

Area artists use pandemic downtime to create new work, Life A6



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HAVE YOU HEARD?

You might not hear much about them, but the Bemidji area is home to some fascinating behind-the-scenes businesses. Our 18-page Annual Report tells their stories.



Photos by Jillian Gandsey / Bemidji Pioneer

Kova, dressed in a skirt, waits to walk through the pet parade on Thursday at Havenwood Care Center in Bemidji.

More questions than answers

Local school planning underway amid new guidance

By Hannah Olson
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Lutz



Walz

BEMIDJI — Instead of a blanket statewide decision, Gov. Tim Walz offered up a more localized solution on Thursday for school reopening — children around Minnesota will go back to school in different methods depending on local COVID-19 case numbers.

What does this mean for Bemidji?

Under Walz's Safe Learning Plan, districts will be able to start school Sept. 8 under the learning model — in-person, hybrid or online — determined by the COVID-19 biweekly case rate by county of residence.

Currently, Beltrami County's case rate would allow Bemidji Area Schools to open under a hybrid model for all students.

Bemidji Area Schools Superintendent Tim Lutz would like the community's help in changing this.

He pleaded with the community to follow COVID-19 prevention guidelines on Friday, so by the time September comes, young Bemidjians will be allowed to go to school in-person.

SCHOOLS: Page A5



Hannah Olson / Bemidji Pioneer

The Bemidji Area Schools Downtown Education Center, which houses the district offices, as seen from the corner of Fifth Street and Minnesota Avenue.

Working together

Community rallied to protect small businesses from COVID impacts

By Matthew Liedke
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Hengel



Mathews

BEMIDJI — More than 1,000 businesses were assisted in the past several months by a special loan set up by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, including 36 in the Greater Bemidji area.

However, it wasn't the only form of assistance created in short order when the coronavirus pandemic resulted in businesses having to close their doors.

Over the spring months, many community organizations and government units created several options to

help businesses weather the COVID-19 storm. According to Greater Bemidji Economic Development Executive Director Dave Hengel, the organization was involved in distributing \$2.1 million in assistance in various programs to 110 businesses.

FINANCES: Page A5

PARADE OF PETS

Pets and their owners visit residents at Havenwood Care Center

Kittens, a tortoise, cows, a variety of dogs, and all of their owners came together for a pet parade on Thursday at Havenwood Care Center. The Jake Bluhm State Farm Insurance Agency hosted the event and suggested pets be dressed up to parade passed windows for residents. Social distancing was enforced and masks were also worn by those who attended the event.

PARADE OF PETS:
More photos on Page A12

RIGHT: Addrianna Kinn, left, and Ashley Kinn walk their cows through the pet parade on Thursday at Havenwood Care Center in Bemidji



I tried to fly safely during the pandemic, and this is what I saw

Earlier this month, I traveled home to South Carolina after a year of being away from family and friends.

Initially, it was a trip I had no intention of taking, because, even as someone who makes a living writing about travel, I've personally maintained the stance that it's best to be safe rather than sorry when considering a



vacation this year.

But after an unexpected death in the family, both my boyfriend and I decided that it was time to get

back on the proverbial horse after these past five months of uncertainty.

We had spent those months taking care to protect our physical wellbeing, all the while not realizing that we were neglecting our mental health. The death put life into perspective for us, and we knew that we needed a dose of family time

after going so long without it.

Flying home

We decided that flying was our best option for a 1,500-mile trip. Of course, road trips are all the rage for travelers at the moment, but nearly five days of driving roundtrip was not in the cards for us.

TRAVEL: Page A12



\$2.00

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