

# Mille Lacs Messenger



**Meet the new CO**  
The Isle area has a new conservation officer page 12



Wednesday, January 20, 2021

\$1.00

## County responds to placement of Reservation boundary signs



PHOTO BY BOB STATZ

The 1855 Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe boundary sign in Onamia on Hwy. 169.

by T.A. LeBrun  
news.messenger@apgecm.com

Last week, the Mille Lacs Messenger reported that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) had placed signs along state highways in Mille Lacs and southern Crow Wing counties. The signs denote the boundaries of the original 1855 Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and have been placed under the direction of Gov. Tim Walz and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison. The boundary issue is a reversal of opinion from previous Attorney Generals Lori Swanson and Mike Hatch and all the past governors of Minnesota.

This issue has been a contentious one in the Mille Lacs community as the 1855 Treaty Reservation, consisting of 61,000 acres encompassing the lower half of Mille Lacs Lake, has been settled by non-Band members since the 1890s when township governments were created and the cities of Isle, Onamia and Wahkon were founded.

The County asserts the 1855 Reservation has long been dissolved by Article 1 of the 1864 Treaty in which the Band ceded the 1855 Reservation to

Sign response to 3



PHOTO BY BOB STATZ

**Seasons open, masks and all**  
Onamia guard Aiyanna Mitchell drove the lane against Pine City during the Panthers' opening game of the 2021 season on Jan. 14. Because of State protocols dealing with the pandemic, no fans were allowed in the gym and players and coaches were forced to wear masks throughout the night.

## Fire rescue on Vista Road

by T.A. LeBrun  
news.messenger@apgecm.com

A heroic rescue occurred on Thursday afternoon, Jan. 14, on Vista Road in Isle.

Andrew Miklesh, a resident on Vista Road, thought he heard a transformer explode, an explosion that shook the neighborhood and could even be felt by the fish houses on the lake.

Miklesh saw smoke just to the northeast of his home. He quickly went to the site of the explosion which was a residential trailer owned by



PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

**Risking their lives**  
John Mcardle stands by as Andrew Miklesh surveys the aftermath of an explosion on Vista Road in Isle.

Rescue to 3

## Melanie Benjamin addresses the MLBO community



PHOTO PROVIDED

**State of the Band Address**  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin addresses the Mille Lacs Band in her annual State of the Band Address on Tuesday, Jan. 12. The event was held virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Press Release  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

In her 2021 State of the Band address, Mille Lacs Band Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin summarized 2020 as a year in which "some of the worst things we could imagine happened, but in many ways, it brought out the best in us we could ever hope for."

During one of the darkest times in our modern history, Benjamin said that many Mille Lacs Band Members became a light in the darkness, "being the best ancestors they could be."

"Small sparks together lit a great fire of community service, of fighting against injustice and of adapting to a new world. As Band Members and employees, you stepped forward to serve our Band with courage and compassion, risking your own safety to protect others. Together, we did not cower in the face of crisis. We faced it head-on and we fought it. We took decisive action, and quickly changed the way we do nearly everything so we could keep Band Members safe."

Normally delivered to a ballroom

State of the Band to 10



**Business**  
New owners at Garrison's Y Club

Page 2



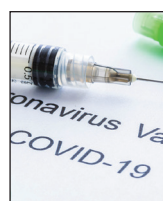
**Liberty Beach**  
Changes coming to the former Liberty Beach

Page 3



**Sports by Statz**  
Mille Lacs Raiders take a win

Page 11



**Health**  
MLHS vaccine update

Page 19

**SPIRE**  
CREDIT UNION  
Federally Insured by NCUA

Driven by  
*Midwestern Values*  
651.215.3500 | 390 W Isle St  
mySPIRE.com