

# HENDERSON INDEPENDENT

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## Below the fold

Henderson Mayor Paul Menne spoke to the House Capital Investment Committee last week about the need to fix Highway 93.

## Fatal crash

A Mankato man made a wrong turn onto Highway 169 and died in the subsequent crash on Friday evening. P. 9



## Greta Nesbit earns state trip

LS-H junior Greta Nesbit won the Section 2A Singles tennis title on Monday. P.16

LS-H Facilities Task Force

## Hilltop needs, safety concerns highlighted

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

The 18-member Le Sueur-Henderson Facilities Task Force met at Hilltop Elementary School in Henderson last Tuesday, Oct. 8 to tour the school and hear about the many challenges facing the fourth- and fifth-grade students who attend the “open classroom” school.

Hilltop was built in 1973, when open classroom designs were all the rage. The theory is that having students in a wide-open space, not unlike one-room schoolhouses, will allow for greater collaboration for both students and educators.

But for the 154 students and 18 staff members inside the school, the open classroom concept provides a lot of distractions as well.

Things like walls and doors are at a premium inside the school,



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Hilltop Elementary School Principal Amanda Feterl leads LS-H Task Force members on a tour of the school. Hilltop was built in 1973 with an open classroom design, and so staff use cabinets, lockers and partitions to create temporary walls, but noise remains an issue and a distraction for students and staff alike.

TASK FORCE

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## Minnesota House hears bid for Highway 93 repairs

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

\$93,000. That is the new daily cost to Henderson when all three roads are flooded, Mayor Paul Menne informed members of the Minnesota House’s Capital Investment Committee on the Minnesota State University, Mankato campus on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Menne was there to stress the importance of finding a fix for flooding, and lifting Highway 93 out of the flood plain offers the highest benefit-cost ratio, with an estimated project cost of \$16.5 million.

The project proposal would also involve making Highway 93 a 10-ton road, which would be a big relief for businesses like Eckblad

Trucking, who currently have to change their entire business model during flood events, as the local county roads are 7-ton roads and unable to accommodate their trucks.

Menne also pointed out that more than a dozen flood-related projects have been completed between Shakopee and Mankato since 1993, including six between Le Sueur and Mankato.

“The frequency, intensity and duration is getting worse and worse,” Menne told House members.

The data backs up Menne’s claims. The top 10 historic Minnesota River crests at Henderson range from 737.66 to 740.08 feet,

FIX FOR 93

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PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Henderson Mayor Paul Menne spoke to members of the Minnesota House’s Capital Improvement Committee last Wednesday about the importance of fixing Highway 93 so it is out of the flood plain.

## Recycling basics, part 2

Al Christensen offers all you need to know about what can and cannot go in your recycling bins. P.5

## Blood Drive

Altona Colony is hosting another Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, Oct. 21. P.5

## Cross Country

The girls were 3rd and boys 10th at the Jordan Invite last week and competed at conference on Tuesday. P.14

## Football falls to Martin County West

The Giants fell 49-6 in the last home game of the season. P.15

## New DNR grant

You’ve heard of “No Child Left Behind.” Well, the DNR is determined to have “No Child Left Inside” with a new grant pushing outdoor activities for kids. P.15





# NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## THE GAYLORD HUB

Sibley East Elementary School is raising funds to install a climbing wall in the school's gymnasium. According to physical education teacher Brian Biermann, the climbing wall would be used only under adult supervision, and while harnesses are not required for this type of wall, there is a plan to purchase helmets.

In other news, Biermann announced that the school has been awarded an \$1,800 grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to introduce fourth and fifth graders to archery. The Gaylord Game Protective League will provide matching funds and archery will be added to this year's curriculum.

## WINTHROP NEWS

A recent water main break near the intersection of Highway 19 and Main Street caused some traffic snarls. Crews from Hjerpe Contracting were able to get to the problem quickly and repair the break. Some traffic has to be rerouted slightly to avoid an area of the road that required cement and asphalt repairs.

