately and consistent with the pre-determined results, when, in fact, the testing had not been completed properly, as required

by state law. Deputy Clerk Terri Joki-Martin and Josh Villebrun also attested to the completion of the testing.

County officials were able to determine that the testing had not been done in the

See...CLERK pg. 10

## UTILITIES

# First hearing on Frontier problems will be in Ely

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

ELY—Customers of Frontier Communications are invited to the first of a series of public hearings around the state on service and billing complaints related to the telecom giant which is set for Tuesday, Sept. 4, at the Vermilion Community College’s fine arts theater.

Tuesday’s hearing, which begins at 6 p.m., is one of five ordered around the state by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in response to public complaints about Frontier’s service.

The MPUC was flooded with complaints after it opened an initial investigation into the company in the wake of reporting by the *Timberjay* last November.

Additional hearings are set for later in September in McGregor, Wyoming, Lakeville and Slayton.

Those who wish to testify at one of the hearings are asked to do four things.

1) To identify themselves and share any relevant circumstances they may have.

2) Describe the services currently or formerly received by Frontier.

3) Prepare a list of concerns encountered while contracting or receiving services from the telecom provider. Copies of correspondence or bills may also be provided to be entered as evidence.

4) Have a list of preferred actions that can either be carried out by the carrier or the state Department of Commerce.

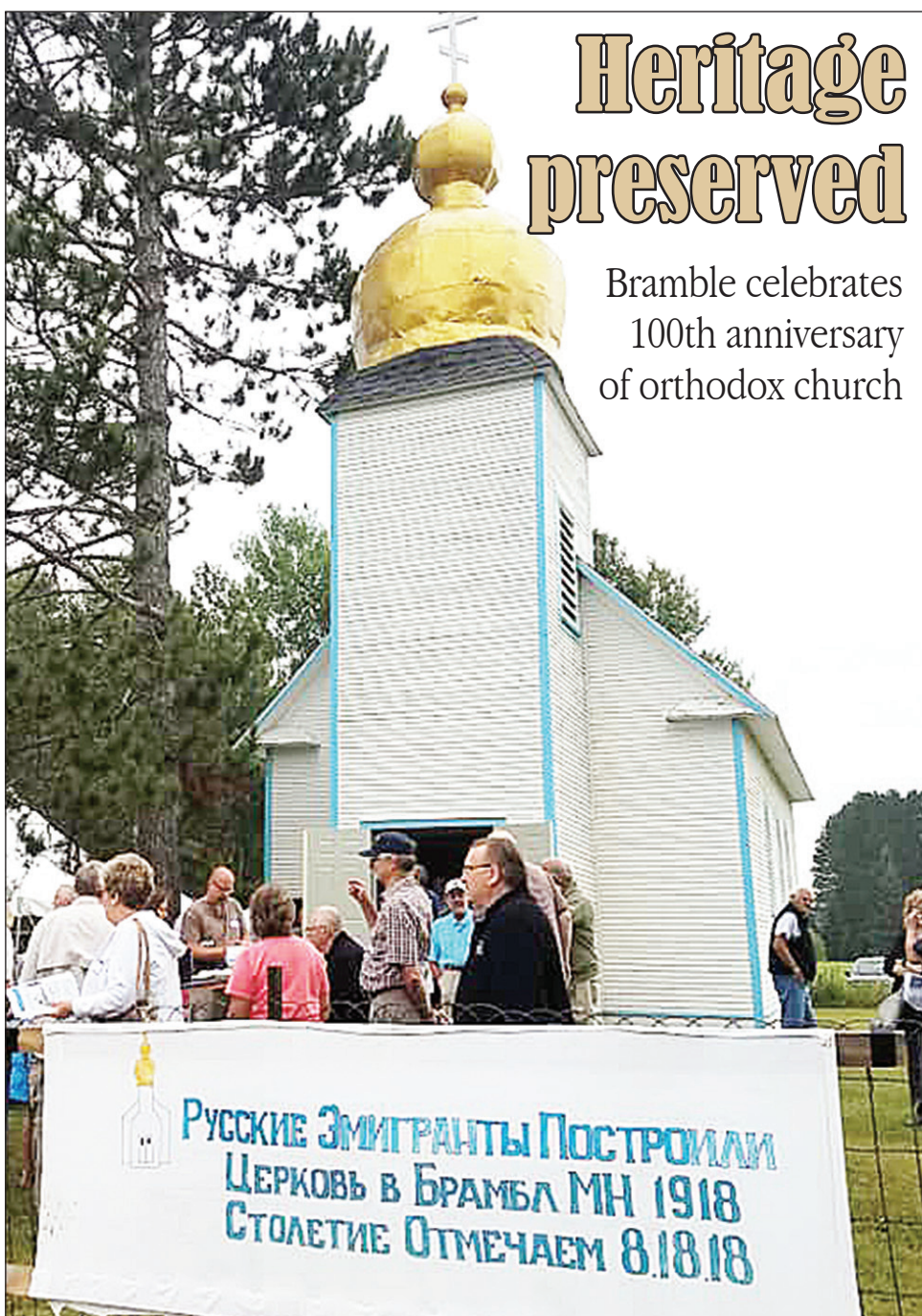
Issues that may be brought forth at the hearing must be related to either billing problems, service quality issues or customer service representatives.

