

Kittson County Enterprise

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Pictured above, Adam Gustafson reaches for the puck during the game against Lake of the Woods at Hallock on Thursday, Jan. 28. The KCC Bearcats beat LOW 7-0. (Photo courtesy of KC Media Arts)

Enterprise honored with two state awards

By Enterprise Staff

The year 2020 put nearly everyone into virtual mode. Here at the Kittson County Enterprise, we were fortunate to still be able to cover many meetings and events in person, but took precautions to cover some remotely. For others, such as school and sports coverage, we relied upon the generous help from the community.

Each year, newspapers around Minnesota submit entries from September through September into the Better Newspaper Contest. The Michigan Press Association judged Minnesota's 3,102 entries for 2019-2020.

This year, both Editor Margie Holmgren and Reporter Anna Jauhola won prizes for their efforts.

Holmgren took third place in Best Advertisement for non-daily newspapers with circulation up to 1,500. Her ad portrayed the End of an Era Retirement Sale for Anderson Country Collectibles.

"It's an honor to win this award as I know I am competing with a lot of great entrants," Holmgren said. "Creating ads and documents that are eye catching is just one of the things I enjoy about my job. As we work to be a great newspaper, it's always good to hear from our readers and our peers about what we are doing well."

Jauhola took third place in the Hard News category for non-daily newspapers with circulation between 1,001 and 1,500. The article detailed the ongoing issue regarding the Lancaster

Best Advertisement

Third Place: Kittson County Enterprise, Hallock, Margie Holmgren* Anderson Country Collectibles

End of an Era Retirement Sale
Anderson's Country Collectibles
 will be open every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the month of October
started Tuesday, Oct. 8
Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Collectible items including Byers Carolers, Dept. 56 Lighted Houses, Pipka Santas and Angels, Precious Moments, Snow Babies, WilliRay Studio, Willow Tree by Demdaco

40% Off
50% Off
 All other inventory

ALL SALES FINAL
 Accepting cash, checks and credit cards.

STORE FIXTURES 50% OFF

115 2nd St. NE • Hallock
 218-843-2205

PICTURED ABOVE is the advertisement that won Kittson County Enterprise Editor Margie Holmgren third place in the Minnesota Better Newspaper Contest last week. (Enterprise graphic)

port of entry hours. Former Rep. Collin Peterson arranged a meeting with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol at the Lancaster Community Center in September 2019, which proved to be a roundabout

discussion and lack of action. The border hours remain the same.

"It's a hot topic and the reduction in hours greatly affected the city of Lancaster," Jauhola said.

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County hires DDA Human Resources to find an engineer

By Anna Jauhola

Nearly a year ago, Kittson County began searching for a new county engineer.

It's been a tough go.

In a last resort effort, the county board of commissioners has decided to hire DDA Human Resources to assist them in finding an engineer. The board met with Gary Weiers, of DDA, in a special meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 27. Weiers assisted the county in hiring a new administrator earlier in 2020.

"This is an incredibly difficult position to fill," Weiers said. "That's really all over the state of Minnesota. This is a significant challenge for counties. The more remote you are, the more challenging it becomes."

Current legislation surrounding county engineer positions really poses the most challenge because it restricts counties in who they can hire. Those applying must live in Minnesota and be licensed in the state.

The legislation does not allow flexibility for a county like Kittson, which borders North Dakota and Canada, to allow reciprocity with those nearby willing to commute.

Salary range is also an issue from both ends. Kittson County has offered the position to two different applicants within the last several months. One asked for an increased salary but then declined the position. The other didn't counter an offer in the mid-\$90,000 range because he lives in North Dakota. However, Weiers told the board they're not likely to get any other candidates for such a low salary when several counties in the state have increased wages just to keep their engineers.

"I do think the problem is getting acute," Weiers said.

He is also conducting an engineer search for Roseau County, which lost its engineer in mid-2020. Roseau is proposing a salary range of \$115,000 to \$140,000.

