closed until next spring. A3.

WILLMAR, MINN. **FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020**



Photos by Erica Dischino / West Central Tribune

Madeline Sheard, 20, plays the cello Thursday for her 98-year-old great-grandmother Dorothy Benson in an intimate performance through the door of a courtyard at Carris Health Care Center and Therapy and Suites in Willmar. While visitors at the facility are not allowed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sheard decided to connect with her great-grandmother through the power of music. Sheard is a cello performance major at the University of Southern California. See video at wctrib.com.

Soothing songs connect family



Above: Dorothy Benson, 98, enjoys a cello performance by her great-granddaughter Madeline Sheard through the door Thursday.

Top right: Madeline Sheard blows a kiss to her 98-year-old greatgrandmother Dorothy Benson Thursday after she gave a cello performance.

Bottom right: Madeline Sheard, left, plays the cello for her great-grandmother Dorothy Benson while her grandfather Dennis Benson conducts along with the music.





Gov. Walz's authority, COVID-19 aid, policing

Laws all on the table for special session

> By Dana Ferguson Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Minnesota lawmakers on Friday are set to return to the Capitol to take up reforms to the state's policing laws and weigh next steps in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their actions could end a peacetime emergency spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and limit Gov. Tim Walz's vast executive authority. Legislators could pass more than \$1 billion in local construction projects and green light millions of dollars in COVID-19 aid for businesses, families and local governments.

And they could take up a slate of changes to the state's policing laws in the wake of George Floyd's death following a fatal encounter with an ex-Minneapolis police officer.

But in the hours ahead of the special session, leaders in the divided Legislature appeared to have different priorities for the overtime session. And partisan disagreements threatened to again block the passage of several bills.

Before lawmakers return to the Capitol Friday, here's what you need to know.

Why are they coming back?

Wednesday Walz announced he would again extend his peacetime emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that triggered legislative action. The House of Representatives and Senate will vote on whether to block the extension of the peacetime emergency and additional executive authority for the Walz administration another 30 days.

Both chambers need to vote down the extension to block it. GOP lawmakers who hold a majority in the Senate have signaled they'll vote to end the peacetime emergency while Democrats who control the House have said they'll vote to allow the extension.

Republicans said they oppose the governor's continued peacetime authority because they feel he hasn't adequately consulted with the Legislature and they think his executive actions have gone too far. Some have said the

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Kandiyohi County to purchase new election equipment

State grant helps upgrade ballot scanners, add electronic rosters

By Shelby Lindrud slindrud@wctrib.com

WILLMAR — The Minnesota Secretary of State has awarded Kandiyohi County more than \$33,000 in grant money to purchase election equipment that will be used during the 2020

The Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioner last month approved accepting the \$33,634

in matching grant funds.

The county is purchasing two different types of machines ballot scanners and electronic purchase.

"The latest and greatest technology has to do with electronic rosters, e-poll pads they same machine. This will solve **EQUIPMENT:** Page A2

call them," said Mark Thompson, Kandiyohi County Auditor/ Treasurer, during a discussion at the May 19 board meeting.

A third of the grant money, \$12,715, will go toward the purchase of five DS200 precinct-based machines that scan ballots and tabulate votes. These are the machines where voters deposit their completed ballots at the polling place. This portion of the grant is a 50-50 match, with the county also putting in \$12,715 toward the machines'

The purchase of the new machines will bring all Kandiyohi County's precincts on to the

the issue with the slow reporting of results the county had in the past, when it was using two different machines.

"Everything should work really nifty together," Thompson said.

The rest of the grant funds, \$20,918, plus a 25 percent county match of \$6,972, will fund the purchase of 16 e-poll pads. While not enough to outfit all the county's precincts, each of the 12 precincts in Willmar will get one e-poll pad. The remainder of the e-poll pads will go to Dovre, Green Lake and New London townships.

"They will be using a combination of paper roster and e-poll pads," Thompson said. "It is a good way for them to ease into it. Eventually all poll places will have the electronic rosters."



Erica Dischino / West Central Tribune file photo

A state grant awarded to Kandiyohi County will allow the County Auditor's Office to purchase five new precinct-based ballot scanner and vote tabulators, which will put all the precincts on the same machine. This should take care of issues that have delayed reporting results in the past few elections.

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