

Mayor Carlson gets state award for service to Greater Minnesota

Alexandria Mayor Sara Carlson has been honored by the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities with the Jack Murray Award for her excellence in service to Greater Minnesota.



Carlson

The Jack Murray Award is given to city officials who demonstrate knowledge, leadership, and active participation in the coalition's program areas over their public service career. The award is named for Jack Murray, former mayor of International Falls, who was instrumental in the coalition's formation.

Carlson, who did not run for re-election this year after serving as Alexandria's mayor since 2013, has been a strong advocate for the CGMC and

Greater Minnesota throughout her time in public service, according to coalition leaders.

In 2017, she served as president of the coalition and helped guide the organization through a legislative session that resulted in success for several CGMC priorities including in a modest increase in Local Government Aid, passage of a bonding bill that funded water and wastewater infrastructure and other important economic development initiatives, and the creation of a new grant program to fund small-city streets.

In addition to her active involvement in CGMC events and activities, Carlson has been diligent about reaching out to her state legislators and speaking out in the media about issues that are important to Greater Minnesota communities, the coalition said.

"Whether it be leading press conferences, writing guest columns or advocating at the State Capitol, Mayor Carlson was always willing to speak up for the needs of Greater Minnesota cities," said Greg Zylka, mayor of Little Falls and president of the coalition. "Not only does she put in the hard work to lead her city and our organization, but she does it with a positive attitude and a real desire to seek common ground and bring people together. Her kind, respectful leadership style has set a great example for other mayors to aspire to."

The CGMC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing more than 100 cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The coalition educates legislators about issues important to Greater Minnesota.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Amanda Schumann took this photo of her son, Maverick Stiernagle, meeting with Santa (grandpa Kenny Meyer) at their home in Alexandria recently. If you have a great photo, email it to Lowell Anderson at landerson@echopress.com.

Submitted photo

Douglas County legislators speak out against Walz's COVID plan

By Al Edenloff
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Two state legislators who represent parts of Douglas County blasted Gov. Tim Walz's decision on Wednesday, Dec. 16 to extend shutdowns and restrictions of some Minnesota businesses, including bars and restaurants, into the new year.

District 12B Rep. Paul Anderson, R-Starbuck, said Walz's plan falls short of helping businesses and his idea of allowing outdoor dining is "insulting" to restaurants that are struggling to survive.

"This simply is not enough for our businesses that have been beaten and battered by the governor's restrictions," Anderson said. "Presenting outdoor dining in Minnesota during

the winter as some sort of advancement is the ultimate insult to the bars and restaurants his shutdowns already have impacted so deeply. The governor's own data shows that less than 1 percent of COVID-19 cases are linked to those entities. We all know that COVID-19 is serious, but the governor is still picking winners and losers and doesn't seem to be following the data."

District 8B Rep. Mary Franson, R-Alexandria, said the restrictions, such as those involving gyms and fitness centers, aren't in line with the numbers that the Legislature has seen so far.

"Prior to this latest shutdown, gyms and fitness centers were not a significant contributor to the state's COVID cases, and pools have not con-

tributed a single documented case," Franson said. "Less than 1% of cases came from restaurants, yet the governor is forcing their business outside in the frigid temperatures if they want to seat customers."

Franson added that local businesses are the backbone of the economy, and they have shown the ability to operate safely.

"It is heartbreaking that we will lose even more of them than we already have because of these closures that aren't based in data," Franson said.

The governor's Executive Order 20-103 is an extension of the four-week pause on certain activities to slow the spread of COVID-19. While some businesses can continue to offer goods and services in a

safe manner, many others will again have to weather the challenge of adjusting their operations to "to-go" or virtual means.

Starting Dec. 19 and continuing to Jan. 10 at 11:59 p.m.:

- ▶ Outdoor dining may resume at 50% capacity, 100 people max. No indoor dining and bar service. Delivery, window, walk-up, or drive-up service is open and encouraged.

- ▶ Gyms, fitness and yoga studios, martial arts, and dance studios may open at 25% capacity, 100 people max. Masks are required at all times. 12 feet of distance must be maintained between patrons and between machines.

- ▶ Outdoor events and entertainment may open at 25% capacity, 100 people max,

with 6 feet of distance between households.

- ▶ Organized sports for youth and adults are not allowed. Practices can resume January 4, 2021.

- ▶ Public pools and rec centers will be closed.

- ▶ Indoor entertainment venues will be closed.

- ▶ Receptions, celebrations, and private parties must be canceled or postponed. Weddings, funerals, and other similar planned ceremonies can be held with the current rules in place, but all receptions and gatherings connected to these ceremonies must be canceled or postponed.

For social gatherings:

- ▶ Two households may gather indoors, 10 people max.

- ▶ Three households may gather outdoors, 15 people max.

- ▶ Masks are strong-

ly encouraged and social distancing must be maintained.

Based on Minnesota's evolving knowledge and understanding of the virus, the Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year has been updated so that starting on Jan. 18, every elementary school in Minnesota may choose to operate in person with additional safety measures, according to the Minnesota Department of Health.

The health department says the changes will help reduce the number of infections while safely supporting schools, hospitals, and the economy. For more information and guidance, visit Minnesota's Stay Safe Plan: Adjusting the Dials or Stay Safe MN.



THANK YOU!!!

As the frost covers our tees, we are most grateful for our Members and our Community. Thank you for your support in 2020. We wish you health and happiness during this holiday season and into the new year.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS
Age 18 and under
\$300
(excluding taxes)

With excitement, we look forward to the 2021 Season and are currently filling our Event Calendar. Please visit our website or email info@alexandriagolfclub.com with any questions.

From our family to yours,
Happy Holidays



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For more information, visit us online at www.alexandriagolfclub.com or check out Facebook: www.facebook.com/AlexandriaGolfClub or Instagram: www.instagram.com/alexandriagolfclub

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