The Kittson County

board discussed raising its engineer salary range and will have a final decision in February. The board's current salary offering tops out at \$101,000, which Weiers flat-out said would not draw in any applicants. Over the last year, with interim county engineers plus a bump in the assistant county engineer's salary, the county has paid \$165,000. While County State Aid dollars pay the engineer's salary, that allocation does not increase just because a county increases the pay — instead the increase takes away from any projects the county can pay for with State Aid.

"The problem is, if we pay someone \$140,000, how does that affect other people that need to be at that level?" asked Commissioner Theresia Gillie. "This is a lot of money. I know what we pay Dillon (Hayes). And we have people who've worked here a long time. It creates a huge ruffle that goes everywhere."

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Kittson Healthcare does not expect COVID vaccine this week

By Enterprise Staff

Those seeking a COVID-19 vaccine this week are being encouraged to find locations outside Kittson County.

According to its Facebook page, Kittson Healthcare Center in Hallock stated Monday it was not expecting to receive any vaccine this week from Minnesota Department of Health. Officials are uncertain when they may receive vaccine.

To find other locations, the Minnesota Department of Health has established a website to search for vaccination locations — <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/>.

This will take you to a page where you can click on Find Vaccine Locations. Either you can zoom in on a map of the nearest locations or you can search by city name or ZIP code.

The closest locations to Kittson County to possibly have the vaccine on hand include Crookston, East Grand Forks, Thief River Falls and Warren. To schedule a time with any entity,

you must call that location.

Thief River Falls hosted a Pilot Vaccination Clinic last week, which targets those age 65 and older. Due to shifting scheduling and vaccine distribution, there isn't a clinic this week.

To find more information about these pilot clinics, you can visit <https://www.primarybio.com/r/vaccinate-mn>.

Kittson Healthcare is also encouraging people to help take care of each other by assisting elderly family, neighbors or friends to help schedule vaccinations.

Over the last week, Kittson Healthcare vaccinated 110 people in the Priority group 1b, which includes people 65 and older, K-12 staff and day-care providers.

For updated information on Kittson County's vaccination efforts, the public can call the hotline at 218-843-8888. It is being updated regularly, starting with the date of the info. If the date remains the same for a while, that means there is no new information, but to check back later.

Kittson County has reactivated the county hotline - 218-843-8888. County residents can call to get updates on the coronavirus.

Updates will be posted daily or every other day.

KCC sports going well, despite challenges

By Anna Jauhola

Kittson County Central winter sports have been progressing nicely, despite challenges, since the Minnesota State High School League allowed play to begin in early January. Most challenges surround capacity restrictions.

The Kittson Central School Board discussed the issue at the regular meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 27.

Each student has been limited to two spectators per household at home games and the issue of social distancing versus capacity numbers has been questioned.

"In trying to figure out how home games would work for us in the winter, we put a lot of work into figuring out what our capacity is," said Kittson Central Activities Director Jami Carr. "And we're trying to make sure our community understands what regulations and guidelines we have from the state high school league."

In the MSHSL's rules for spacing due to COVID-19 restrictions, a clause said the max capacity at any game is 150 people. Carr said that maximum would be just for spectators if they could sit 12 feet or more from the playing surface.

"In our facilities, if we

were to go 12 feet from our playing surfaces, we would use the top two bleachers in the arena and at the school," Carr said. "But that's not maximizing people in."

Since they can't facilitate that large of a crowd that far from the surfaces, they must also count players, coaches and game personnel in that 150 total.

"Home games, away games, every school is doing it a little differently between registration, who's allotted tickets. It's kind of been a moving target," Carr said. "But as we're now in the second week of contests, full week of contests, I think people are kind of starting to get the routine of this new part that COVID has added."

Carr also commended players and coaches for taking in stride the mandate they wear masks during practice and games. For the most part, players are adhering to mask use and coaches are working with the kids, ensuring mask breaks and water breaks.

"I know it's not easy just wearing one on a regular basis, let alone while working out," Carr said. "The coaches have really helped out in so many ways and I appreciate that."

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Subscriber of the Week

Julie Cerkowniak, Lake Bronson, Minn., is among the 1,000 people who subscribe to the Kittson County Enterprise every week.

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