



The Bemidji Pioneer

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NEW BEGINNINGS FOR BEMIDJI



Photos by Jillian Gandsey / Bemidji Pioneer

From left: Councilor Nancy Erickson, Mayor Jorge Prince, Councilor Audrey Thayer and Councilor Ron Johnson are sworn in by City Clerk Michelle Miller during Monday's meeting of the Bemidji City Council.

City Council takes action following swearing in ceremony

By Matthew Liedke
mliedke@bemidjipioneer.com

The post-election transition period mostly concluded for the city of Bemidji Monday, with the gavel of leadership being passed. During its first meeting of 2021, four elected officials were sworn in, two of them new and another two returning. New Bemidji Mayor Jorge Prince, having defeated former council member Michael Meehlhouse in the November general election, was one of those taking the oath, prior to being handed the gavel by his predecessor Rita Albrecht.

BEMIDJI: Page A6



Bemidji's new mayor Jorge Prince is passed the gavel from outgoing mayor Rita Albrecht during Monday's Bemidji City Council meeting.



Jillian Gandsey / Bemidji Pioneer

Owners of the The Cabin Coffee House and Café announced the business was closing permanently over the weekend. The VanGrinsven family, owners of Heroes Rise Coffee, announced they would soon be opening the Third Street Station in the location.

From Cabin to Station

Downtown restaurant closes with a new one coming soon in the same building

By Dennis Doeden
ddoeden@bemidjipioneer.com

BEMIDJI — On the same day that owners of The Cabin Coffee House and Café said they were closing the downtown Bemidji business, an announcement of a new restaurant in the same location was made.

Both happened via Facebook posts on Saturday, Jan. 2. First, a statement and video by brothers Brett and Derek Leach appeared on The Cabin's page. They are owners of Brothers Group Restaurants, which also runs Bar 209, Red Stu Breakfast Bar and the Turtle River Chophouse. They cited Minnesota COVID-19 restrictions for an insurmountable loss of revenue as their reason for closing The Cabin, and asked supporters to urge elected officials to lift those restrictions.

Later on Saturday, a video on the Heroes Rise Coffee Company page announced plans to open Third Street Station in the same location.

The VanGrinsven family opened Heroes Rise Coffee a few months ago at the corner of Bemidji Avenue and 15th Street, and recently added a second coffee shop location in Crookston. Owners are Jeff VanGrinsven, his wife, Joan, their son, Matt and daughter-in-law Charly. Another son, T.J. VanGrinsven, and his wife Chelsey are joining those four in ownership of Third Street Station. T.J. and Chelsey first met at The Cabin, got engaged there last April and were married last month. They live in Williston, N.D.

THE CABIN: Page A6



Photo courtesy of the Beltrami County Historical Society

Carson's Pioneer Store is pictured in the background in 1896, on the southeast corner of Third Street and Beltrami Avenue. Their slogan was "We came FIRST and will stay till the LAST." They carried general merchandise, groceries, clothing, dry goods, boots and shoes as well as flour and feed.

Bemidji's historical path to incorporation

By Cecelia McKeig
Special to the Pioneer

Editor's Note: The Beltrami County Historical Society is partnering with the Pioneer on a series of monthly articles highlighting the history of the area. For more information about the Historical Society, visit www.beltramihistory.org.

Although Bemidji was not incorporated until 1896, it had a steady

pattern of growth beginning in 1870 when Oliver W. Barnes traveled by stagecoach, ox team and a canoe route to the Bemidji area with a government surveying party and spent the next six years mapping the northern part of the state.

HISTORY: Page A7

Construction concludes on Bemidji Fire Station No. 4

By Hannah Olson
holson@bemidjipioneer.com

BEMIDJI — Bemidji firefighters have officially moved into their new permanent digs north of town. Bemidji's Fire Station No. 4, which is located at 883 Winter Sumac Road NE, was recently completed at the end of December.

While there has been a Bemidji Fire Department presence north of town since 2018 — targeting an area that has seen growth in recent years — as of Dec. 29, Bemidji firefighters now will work out of a new building. Interim Fire Chief Chris Loeb confirmed this in a call with the Pioneer on Monday.

Addressing a growing need

The idea for a fourth Bemidji fire station first began years ago. In August 2018, it opened in the leased garage space just down the road at 881 Winter Sumac Road NE, and



Hannah Olson / Bemidji Pioneer

Newly constructed Bemidji Fire Station No. 4, located at 883 Winter Sumac Road NE, is pictured on Tuesday morning, Jan. 5.

was home to Engine 8, Tender 14 and Squad 4, and a team of eight on-call employees. The new station was established with the intention that, if successful after two years, the leased space could lead to the construction of a permanent Fire Station No. 4. Its location was chosen to target a spot that has seen

rapid growth, strategically placed at the intersection of U.S. Highway 71 and Winter Sumac Road.

In a May 2018 Bemidji City Council meeting, former Bemidji Fire Chief David Hoefer laid out the need to expand north of town.

FIRE STATION: Page A6

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www.bemidjipioneer.com
218-333-9200
news@bemidjipioneer.com

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