



Benton County NEWS

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Townships to hold annual meetings March 10

Residents vote on levy

ST. MICHAEL – Minnesota's 1,781 townships will host their annual town meetings Tuesday, March 10.

Known as Township Day, these meetings take place every year on the second Tuesday in March. Residents of the townships meet to voice their opinions about local issues with other township residents and also vote directly on their annual tax levy; direct democracy in action. Citizens attending annual meetings also often discuss and vote on other issues.

In addition, many of the state's townships will have township officer elections on Township Day.

"Township Day gives a direct voice to residents of townships," said David Hann, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Townships. "The annual meeting is an opportunity to participate in government. Residents meet and discuss issues with their town board, and vote on the proposed tax levy."

Hann urged those living in townships to attend their annual meeting.

There are approximately 914,174 township residents in 1,781 townships in Minnesota. Benton County has 13 townships: Alberta, Gilmanton, Glen-

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- Nancy P. Stang
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Goreckis go all in

Brothers find themselves coaching state wrestling teams

BY EVAN MICHEALSON STAFF WRITER

Most mornings before the workday begins, Foley wrestling head coach Scott Gorecki makes a phone call to his brother, Terry.

Every early-hour conversation, the brothers talk about the sport they have been coaching in for 23 years: wrestling. Both Goreckis have their essential roles in two programs in two different classes.

However, on the morning of the 2020 Minnesota State High School Wrestling Tournament Feb. 27, they found themselves no longer needing to communicate over the phone; they were both under the bright lights of the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Scott is not the only Gorecki to claim the honor of reaching state, as Terry's Royalton-Up-sala wrestling team defeated the Aitkin Gobblers 39-27 in the Section 7A Tournament Feb. 15 to clinch the program's second-ever state appearance.

"The kids overcame a ton of adversity throughout the season," Terry said. "Two weeks

ago, we came together on that Saturday to put together a perfect match to earn a second trip to the state tournament."

Watching from the Royalton High School stands to see the team's rare achievement was Scott and his son, Section 7AA's 195-pound champion, Hunter. Seeing his brother's squad reach that vaunted goal only made those phone calls feel more special.

"It's just great support, knowing he's behind me," Scott said. "Every morning, we're calling each other, talking about wrestling, talking about kids, the program, ways of getting better."

The Goreckis have experienced contrasting paths to careers as state-attending head coaches. Scott, following a 100-win high school career, thrived under the tutelage of Foley's winningest coach Lyle Freudenberg and eventually took over the program.

Terry, however, initially bowed out of wrestling following his sophomore season. He was re-introduced to the world of high school wrestling when Randy Zimmer, a former head coach of the Milaca Wolves wrestling squad, ran into Terry at a football game.

"I really didn't get back into the sport until my first year of teaching in Milaca," Terry said. "Randy was reffing the football game and said, 'You know what Terry, I want you to be a part of the program. I want you to coach.' Since then, it's been back in my blood."



PHOTO BY EVAN MICHEALSON

Foley wrestling head coach Scott Gorecki shouts encouragement during a match at the 2020 Minnesota State High School League Class AA Wrestling Individual Tournament Feb. 28 at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul. Gorecki's experience at state was bolstered with his brother, Terry, who was also an entrant as the head coach of the Royalton High School wrestling team.

While Terry built up a ground-work of coaching experience as an assistant to Zimmer in Milaca, Scott began helping Freudenberg in continuing to develop strong wrestlers in Foley. He took over as

the Falcons head coach before the 2014-15 wrestling season where he has continued Foley's tradition of entering the state tournament.

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State, county urge participation in 2020 Census

Legislative funding, redistricting on the line

BY JAKOB KOUNKEL STAFF WRITER

FOLEY — With legislative funding and redistricting on the line, Benton County residents are urged to participate in the United States census count.

The census, one of the original articles of the U.S. Constitution, aims to count every resident in the United States, even homeless and illegal alien populations. Benton County officials have been preparing for the labor-intensive count since 2017.

"In Minnesota alone, there's roughly \$15 billion that we receive every year based on the number of people we have," said Roxanne Achman, Benton County Department of Development Director.