An Administrative Law Judge with the commerce department will preside over each of the hearings.

Those who would like to

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## COMMUNITY CELEBRATION



# Heritage preserved

Bramble celebrates 100th anniversary of orthodox church

by MARCUS WHITE  
Cook/Orr Editor

BRAMBLE—Homesteading communities across the Midwest have come and gone leaving little behind of what once was.

While many in northeastern Minnesota have forgotten the days when farms and ranches dotted this remote portion of the Littlefork River Valley, this small community in southeastern Koochiching County continues to preserve a most visible symbol of their early heritage.

Many small, rural communities have lost their churches over the years as the early homesteaders who cleared the forests and farmed their poor fields for a time eventually moved on in hopes of an easier life, leaving their houses of worship to fall into disrepair.

But dedication from a small group

See...CHURCH pg. 12



Rev. Radomir Plavsic and Rev. Kristijan Petrovich lead the 100th anniversary mass at St. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Bramble. photos by Fred Schumacher

## TOWER HARBOR

# Council sets deadline for new town home agreement

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

TOWER— The city council here set a late September deadline for the development group led by Orlyn Kringstad to sign a revised development agreement for town homes at the city’s harbor or the city will cancel the project.

The agreement would require the developers to take on significant additional financial risk, since it would leave them potentially on the hook for the cost of public infrastructure if the project failed to move forward.

Under the original agreement, the city had agreed to pay for the full cost of public infrastructure, mostly through grants from the IRRRB and the state Department of Employment and Economic Development. But estimated costs have risen sharply and the city has been less successful than anticipated in obtaining outside funds to assist with project costs.

“In order to protect the city, the letter of credit was asked for, so if something went awry, we wouldn’t be sitting on three-quarters of a million dollars of infrastructure,” said Mayor Josh Carlson, who acknowledged the requirement was not part of the original development agreement.

The city’s deadline comes barely a month after permits and platting for the project were finally approved, which means the project could potentially move forward to actual sales if the dispute over the development agreement could be resolved.

The council’s action appeared to be a reaction to Kringstad’s recent decision to file for mayor in the fall election. Council member Kevin Fitton questioned whether Kringstad was committed to the development given his plans to divest himself from the town home project in order to avoid any conflict of interest as mayor. “How is that supposed to increase our confidence that you will complete the project?” Fitton asked. Kringstad said his partners on the project would be taking over the project in his place.

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# CLERK...Continued from page 1

manner required. "After review of the test materials, the public accuracy tape did not agree with the predetermined results," writes Chapman. "In fact, it appears the test was incomplete because eleven ballots for each precinct were not marked using the AutoMark machine," Chapman continued. According to the investigation, Chapman said it appears that the blank ballots that were supposed to be used for testing were, instead, handed out to voters on election day.

At the same time, Chapman noted that election officials in Tower conducted what partial testing they did do on a back-up disk, rather than the primary disk that election officials are supposed to use for the election.

According to Chapman, election officials must test the actual equipment and software

disks that will be used on election day. The back-up disks are only provided for use in the event that the primary disk were to fail on election day.

Chapman also cited major errors in the voting tabulations provided to the county by Keith after the Aug. 14 primary.

The process for elections is designed to ensure accountability in order to prevent errors or fraud. In order to do that, election officials must account for each ballot that they receive from the county and the numbers must add up at the end of the day.

