

# BRAINERD DISPATCH

SERVING THE BRAINERD LAKES AREA AND CENTRAL MINNESOTA SINCE 1881

Meeting on the grass Monday, Aug. 31, in Rotary Park, the Circle of Change support group member Heidi Balvik-Townsend (left), facilitator Karen Wussow, members Heather Erickson and Jenny Bexell share the warm afternoon sun with a picnic. The Circle of Change support group is sponsored by the Mid-Minnesota Women's Center.

Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch



## CIRCLE OF CHANGE

### Supporting youths

County, restorative justice group team up to bolster area kids

By Theresa Bourke  
Staff Writer

Less than half of Crow Wing County students in fifth, eighth, ninth and 11th grades feel adults in their community care

about them. According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, 41% of the students surveyed at Brainerd, Pequot Lakes and Crosby-Ironton schools reported feeling cared for by adults in the community. Crow Wing County officials are

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Theresa Bourke / Brainerd Dispatch

Representatives from Crow Wing County and Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project, along with other community members, discussed resources and potential programming to help support area youths during a workshop Aug. 20, at the Northland Arboretum.

### Police arrest Nisswa mayor after traffic stop confrontation

Video footage shows Heidmann in expletive-filled rant against officers

By Jennifer Kraus  
Staff Writer

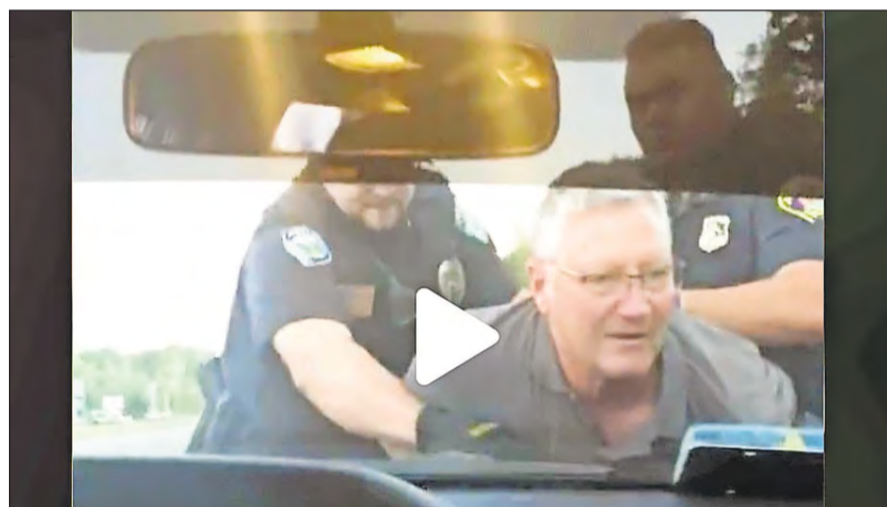
Police body camera footage shows Nisswa Mayor Fred Heidmann in a profanity-laced tirade against two police officers conducting a traffic stop of a third party Saturday, Aug. 29, in Nisswa.



Heidmann

“You guys are just as bad as the cops in Minneapolis,” and “I’m the mayor of this (expletive) town” were among the statements Heidmann made to the officers in footage provided to the Dispatch.

After refusing officers’ warnings to move to a safer area, Heidmann was arrested under probable cause for disorderly conduct and obstruct-



A screen grab from the TikTok video taken of Nisswa Mayor Fred Heidmann’s arrest.

ing the legal process while officers were conducting a traffic stop near his business on Highway 371 and Skillman Street, south of Nisswa. In a written statement, Heidmann said he planned to fight any charges

resulting from the incident because he had a right to free speech and the traffic stop was over when the confrontation occurred.

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### Fertilizer rules to start this week, but will they curb Minn. groundwater’s nitrate problem?

By Kirsti Marohn  
MPR News

PIERZ — Don Tschida grows corn, beans and small grain on land that his father and grandfather farmed before him. On his central Minnesota farm, he also raises a small herd of beef cattle and two barns of broiler chickens.

There’s been plenty of rain this summer, and the corn stands tall and green. But when Tschida digs down beneath a layer of topsoil, the earth is coarse and sandy.

“Water just really filters through in a hurry,” he said.

If Tschida isn’t careful, what he puts on his fields — including the nitrogen in fertilizer — could wind up in the groundwater below, where most

Minnesotans, including Tschida, get their drinking water.

Starting this week, farmers in parts of Minnesota, including in Morrison County, will face new restrictions on how they apply nitrogen fertilizer.

