

# Reaching Everybody!

# Newsleaders

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## Town Crier

### Habitat seeks help with snow removal

Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity needs volunteers to shovel snow on properties that Habitat owns but there is not a homeowner on the property yet. Locations are in the St. Cloud area. Volunteers are asked to adopt a property and shovel as needed throughout the winter. The time is flexible for the volunteer's schedule, but the shoveling needs to be done in a timely manner after a snowfall. For more information, please contact Jess at 320-248-8256 or jdahl@cmhfh.org.

### Share your health, give blood

The American Red Cross needs eligible and healthy blood donors. Patients are counting on lifesaving blood throughout this coronavirus pandemic. If you're healthy and well, please schedule an appointment to give in the days ahead. You are strongly urged to make an appointment to provide lifesaving blood products to patients. Visit [www.redcross-blood.org](http://www.redcross-blood.org) to make your appointment today. Please don't feel discouraged if there isn't an immediate appointment available, patients still need you!

### Volunteer with RSVP

The Greater St. Cloud Area RSVP engages men and women ages 55 or better in meaningful volunteer opportunities at more than 175 human-service agencies throughout the community. They are seeking compassionate volunteers in a variety of positions including many roles with flexible and virtual commitments. RSVP staff will work with you to design your volunteer experience to fulfill your needs and create a positive impact on your community. Contact RSVP at 320-255-7295 or [rsvp@ci.stcloud.mn.us](mailto:rsvp@ci.stcloud.mn.us).

### Newsleaders seeks GoFundMe donations

During these turbulent times, advertising support has dwindled. The Newsleaders wants to continue providing up-to-the-minute local coverage both on our website and in print. Please help support the Newsleaders by viewing/contributing to our GoFundMe page on Facebook. Thank you to our recent contributors! Any amount is greatly appreciated.

**INSERT:**  
City of St. Stephen



photos by Carolyn Bertsch

### Santa makes a window visit

(Left) Rodney Austin, at Sartell's Edgewood Senior Living, receives a surprise visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus Dec. 15. (Above) Kay Peterson, also at Edgewood, holds up a photo when Santa asks, "How long has it been since we last saw each other, Kay?" The holiday cheer was a gift of Express Employment Professionals of St. Cloud.

## Sartell approves 1-percent tax hike 2021

by Dennis Dalman  
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A tax-rate increase of 1 percent was approved for 2021 by the Sartell City Council at its Truth in Taxation hearing Dec. 14.

After a lengthy, spirited conversation, council members decided to compromise and approved the tax increase as part of next year's budget and levy. It was approved on a 4-0 vote. Council member Brady Anel

was not at the meeting.

Sartell Finance Director Rob Voshell outlined the budget and levy proposal.

The total tax levy, collectible in 2021 is \$7,393,045.

The long discussion by coun-

cil members focused on efforts to keep any tax increase as low as possible. At one time, earlier this year, the preliminary budget called for a 2.35-percent tax increase. Since that time, city

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## Superintendent announces retirement

by Mike Knaak  
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The Sartell-St. Stephen school district superintendent told the school board he intends to retire at the end of June.

In a letter to the school board, Jeff Schwiebert, who has led the district for seven years, thanked the community for its support. During his tenure, Schwiebert oversaw the funding and building of a new high school, major

remodeling of the former high school and realignment of the district's schools. As communities struggled this past summer with discussions of racism, he researched and the school board approved conducting an equity audit of the district's practices and policies.

Schwiebert said he's most proud of bringing stability to the district and helping to foster trust among the community, staff and school board.

He announced his retirement now, with six months of the school year left, so the board has time to conduct a search.

"There are a lot of things to get done in the next six months," Schwiebert said.

When his time in the Sartell-St. Stephen school district ends, Schwiebert will have served 19 years as a superintendent – seven years in Sartell, five years in Eldridge, Iowa and seven at Mount Vernon, Iowa.

Schwiebert's career started as a teacher in Mount Vernon after graduating in 1981 with bachelor's degrees in history and education from Cornell College in Mount Vernon. He then earned a master's degree in secondary education from the University of Iowa and a superintendent certificate from the University of Northern Iowa.

"Of all those places I've been, my wife and I consider the Sar-

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### 2020 Year in Review

## Compassion, resilience, hope outshine COVID-19

### Jan. 10 edition

Thanks to a donor who pledged up to \$100,000 in matching funds, the Sartell-St. Stephen Education Foundation launched a campaign to fund cutting-edge equipment and materials for Riverview Intermediate School. The donor is longtime Sartell resident, foundation supporter and former City Council member Pat Lynch, Granite Logistics.

After a one-week delay waiting for signs and barriers, the new student drop-off traffic plan at Pine Meadow Elementary School began Jan. 9. The change is needed,

school and city officials said, because traffic is backing up on Pinecone Road as far south as City Hall around drop-off time. Officials were worried about traffic congestion and potential rear-end collisions, especially during bad weather.

It's one of the saddest sights along roadways: crosses, flowers and memorabilia "planted" in a ditch where a loved one died in an accident. However, such memorials are also a cause for public safety. That is why the Sartell City Council passed an ordinance Dec. 9 regarding roadside memorials.

### Jan. 24 edition

A second Sartell ice arena is closer to reality after a second lead gift to its capital campaign. Sartell Youth Rec Center, owners and operators of Bernick's Arena, announced on Jan. 15 the donation from Regional Diagnostic Radiology. The plans for a second sheet of ice shifted in November from an open-air structure to an enclosed, year-round building including ice/refrigeration system, weight and dry land training area, locker rooms and turf system.

Dog-owning residents in Sartell no longer have to license their dogs

in the city, effective Jan. 13. The Sartell City Council, after a Jan. 13 public hearing during the council meeting, voted unanimously to strike the license requirement from the city's animal-control ordinance.

### Feb. 7 edition

Recent state data predicts that Sartell's population will grow from about 18,000 residents now to 25,000 people in 2025. The health and medical technology sector is Sartell's niche, and that's where future growth is expected, Degiovanni

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