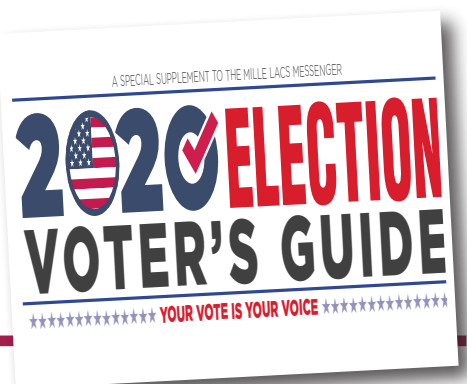


Mille Lacs Messenger



Voter's Guide
Learn more about Senatorial, Congressional and state candidates in this week's edition of the *Messenger* pages 3, 11-14



Wednesday, October 7, 2020

\$1.00

County approves preliminary levy

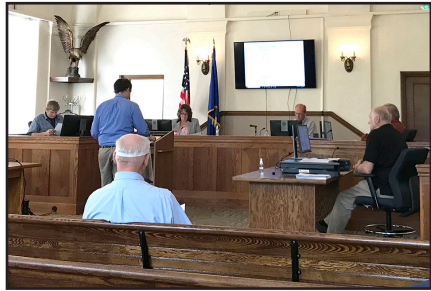


PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

Preliminary levy approved
The Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners approved a preliminary levy with an increase of 4.9% at the regular board meeting on Sept. 29.

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

During the Sept. 29 special Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners meeting, the board approved by a 3-2 vote a preliminary levy increase of 4.9% for 2021 in the amount of \$18,274,440. Commissioners Genny Reynolds and Tim Wilhelm voted against the preliminary levy increase, and commissioners Dave Oslin, Phil Peterson and Roger Tellinghuisen voted in support of the preliminary levy.

The reasons for the increase primarily are a result of a proposed increased of non-bargaining employee wages, contractual increase of bargaining unit employee wages, increased dollar allocation to the contingency account to cover legal representation as a result of the lawsuit against the County by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, a projected decrease in State Aid funding for roads, increased health insurance rates, and mandated increase in jail staffing by the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Mille Lacs County Commissioner Tim Wilhelm said, "I think it's a little bit steep." Commissioner Reynolds agreed.