The regulations are aimed at reducing nitrate contamination in the state’s groundwater. But whether they’ll have a real impact on a growing health and environmental problem is still up for debate.

In a testing program a few years ago, more than half of the wells tested in Agram Township, where Tschida farms, had a level of nitrate higher than what the federal government considers safe for drinking water.



Vickie Kettlewell for MPR News

Don Tschida looks over the Skunk River, which runs through his property in Pierz, Minn.

Above that limit, nitrate poses a health risk to humans, especially infants. Consuming too much nitrate can cause a potentially serious or even fatal condition known as blue baby syndrome.

#### Tackling the source

Nitrate contamination can come from different sources, including septic systems and urban drainage. But in Minnesota, the biggest source is the fertilizer and animal manure

commonly applied to farm fields.

It took several years for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to develop what’s known as the Groundwater Protection Rule, to tackle the problem. It took effect in June, and the restrictions that govern when farmers in specific areas can apply fertilizer begin Tuesday.

Starting this week, farmers won’t be allowed

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### Lakewood nursing home reports positive employee

Crow Wing tops 300 cases

Lakewood Health System Care Center in Staples identified a positive case of COVID-19 in one of its staff members.

The case at the nursing home was reported in a Monday, Aug. 31, news release.

“We are doing everything we can to stop the spread of this virus within our setting,” stated Kathy Dobson, vice president of senior services, in a news release. “Aggressive proactive infection control measures and screening procedures were initiated which we believe will help us manage this case as effectively as possible. We have enacted our emergency response plan with heightened infection control protocols, and we are working in partner-

#### COVID-19 DATA AS OF AUG. 31

- ▶ **Aitkin** — 48 (+0 since Aug. 28), with one death.
- ▶ **Cass** — 105 (+5), with three deaths.
- ▶ **Crow Wing** — 309 (+12), with 16 deaths.
- ▶ **Mille Lacs** — 102 (+9), with three deaths.
- ▶ **Morrison** — 117 (+5), with one death.
- ▶ **Todd** — 449 (+3), with two deaths.
- ▶ **Wadena** — 49 (+4).

*NOTE: These numbers are cumulative since March 21 and many are out of isolation. The number of those no longer needing isolation is not reported on a county-level basis by the state.*

ship with the Minnesota Department of Health to ensure we are taking appropriate steps. Our

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## The CARES Act/Coronavirus Relief Funds



Up to \$10,000 in grant funds available for small businesses & nonprofits of Crow Wing County.

Deadline to apply is Sept. 18, 2020.

VISIT [WWW.CROWWING.US](http://WWW.CROWWING.US) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

# Hound is nothing but trouble during his owners' vacations

**DEAR ABBY:** My daughter and son-in-law's dog, "Zeke," is a poor houseguest. We have kept him several times while they were vacationing. This last time, a long weekend, was very stressful.

Zeke is a hound dog (58 pounds) and stubborn. He jumps on furniture, jumps up to the kitchen counter and dining table trying to steal food, urinates in the house (not all the time, but often enough), doesn't want to stay outside in the backyard unless someone is out there with him and, when he is outside alone, he constantly howls. He also chases our cats.

Whenever it's muddy in our fenced backyard, he must be taken out to the front yard on a leash or he will catch a scent and run off. There are also potential



DEAR ABBY

sparring matches with our own dog that must be monitored, and at feeding time, they have to be separated.

Our daughter's last trip was to be for 12 days. We said we didn't want to keep him for that long, but we would continue to keep him for short stays. This has been a sore spot with her ever since. She feels Zeke is our "granddog," and we should keep him anyway. I do not know how to handle this without causing any more bad feelings. Please advise. — ABOVE AND BEYOND

IN TEXAS

**DEAR ABOVE AND BEYOND:** Your daughter's dog is too much dog for you to handle and, in addition, poorly trained. He isn't your "grand" anything. Stand your ground and quit trying to placate your entitled daughter. She should be grateful that you're willing to take responsibility for the dog even for a short time. If that isn't enough for her, "bow-wow" out by refusing to take Zeke at all. He's her dog, and the problem should be hers, not yours.

**DEAR ABBY:** I am an empathetic person, and because of it, most of my friends and family members share things with me that they are going through in their lives. I feel pain with and for them, and have shed many tears with these people.

