

## INSIDE

This week in Carlton County's only independent, locally owned newspaper.



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## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE



# As vaccinations rise, some vacillation

Rebekah King  
news@pineknotnews.com

Although first responders in Minnesota got to jump to the front of the line for the Covid-19 vaccine, some have said “no” to getting vaccinated despite their elevated risk of contracting and spreading the coronavirus.

Like other states, Minnesota is giving high-risk groups priority

access to the vaccine during the first phases of vaccination. That includes all health care workers — including doctors, nurses, firefighters, paramedics, and other public health officials and emergency personnel — and long-term care staff and residents, Covid-19 test and vaccination site workers, educators and those aged 65 and older. Combined, these groups amount to 1.7 million Minnesotans, according to the

Minnesota Department of Health. As of Tuesday, March 2, a total of 1,383,609 vaccine doses had been administered across the state.

In Carlton County, by the end of February, 8,844 individuals had been vaccinated with at least one dose and 4,922 of those had completed their second and final dose. The total number of public health officials and first responders who have received the vaccine here is

unknown.

The numbers vary from department to department, according to responses solicited by the Pine Knot News.

On the high end of the scale is the Cloquet Police Department, where 91.6 percent of their officers have received the vaccine, according to police chief Derek Randall.

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## POLICE DOG MOURNED IN SCANLON

Police officers and mourners made a sad trip to Scanlon Saturday to say farewell to Duluth K-9 Luna, who was killed in a standoff Thursday. People lined the route from a pet hospital in West Duluth and gathered on overpasses between there and the pet crematorium in Scanlon to pay their respects. For details and more photos, see **Page 3**.

Photos by Jana Peterson  
Pine Knot News



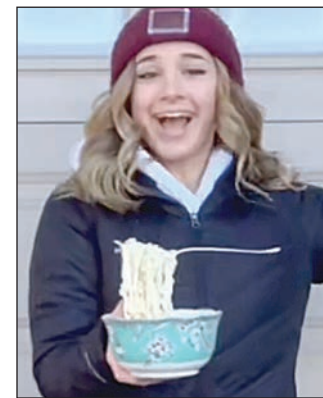
## TikTok post on cold snap heats up

Jana Peterson  
news@pineknotnews.com

Move over Jessica Lange, Jamie Langenbrunner and Sappi fine paper — Cloquet has a new export. Her name is Emerson Rock and she's a TikTok star. A recent post by Rock about “what negative 25 degrees in Minnesota can do” went viral on the social media video app and got more than 11 million views last month.

In the video, a smiling Emerson shows the world what happens to a cracked egg, cooked ramen noodles and boiling water in temperatures that low.

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Cloquet's Emerson Rock is gaining a wide audience on TikTok with dance videos and a cold weather post, showing frozen noodles, that went viral. Contributed photo

### WANT TO JOIN A WINNING TEAM THAT JUST KEEPS GROWING?

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Police officers from the region pass by the casket holding Luna, a K-9 police dog for the Duluth Police Department that was killed last week in a standoff, at a ceremony at Fur-ever Loved Pet Cremation Services in Scanlon Saturday. *Photos by Jana Peterson*



Clementine Modich of Cloquet made a card for Luna.

# K-9 death reverberates beyond Duluth

Jana Peterson  
news@pineknotnews.com

This weekend marked the second time in three years that a procession to honor a Duluth police dog killed in the line of duty has ended in Scanlon.

On Saturday, a long line of people stood along the roadsides overlooking Fur-ever Loved Pet Cremation Services, as a massive line of police cars and others followed the hearse holding K-9 Luna's remains from Duluth to Scanlon. Members of the Cloquet and Fond du Lac honor guards — and service dog Purity — joined the many police officers from Duluth and across the region for the brief ceremonies and a procession line outside the pet crematorium.

People started arriving on the embankment overlooking Scanlon Way at least an hour before the ceremony to honor Luna. Tad Wood and his German shepherd Roxie waited with Mac Coppage and 2-year-old Hudson, watching the procession on their cell phones as it was livestreamed on the Duluth Police Department Facebook page, waiting to pay their respects. Heather Wait and her children did the same, both kids holding handwritten signs that read "All dogs go to heaven."

Wait is a corrections officer at the prison in Moose Lake. "So this kind of hits close to home," she said.

Before the funeral procession arrived, Casey Modich helped his 4-year-old daughter down the snow-covered hill so she could deliver her hand-drawn card and envelope to Luna. "I put a little rainbow inside," said Clementine Modich. A bouquet of



Heather Wait of Cloquet, and her children Trygger Leino, 9, and Lanie Westmoreland, 7, made signs and stood along Carlton County Highway 45 to honor Luna.

flowers and a dog bone sat on the window inside Fur-ever Loved.

Kimmy Luke and Katie Allen came from Duluth, Allen later wrapped in an American flag bearing the "thin blue line" to represent law enforcement.

"I was there after Haas was killed, now we're coming to pay our respects to K-9 Luna and officer Haller and his family," said Allen, an officer at the Arrowhead Juvenile Center in Duluth. "I think it's important because not only is it the second time the family has gone through this, I want to show support for law enforcement because they've been getting such a bad time. And it's easier to go through grief in numbers than alone."

Bob Atkins — who owns both Fur-ever Loved and Atkins-Northland Funeral Home with his wife, Karen — said he took the casket to Duluth's BluePearl pet hospital as soon as he heard about Luna's death.

"An officer stays with the dog's body 24/7 until the dog is removed," he said. "And I knew handler Aaron

Haller would be coming there too, so we wanted the viewing to be in a casket. I went over there a couple times to make sure everything was OK."

Atkins said the streets were packed with people along the Duluth route from the pet hospital, and more people with flags and fire trucks were gathered on the frontage roads and bridges crossing Interstate 35. "People driving north on I-35 were even pulling over to pay their respects," he said.

A pet lover who served on the Friends of Animals board of directors for nearly two decades, Atkins built the pet crematorium and an adjacent crematorium for human remains in 2018 along the quiet dead-end road in Scanlon. They built Fur-ever Loved to be more than a crematorium: it has a living room area where families can say goodbye to a pet, and wait during the cremation to pick up the remains. Since they opened, he said they've cremated more than 6,500 animals, with 4,600 of those being private services



Fur-ever Loved and Atkins-Northland Funeral Home owner/director Bob Atkins makes sure K-9 Luna's body is arranged properly inside the small wooden casket.

— one at a time — where the family gets the remains of their pet back.

While it is gratifying to be able to help families grieve the loss of a beloved pet or police officers mourn a trusted partner, Atkins

said the crew at BluePearl deserve real kudos in the case of the Duluth K-9. "They tried to save Luna's life. They are the ones who went above and beyond."

As for Atkins, who kept things running smooth-

ly Saturday as dozens of family, friends and police officers came together to mourn, it's all part of the job.

"It was a privilege to be there," he said.