The money is given to at least 55 federal programs that distribute money based on census data. Over the next decade, every person that goes uncounted is a loss of approximately \$15,000 to Benton County, Achman said. The number of estimated people not counted in the 2010 census was 7,000.

Funding is not the only potential loss.

The total population of each state determines the number of elected officials each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. Minnesota has eight congress-

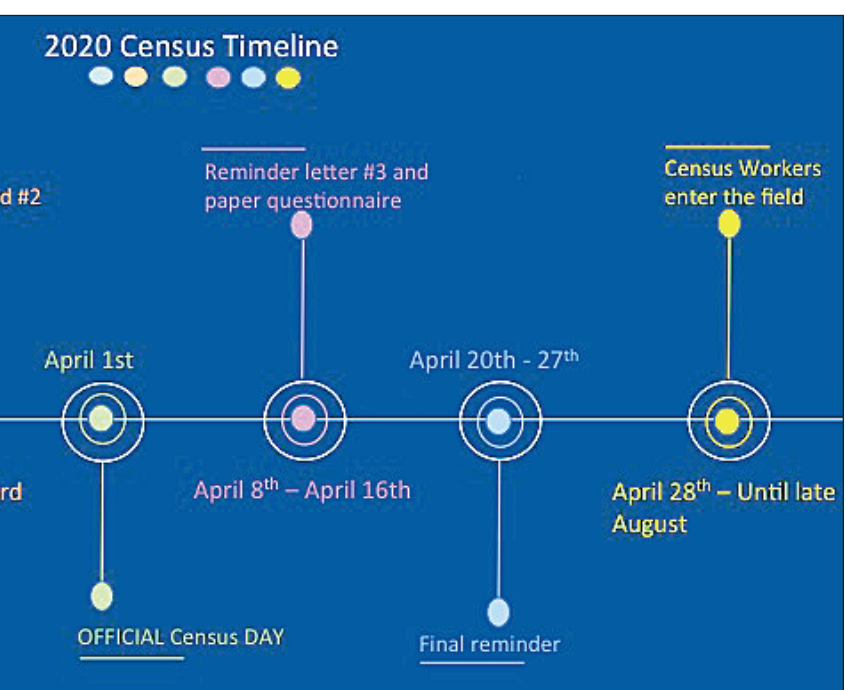
sional legislators serving in the U.S. House. The census also has implications for the state House.

"This year, Minnesota stands to lose a representative due to the projected undercount, so we could go from eight representatives to seven," Achman said.

Congressional seats will be reapportioned after the president receives state population reports in December of this year. By February 2022, legislative and congressional redistricting will be complete.

Aside from legislative funding and redistricting, Achman said the census is also helpful to understand the demographics of the area.

"I think it helps us understand what we have out there for a population, and what programs we need to change, focuses that we need to make," Achman said. "Where are our issues?"



GRAPHIC SUBMITTED

A census timeline details what residents can expect in the months of March through August. The 2020 Census will be used to determine legislative funding and redistricting.

Children, people of color, indigenous people, urban and rural low-income households, and other populations have been historically difficult to include in the census, according to the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

Achieving a more complete count would mean getting people educated about the importance and utility of the census Achman said.

The census this year is 10 questions which does not include a citizenship question. The information is protected meaning its data cannot be released to anybody for a 72-year period.

Achman said there were public concerns the information would be released to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, but the information is classified in a way that makes the data unavailable to certain government agencies.

"The other critical thing that they're pushing is you don't have to answer the entire questionnaire," Achman said.

"Just provide the information that you're comfortable with. If there are questions, they'll follow up with you. If it's sufficient, they'll move it along in the system."

There are three ways to respond to the 2020 Census: online, by phone or by mail.

Starting March 12, state census workers will send out invitations to respond to the 2020 Census online. Once that invitation is received, residents can respond by whichever medium fits best. Around 80% of households will receive an online invitation, which will continue through March 20.

On March 26, a reminder postcard is sent to all households that have not responded, which will continue through early April. On April 1, everybody is invited to participate online, by mail or by phone. If residents still are not responding, a second reminder and paper questionnaire will be sent to all of the unresponsive house-

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