Most of the time, this is something I am happy to offer. I understand that not everyone has the same level of empathy or the skills to "be there" when people are going through a rough patch. But right now, I thought it might be good to share some things I have noticed when the roles were reversed and I found myself needing to share with others:

1. It's not a competition! Now is not the time to share your similar experience. Let the person sharing just talk and resist the urge to relate your own stories.

2. Don't try to offer solutions unless they are asked for. The majority of the time, the person just needs to say it out loud to someone, and then they are able to get their head or heart around it and figure things out.

3. Just listen. That's all any of us want. We want to feel heard and important and that we matter. Listening can provide that to the person who is in pain.

Abby, thanks for letting me be heard. Even the strongest friends sometimes need someone. —

LEARNED FROM EXPERIENCE

**DEAR LEARNED:** AMEN! Life is about learning and growing. There is much wisdom in your letter and a practical lesson for those who sometimes put their foot in their mouths because they only want to help. Thank you for sharing.

**DEAR ABBY** is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

## Sanford Health distances itself from Denny Sanford child porn investigation

By Jeremy Fugleberg  
Forum News Service

SIoux FALLS, S.D. — Sanford Health executives are distancing the health system from a reported child pornography investigation into T. Denny Sanford, the benefactor and billionaire businessman after which it is named, saying it is not part of the inquiry.

Kelby Krabbenhoft, president and CEO of the Sioux Falls-based Sanford Health, messaged the system's 49,000 employees Saturday evening to say he was "deeply concerned" about the news of the investigation, first reported late Friday by ProPublica, a

national investigative news site.

"There's nothing more sacred than the innocence of children, and our dedication to their care remains at the very core of who we are as a family," Krabbenhoft wrote. "As you hear of this news, I want you to know that this matter does not involve our health system and we have not been contacted by law enforcement."

Sanford Health, the largest rural nonprofit health system in the nation, has a major footprint in the Upper Midwest, with 480 clinics and 44 medical centers including major facilities in Sioux Falls, Fargo and

Bemidji, Minn., and more than 200 Good Samaritan Society senior care locations in 26 states and nine countries.

Sanford, who founded First Premier Bank in Sioux Falls, has in recent years doled out millions of dollars to many charities in South Dakota and nationwide, including a \$55 million gift to Children's Home Society but most notably Sanford Health, where his contributions have totaled nearly \$1 billion.

Sanford, who lives in Sioux Falls, has been closely associated with his namesake health system, appearing at Sanford events and making media appear-

ances.

According to the ProPublica report, which was based on four anonymous sources, Sanford had been investigated for possible possession of child pornography, a search warrant had been issued, and the matter referred to the U.S. Justice Department for further investigation.

Sanford has not been charged with a crime, and it's not clear whether he could be facing charges or the status of any investigation into him.

The Argus Leader in Sioux Falls, which posted a similar story soon after ProPublica's piece posted on Friday, said an "electronic

device" that belonged to Sanford was at the center of the probe, and the investigation had stretched from South Dakota to Arizona and California, where Sanford has homes.

Marty Jackley, former South Dakota attorney general and Sanford's personal attorney, issued a statement to The Forum on Saturday.

"Although we know very little about any state or federal inquiry relating to Mr. Sanford, we do know those authorities responsible for investigating allegations obviously did not find information or evidence that supported or resulted in any criminal charges,"

Jackley said.

In his message to employees, posted to the Sanford Health page on Facebook, Krabbenhoft sought to reassure and thank the health system's employees.

"These reports are unsettling and we take this matter extremely seriously," he wrote. "Our focus, however, remains on you — our Sanford family — as well as our patients, residents and the communities we serve. I'm grateful for your continued dedication to our important work of health and healing."

Fugleberg covers regional health issues, with a focus on Sanford Health. He can be followed on Twitter at @jayfug and reached at [jfugleberg@forumcomm.com](mailto:jfugleberg@forumcomm.com) or 605-777-3357.

## POSITIVE

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staff and residents are following recommended preventative actions, we continue to screen staff residents and visitors, and all residents and their primary contacts have been notified.

"As we navigate this challenge, we are especially grateful for our dedicated caregiving team who are working tirelessly to ensure a clean, safe environment for all who live and work here. We all remain focused on providing exceptional care and services for our residents/tenants."

The care center will complete testing of all residents and staff who work in the care center, the release stated. They are continuing to restrict visitors to the facil-

ity (with the exception of compassionate care visits) until able to confirm there are no longer positive cases.