## LE SUEUR COUNTY NEWS

The upcoming 2020 census will be a critical one for the state of Minnesota as there is the potential

of losing a representative to the United States House. According to state officials, the state could lose \$28,000 in federal funding over the next 10 years for each person that isn't counted.

To help increase turnout, Nicollet County has met with the US Census Bureau and received training on how to form a Complete Count Committee that would be responsible for ensuring that people within the county are aware of the importance of completing the census form. Ideas for raising public perception include ads on county and city websites, Facebook, circulars in utility bills, and handouts at city and county offices, churches, schools and businesses. These committees will not be going door to door or calling on residents, but merely trying to disseminate information.

## ST. PETER HERALD

Four St. Peter area brothers recently got together to celebrate two birthdays on Oct. 2. The four are still going strong over 90: Chester, 96, Wallace, 95, Lloyd 91 and Glenn, 90. Their younger sister, Marion Pomplun, a youngster by comparison at only 83, was also present for the occasion when they reunited at their grandparents' old farm home, west of St. Peter, just

south of Gaylord.

At the Sept. 23 meeting, the St. Peter City Council voted to allow parks within the city's industrial zoning districts. This move came about primarily due to a presentation from the River Valley Dog Park Association in their quest to find a new home for a dog park in the city that will be outside of the flood plain. The specific area under consideration is at North Swift Street, across from the St. Peter Armory, and could be enclosed with a chain link fence with off street parking nearby, practically ideal for a dog park. The only negative raised is the occasional odor in the area due to the proximity of the St. Peter Water Plant.

## BELLE PLAINE HERALD

On Oct. 5, the Belle Plaine and Jordan robotics teams joined forces to raise money for their programs. In a change from their usual competitive ways, the teams rolled up their sleeves to work in the pumpkin fields of Jim's Apple Farm and then each teammate donated their \$10/hour earnings to the team coffers.

The arrangement has been dubbed "Pumpkin Patch Cash" and it's a mutually beneficial system, providing workers for the field, allowing employees to remain at

work in the store and giving the teams a chance to work on team building. The program has already or will work with the Belle Plaine cross country and tennis teams, Scott West wrestling and the Jordan cheerleading squad.

The vulnerable adult who went missing on Sept. 28 at the Renaissance Festival has been found safe. Michael Grossoehme, 41, was located at the Salvation Army in Minneapolis on Oct. 3. The Scott County Sheriff's Office had asked for help from the public and received multiple reports of sightings and encounters with an individual answering to Michael's description.

Motorists traveling south of Shakopee on Highway 169 will encounter two-way, head-to-head traffic near County Road 14 through mid-November. Traffic will be rerouted between 145th Street and south of County Road 14 to allow workers to safely install pipe under the highway.

## ELYSIAN ENTERPRISE

In her 13th year as head coach of the WEM volleyball team, coach Crystal Lamont's teams have only had one losing season. On Oct. 7 she reached a milestone, winning her 300th career match to bring her overall record to 300-100.

A 30-year-old Waseca man, Anthony Michael Hodge, was killed in a collision on Oct. 1 as he was bicycling to work at Waterville Food and Ice, Inc. He was struck by a car driving northbound on Highway 13 at about 6:40 a.m. Road conditions were wet and Hodge was not wearing a helmet.

## NEW PRAGUE TIMES

As of the end of September, some speed limit changes took effect on Highway 282 outside of Jordan. The speed limit increased from 55 to 60 between Minnesota Valley Electric Drive (County Road 10) and County Road 17 (Marschall Road) and decreased from 55 to 45 between East Street in Jordan and County Road 10 (Minnesota Valley Electric Drive).

These changes resulted from a state-wide five-year MnDOT study that examined past crash rates, physical attributes of the highway and an analysis of current driving speeds of all Minnesota two-lane roadways. These speed regulations are the maximum recommendations for ideal driving conditions and drivers are reminded that snowy, icy and rainy road conditions should be taken into consideration when deciding on a safe driving speed.