Mille Lacs County Administrator Pat

Preliminary levy to 10

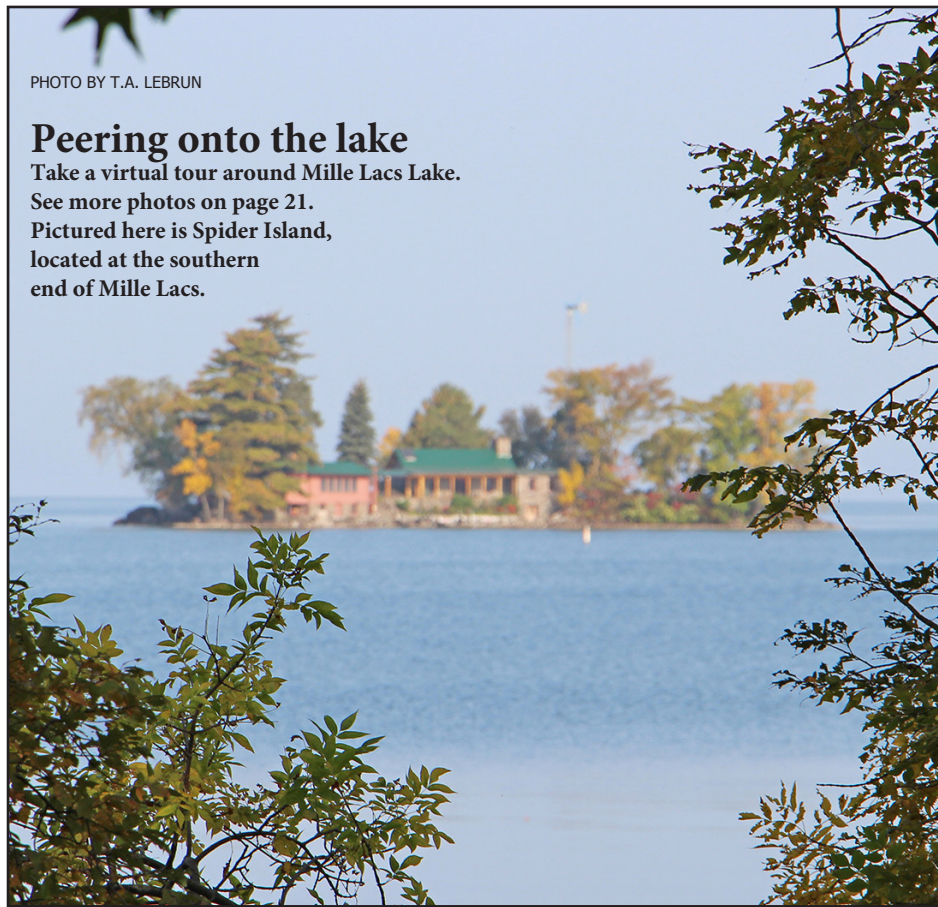


PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

Peering onto the lake

Take a virtual tour around Mille Lacs Lake. See more photos on page 21. Pictured here is Spider Island, located at the southern end of Mille Lacs.

Early voting strong in Mille Lacs County

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

Mille Lacs County Auditor Eric Bartusch said that as of Friday, Oct. 2, the county auditor's office has issued 3,350 ballots which includes all absentee, mail ballot and early in-person voting.

Of that 3,350, and as of last Thursday, 238 of them have been in-person votes. "The 238 would be individuals who requested their ballot and completed it all at the county auditor's office," said Bartusch. "When someone receives a ballot by mail and physically hand-delivers the com-



PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

Mille Lacs County voters come out strong for early voting.

pleted ballot to the county or our drop box, it still goes in as a 'mailing' as far as how the system counts it."

As of Sept. 25, statewide,

1,051,459 absentee applications were received. And in comparison in 2018,

Early voting to 10

Hwy. 47 construction nearing completion



PHOTO BY T.A. LEBRUN

New bridges

New bridges have been built on Hwy. 47 over Little Ann River and Ann Lake. Pictured above is the newly constructed bridge over the Little Ann River.

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

Though Hwy. 47 remains closed to through traffic, the bridges are completed, and the project is closer to an end.

A Minnesota Department of Transportation spokesperson said the project remains on schedule and work is continuing on the south end of Hwy. 47 to Ogilvie.

The entire project is set to be open Wednesday, Oct. 14, weather permitting. The detour will be removed at that time.

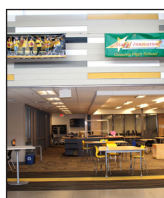
The new Little Ann River and Ann Lake bridges are built and open to local traffic. "Those in the area will see road operations rev up south of the Ann River bridge/265th Avenue to Hwy. 23 in Ogilvie, as trucks can now haul materials over the bridges," said the spokesperson. "Hwy. 47 remains open to those who live, work or visit a resident or business along the closed road. Expect stops or slow moving traffic with flaggers, pilot car and alternate one-way traffic in this area. Try to enter/exit the work zone nearest to you. Be on the lookout for multiple crews working at different locations on this 22-mile work

Hwy. 47 to 9



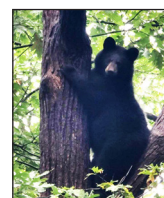
Sportsman's Show
Hunters Point holds Sportsman's Show

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School
Onamia School receives Gold Star of Innovation Award

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Wild & Free
Wild & Free receives a ton of bear food

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Sports by Statz
Football season kicks off with a local rivalry

Page 23

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