### Cases top 300, more businesses impacted

Cases in nearby Crow Wing County exceeded the 300-mark over the weekend, with a total of 309 cases reported as of Monday. The per capita case rate of 47.5 cases per 10,000 residents in the county continues to be highest of area counties aside from Todd County, which saw an early surge in cases this spring associated with workers in meatpacking facilities.

Area businesses continue to experience impacts from COVID-19. The Commander Restaurant & Bar and JJ's Pub in Breezy Point announced Sunday it would be

closed for the upcoming week due to an employee testing positive.

"... Out of an abundance of caution we will be closed for several days this week until all of our employees can be tested and cleared for safely returning to work," a Facebook post stated. "And even though our facilities are already cleaned and sanitized daily, we will be doubling our efforts while we are closed to insure that everyone is as safe as possible when we re-open."

Down County Highway 11, Billy's at Breezy Point announced it would cancel its planned outdoor concert featuring Doug Allen Nash and Chris Olson, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley impersonators. The event, an advertisement for which encouraged people to "join Billy as he saves the summer," was scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 4-5.

A Facebook post pointed to a recent announcement from the Minnesota Department of Health reporting plans to more strictly enforce mandates associated with the coronavirus.

"The Health Department sent a letter to all bars stating that they will be becoming more strict on all the current mandates that are already in place," the post stated. "We feel that the Health Department is making it very difficult for us to stay within their guidelines. ... This was not an easy decision. We hope you understand."

Those who purchased tickets for the concert may receive a full refund and should speak with the person from whom they purchased the ticket or tickets.

The Fort Steakhouse in Fort Ripley also closed for a short stretch last week after learning of

an employee's exposure outside of the workplace. The restaurant announced the closure Wednesday, and Saturday, reported the employee tested negative. The business reopened Sunday morning.

Mille Lacs County saw the second-highest number of new cases among area counties over the weekend, adding nine to its total. A congregate living facility in the county is on the health department's list of those with COVID-19 exposures — Sterling Pointe Senior Living in Princeton.

Other facilities located in area counties that remain on the list include: Good Samaritan Society-Pine River, Edgewood Baxter, Good Samaritan Society-Bethany in south Brainerd, Central Care Long Prairie Care Center and Providence Villa in Sebeka.

## MAYOR

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According to police reports, Pequot Lakes officer Matthew Jorgens made a traffic stop just before 8 p.m. while working the Toward Zero Deaths traffic safety program, and Nisswa officer Matthew Thompson was called to assist.

While the officers were conducting the traffic stop, Thompson observed Heidmann recording the traffic stop from across Highway 371 on Round Lake Road. Heidmann continued to record for a few minutes and then began to cross the highway toward the vehicle that was pulled over.

Thompson observed Heidmann walk to the back of his squad car. The officer advised Heidmann he could record the traffic stop but he should do it from a safe distance. Heidmann asked what the officers were doing and why they stopped the vehicle. The Nisswa officer advised the mayor he was assisting with the traffic stop and again told him to "go back where it was safe," the police report stated. Heidmann did not listen and he continued to argue with the officer.

According to the police report, Heidmann stated, "Don't you guys have something better to do? ... Go patrol the (expletive) streets," and "You guys aren't qualified to be out here on the highway."

The officer again advised Heidmann to leave and stand back where it was safe. Heidmann refused to leave and continued to argue, stating, "I'm the mayor of this (expletive) town," "You guys are not drug people," and "You guys are (expletive) (expletive)."

During the interaction,

Heidmann is seen in the body camera footage holding a leash attached to a dog, which got loose at one point and walked along the busy highway. Heidmann is seen walking to get the dog.

Jorgens then advised Heidmann it was not safe for him to be where he was, standing on the highway fog line. Heidmann replied, "Don't tell me what to do, I know what I'm doing," and, "You guys are just as bad as the cops in Minneapolis," the police report stated. The officer again advised Heidmann to leave and Heidmann stated, "Shut the (explicit) up" and left the scene.

Heidmann then drove his work truck from Dockside Rental and parked on Skillman Street, in front of the traffic stop location. Jorgens was talking with the occupants of a stopped vehicle when Heidmann walked to them again. Jorgens attempted to place Heidmann in handcuffs and Heidmann stated, "I'm not going to get into this in TikTok, but there is a whole lot more to it. He was given numerous warnings and he just wanted to be out there and be belligerent with the officers and we are not going to put up with that."

