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Life, Page A6

# Pioneer Weekender

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Saturday, October 17, 2020

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## 'Because of You'



Photos by Annalise Braught / Bemidji Pioneer

Pictured from left: United Way of Bemidji Area Director of Marketing and Events Shannon Lee, Executive Director Denae Alamano, and Director of Community Impact Annie Butler Ricks.

## Bemidji United Way's community campaign continues through October

By Bria Barton

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While unprecedented challenges have been the unofficial theme of 2020, the United Way of Bemidji Area has created a theme of community togetherness for its annual campaign, in an effort to alleviate increased local hardship brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

The campaign's theme "Because of You," was created to honor the help the United Way has received from the community since the pandemic began.

The organization's annual Community Campaign works to bring area businesses, organizations and individuals together to rally and raise funds to support important work and services for local families and individuals in need.

UNITED WAY: Page A10



Sanford Health volunteer Alicia Underdahl asks the number of families in a vehicle during a distribution event on Friday morning in the Sanford Center parking lot. Each family was able to receive one box of food during the drive-thru event.

## Marching – and paddling – in place

Second Women's March of 2020 to take place this weekend

By Hannah Olson  
[holson@bemidjipioneer.com](mailto:holson@bemidjipioneer.com)

BEMIDJI — Mattea Elhard fell into her role as a Women's March organizer after waking up post-General Election in 2016 feeling awful.

"The first march, I remember the sign that I held said 'empowered women empower women,' and truly I was so depressed that Election Day in 2016. The day of the Women's March I was kind

of lying in bed like, 'I'm not going to go, I'm not going to go,'" she said.

She finally dragged herself out of bed, and went un-showered and alone, to the inaugural Bemidji Women's March. It changed her whole perspective.

"I just showed up and marched with some amazing people," she said. "These people around me, total strangers, lifted me up."

MARCH: Page A5



Hannah Olson / Bemidji Pioneer

Students from BSU's Black Student Union and BSU Phoenix gathered Thursday evening in the Hobson Memorial Union to make posters for the upcoming Women's March this weekend.

## City pleased with bonding bill passage

By Matthew Liedke  
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BEMIDJI — It's a time of relief and action for the city of Bemidji, with funding secured from the state for a new water treatment facility, and litigation forming over the chemicals the plant will be clearing.

The plant, now under construction, is located near the Bemidji Regional Airport, as the city's water wells are close by. The council authorized constructing the new facility in response to new standards on perfluorocarbons, or PFCs, set by state agencies.

PFCs are chemicals that were previously used in firefighting foams, and were developed by the company 3M. The chemicals

have been found in the area, as the airport has been the site of training exercises by local fire departments.

In June, the city awarded a bid of \$6.06 million to Rice Lake Contracting to begin the first phase of the project. Additionally, \$440,000 was approved to hire Barr Engineering for design and inspection work, bringing the total to \$7.34 million. The next phase of the project will expand the facility, and increase the amount of water that can be treated at a time.

To help fund the project, last year the city began working to have dollars for the plant included in the state bonding bill.

CITY: Page A10

## Minnesota Youth Council's District 7 reps want to make a difference

By Hannah Olson

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BEMIDJI — The four members of the Minnesota Youth Council representing Congressional District 7 aren't yet old enough to vote, but they are already more involved in the legislative process than many adults.

This year's crop from District 7 are unique — they are all young women hailing from Bemidji and Red Lake, and all but one are new to the youth council this year.



Three of the four Minnesota Youth Council members from District 7 pictured from left: Bridget Westrum, Jaden Henderson and Alya Nimis-Ibrahim. The three, along with Karen Guise of Red Lake, represent the youth voice of the 7th congressional district.

Hannah Olson / Bemidji Pioneer

MYCD: Page A5



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