— Compiled by Beth Cornish

## FIX FOR 93

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and six of them have occurred since 2001. This spring's flooding came in at number six on the list, with 738.52 feet. The other four historic crests were set in 1965, 1969, 1993 and 1997.

But you don't need to be "Top 10" to do damage and cost businesses money. In fact, since 2010, the National Weather Service has recorded 11 river crests that exceeded the flood stage of 732.00 feet.

According to information provided by Sibley County, flooding forces road closures in Henderson two to three times a year on average, with Highway 93 and County Road 6 closed for an average of 20 days, and 25 days for Highway 19. Those road closures affect an average of 5,800 vehicles every day.

By comparison, Henderson City Administrator Lon Berberich told House members that so far this year, six flood events have resulted in roads being closed for 62 days.

The flooding impacts multiple areas of life, from economics/business to public safety.

If someone experiences a medical emergency and needs an ambulance, it will be a long ride as the closest hospital is in Le Sueur. If Henderson needs additional police presence, the closest department is Le Sueur.

The flooding that occurred this past spring was especially hard in many ways. The excess damage

on the road washed away part of Highway 93. Students at Hilltop Elementary in Henderson lost approximately 30 minutes of instructional time every day for the almost two months the city was dealing with road closures due to flooding.

Recently, Sibley County conducted a survey of Henderson residents and business owners to gauge the impact, with 197 people responding.

Cemstone's representative wrote that the road closures have had a crippling effect on business.

"Our company has invested multi-millions in equipment upgrades in recent years and any road closure stops our ability to sell and ship our products into the market. These closures also greatly affect our employees who are unable to work and provide as fully as possible for their families. This in turn has a negative financial impact on other parts of our business as well as our local customers that rely on these materials to run their own businesses," the statement read.

Another respondent wrote that this spring's flooding caused a decline of more than 50 percent in sales. "No customers mean no one wins."

Another business owner responded that they have lost several clients who live in the north and found it impossible to come to town during flooding.

Yet another business owner who filled out the survey said business is very slow when roads are closed, and they might not have

any customers.

"The economic impact may cause businesses to close if this keeps happening on a regular basis. It is difficult to meet daily operational needs without income," the person wrote.

"We need you to be aware that it matters," Menne told House members. "We think it is a great investment and frankly, if we don't get it done, our businesses will start failing, we will become a food desert and our grocery store will close — it is already on the verge — and home values are already starting to fall."

## HOUSE RESPONSE

DFL Rep. Mary Murphy, who is currently serving as the chair of the House's Capital Investment Committee, opened her statement by thanking Menne for his presentation and for making them "aware of what happens when

natural causes happen."

However, Murphy questioned why Menne was presenting to them at all, as she pointed out that their committee deals with general obligation bonds, and Trunk Highway Bonds are used for state roads.

"We have heard your presentation and we know of your plight and we care, but we cannot make any promises," Murphy said.

Murphy did acknowledge that sometimes the people's concerns get lost among the political process, sometimes Trunk Highway Bonds don't get passed, but she hopes that does not happen to Henderson.

"I believe in transparency and concerns the people bring to us, but it may happen in the political process that we don't have a say what happens to your problems in Henderson, but we certainly are

going to remember your presentation," Murphy said.

Although he is not on the committee, Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen, Henderson's representative in the House, was also present and told the House Capital Improvement Committee to "keep an open mind" because the flooding problem in Henderson was a "critical situation."

"This community has suffered long and hard and is in danger of losing key business in the community and residents if they don't come up with a solution to this," Gruenhagen said. "Hopefully something can be worked out one way or the other by the end of the session."

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Boutique

**October 25-27**  
8:00am to 5:00pm

Over 30 Crafters  
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Craft items,  
Vintage items,  
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