Nisswa Police Chief Craig Taylor said, "I'm disappointed and extremely sad that an elected official feels justified in inserting himself into a traffic stop that has nothing to do with him and feels it is appropriate to yell and swear at two officers from two jurisdictions that are doing nothing more than trying to do their jobs and making people safe."

"I would hope there would be more accountability to our elected officials," Taylor said he watched the body camera video in its entirety.

"I am extremely proud of the patient and restraint used by the officers in this altercation," Taylor said.

Klang said he stands by Jorgens, who is a highly respected officer. Klang said once a person "crosses the line" and the officer tells them they are under arrest, most of the time

police are preparing paperwork for criminal charges. When Jorgens asked if he had any questions, Heidmann said, "Find another job," the report stated.

### Police leaders respond

"This guy shows up to a traffic stop and he had nothing to do with it, no part of it whatsoever," Pequot Lakes Police Chief Eric Klang said. "It was totally inappropriate."

"If he's got a problem with the officers or with Nisswa, he should be dealing with that in a different setting than alongside a busy road where there is a traffic stop. People are only seeing a part of this in TikTok, but there is a whole lot more to it. He was given numerous warnings and he just wanted to be out there and be belligerent with the officers and we are not going to put up with that."

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there is no struggle for the officer to place handcuffs on them.

"The officer was just trying to get a hold of him and obviously he was pulling away from him, trying to get away from him," Klang said.

Klang said the traffic stop shown in the TikTok video was initiated as the vehicle was in violation of window tint and loud exhaust laws. During the stop, the officers found some drug paraphernalia and a small amount of marijuana and the occupants were cited for those violations.

"The officers had no issues with the occupants in the vehicle or with searching the vehicle," Klang said. "And then they saw a guy with a dog walking up the service drive and cross the southbound lane of the highway, going through the median and holding a phone filming it. Then he started yelling vulgarities at the officers."

### Nisswa mayor's statement

In a written statement, Heidmann said he saw the activity up the street from his business while walking his dog and was concerned by what he saw, so he began videotaping the incident as he went to check out what was taking place.

He saw Jorgens digging around in the car and unpacking and going through the belongings of what appeared to be travel gear and blankets. Heidmann said he stood there wondering what impression this was making with the hundreds of vacationing families going by seeing what appeared to be tourists having their goods rifled through. When it looked safe, he said he walked over and was immediately con-

fronted by Jorgens and told to leave. After trying to get information and getting no response except to leave, he did.

He went back to his store and watched until the incident appeared over, the people were back in their car and the officers were standing back 50-60 feet away at their squad cars. Heidmann said he drove over and stopped on a side street in front of the stopped car and approached, stated he was the mayor and wondered if they would mind stopping over to his store so he could learn more about what transpired.

Jorgens then came marching up after his business with the citizens appeared to be well completed, Heidmann wrote, and started in about obstruction of justice. Heidmann said he finished what he was saying, stood up, looked over to the officer and was going to leave to

meet the people at his store when Jorgens grabbed him, twisted his arm and told him he was under arrest.

Heidmann clarified part of the TikTok video in his statement, saying when he disagreed that he was asked to leave five times, that had happened in about 30 seconds when he was there the first time, not when he came back after the people were about to leave.

Heidmann said he is seeking discussion with the Toward Zero Deaths leader about what he described as a "trap" set up in Nisswa on Saturday to learn more about those campaigns. He will be seeking to have the charges dropped based on the right of free speech being the stop had concluded, he said.

Echo Journal Editor Nancy Vogt contributed to this story.

JENNIFER KRAUS may be reached at [jennifer.kraus@brainerddispatch.com](mailto:jennifer.kraus@brainerddispatch.com) or 218-855-5851. Follow me at [www.twitter.com/jennewsgirl](http://www.twitter.com/jennewsgirl) on Twitter.

**LABOR DAY**  
Monday, September 7

Due to the **Labor Day** holiday the **Brainerd Dispatch & Echo Publishing** will have the following advertising deadlines:

**Brainerd Dispatch:**  
**Tues., Sept. 8th** Copy & space deadline:  
 Display: Thurs., Sept. 3rd, 5 p.m.  
 Classified line ads: Thurs., Sept. 3rd, 4pm

**Wed., Sept. 9th** Display: Fri., Sept. 4th, 5 p.m.

**Echo Publishing:**  
**Echo Journal** Display: Fri., Sept. 4th, Noon  
**Thurs., Sept. 10th**

**The Brainerd Dispatch & Echo Publishing Office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7th.**

**Wishing all of our customers a safe and happy Labor Day.**