On the summary report provided by Keith to county officials, it claims 370 total ballots were provided to the city by the county. "We're not sure where they came up with that," Chapman said during an interview this week with the *Timberjay*. "We recorded 150 pre-

cinct one ballots." The county also provided 50 ballots for precinct two, which should have totaled 200. The other ballots that the county provided were for testing purposes only.

Keith also listed eight absentee ballots on the summary sheet, while Chapman said it appears there were actually 25.

Perhaps the most glaring error was the discrepancy between the number of voters reported by election judges and the number of ballots reported in the ballot box at the end of the day. Based on signatures, a total of 131 city residents turned out to the polls on Aug. 14. According to Chapman, there should be the same number of ballots in the ballot box, yet Keith reported 345.

At the same time, Keith failed to submit any summary information for precinct two, as required

by state statute.

According to Chapman, Keith also mishandled absentee ballots, by mixing them into the ballot box "due to confidentiality concerns that the City Clerk has." Yet Chapman notes that state law "requires that absentee and polling place vote totals be reported separately."

City officials also mishandled the ballots and other election materials in the wake of the voting. "When election supplies were returned [to the county], all voted ballots were in clear unsealed bags and not in sealed envelopes signed by election judges as required."

Keith also sent all three summary envelopes back to St. Louis County even though election officials are trained and reminded that one of the three envelopes is supposed to be retained by the local election administrator so they can answer questions, and also serve as a back-up in case the other ballots are damaged in transit to county offices.

While Chapman said the occasional error or irregularity isn't that uncommon among the

172 precincts and 75 unorganized territories overseen by the county, he said the number and scale of mistakes in the recent Tower election was extraordinary. "I'll be honest, I don't recall seeing this many issues before," he said. And the problems may not have been limited to the recent primary election. "The investigation focused on the recent state and federal primary election; however, the auditor's office has been made aware of citizen concerns relating to previous elections," said Chapman.

Keith, at a special council meeting this past Thursday, attempted to put the onus on St. Louis County for failing to provide a "packing slip" that detailed all of the materials. Chapman said given the large number of precincts they serve for each election, producing a packing slip for each one would be a major undertaking that would serve little purpose. He noted that the election day ballots come sealed in plastic and both the number of ballots and the precinct are clearly labeled.

Keith had also sug-

gested earlier that the county had provided loose ballots along with the sealed ones. Chapman said the "loose" ballots are clipped together with a large black clip and are clearly labeled to be used for testing. It was, apparently, because city officials failed to conduct the required testing with blank ballots that so many were left over on election day.

"It's frustrating to me," said Chapman. "We cover all this in clerk training. It's really unacceptable that this many errors could happen." While the county supervises elections, Chapman said there is no question about which level of government is charged with ensuring that local elections are run properly. "Ultimately, it's the city's responsibility," he said.

According to Chapman's letter, the city of Tower will be expected to reimburse the county for the cost of the one-on-one training that Chapman and other county officials will provide to Keith and other election staff on Sept. 13.

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# ELY...Continued from page 1

comment but cannot attend Tuesday's hearing, or who wish to submit further evidence, are asked to submit their information and evidence to the PUC by going to [www.mn.gov/puc](http://www.mn.gov/puc) and selecting Speak up! The docket number for

the case is 18-122.

Additionally, comments may be submitted to [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us) or by sending a letter to: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Additional information on the case can also be found on the PUC website.

The specific room number for the hearing at Vermilion Community College was not available as of press time.

August/September 2018

**MINE READER**

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**WE ONLY THRIVE WHEN OUR COMMUNITIES PROSPER**

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As children across the country head back to school, we find ourselves recommitted to this idea. We believe it's vital for the future workforce to have proper educational resources, which is why Twin Metals has provided more than \$400,000 in financial support to a variety of community organizations, including Independent School District 696, the United Way of Northeast Minnesota, the Ely Area Food Shelf, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, the Ely Public Library and more. We could not be happier to support these organizations, because to us, seeing northeast Minnesota prosper is at the core of what drives us.

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To learn more about Twin Metals Minnesota come see us at the 2018 Iron Range STEM Showcase on October 5 from 4-8 p.m. at the Hibbing Memorial Building.

For more information on Twin Metals Minnesota, visit [www.Twin-Metals.com](http://www.Twin-Metals.com).