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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ENOUGH SAID.



Blaine graduate hosts sports talk show Page 15A

INSIDE



Elmcrest Art Fair set for July 11 Page 3A



Oak Grove Navy seaman stands lookout Page 5A



Two dead in Ham Lake crash Page 7A



Ramsey appoints interim directors Page 10A

PUBLIC NOTICE:
The Ramsey Planning Commission is hosting a public hearing July 22 regarding a conditional use permit for Connexus Energy.

See this and other Public Notices on pages 1-6B



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Street racing a problem in Anoka County

By Jonathan Young
Managing Editor

Police in Anoka County are combating a dangerous trend that has grown during the coronavirus pandemic: street racing.

Cities such as Anoka, Blaine, Coon Rapids and Fridley have reported problems with street rac-

ers, sometimes in groups of 100 or more, gathering and causing property damage, noise and potential road hazards.

“I would say it started last year during COVID when people were looking for things to do,” Coon Rapids police Capt. John Stahnke said.

The large groups are

fairly well organized and move around from week to week, he said.

“Our biggest issues have been along Coon Rapids Boulevard and, of course, on the highways,” Stahnke said. “And they like to congregate in the middle of the night at the Foley park and ride.”

Blaine police had sim-

ilar issues at a park and ride last year and have seen some racers in the southern part of the city, according to Blaine police Capt. Mark Boerboom.

On June 19, Fridley police reported dispersing about 100 street racers along East River Road in the city’s industrial area in the southern part of

the city, where they like to congregate.

“They’ve been participating in burnouts and damaging parking lots ... in the southern end of the city,” Fridley police Lt. Kevin Titus said.

Street racing in Minneapolis received attention

Continued on 6A

INDEPENDENCE DAY



Will Hultquist and his son Drew, 5, take a photo together on a ride at the Coon Rapids Fourth of July carnival July 4 outside the Coon Rapids Ice Center. The city of Coon Rapids held its annual Fourth of July fair July 3-4 after cancelling it last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Families at the fair rode carnival rides, played games and ate fair food. See more photos from the event on Page 2A. Photo by Emilee Wentland

Anoka-Hennepin School Board passes 2021-22 budget

By Emilee Wentland
Staff Writer

The Anoka-Hennepin School District approved its 2021-22 budget June 28.

Since the district’s draft budget was proposed in May it has adjusted its estimates of revenue and expenditures. In May the district had estimated revenue would fall \$5.5 million short of last year. Now it expects revenue will be only \$2.9 million less than last school year. The revenue decrease is mainly due to a \$9.3 million drop in federal revenue, which is offset by a \$1.3 million increase in property tax revenue and a \$5 million increase in state revenue.

The stark decrease in federal revenue relates to COVID-19 relief funds accounted for in last year’s amended budget.

The general fund expenditures add up to \$551.3 million — \$4 million less than 2020-21, or about a 0.7% drop. This is about a \$2.5 million increase from

the May estimate.

The district’s approved food service fund anticipates a \$341,022 drop in total revenue. That accounts for a \$423,869 increase in federal revenue, but more than a half-million-dollar drop in local sales, due to loss in a la carte sales.

The district will serve free lunch to all students again this year.

“[The food service department is] doing some conservative budgeting with the uncertainty of the pandemic and the recovery and what happens with the free meals,” Chief Financial Officer Michelle Vargas said. “We’re still trying to see how that shakes out with the second year.”

Serving free lunches generally means a la carte sales will continue to decrease, because if students are receiving lunches at no cost, they likely won’t spend money on extra items, Vargas said.

The district should receive around 55 cents a

meal from the state for the free lunches, Vargas said.

Even with a \$189,715 supply expense increase, the district’s food service expenses will decrease by \$115,420 overall due to a significant decrease in equipment purchases because of uncertain funding.

The community service fund expects a \$2.3 million increase in revenue and a \$1.8 million increase in expenditures.

This revenue includes a \$1.7 million increase from Adventures Plus revenue, anticipating a post-pandemic enrollment return rate of 79%, Vargas said. The remaining \$669,000 is for other community education programs districtwide, Vargas said.

The capital projects fund revenue is down 97%, to \$15,000, and expenditures are down \$67.5 million, to \$14.5 million, because many major projects are wrapping up, Vargas said. The funds balance is about \$11.1 million.

emilee.wentland@apgecm.com

‘One of a kind’ Remembering Al Sannerud

By Emilee Wentland
Staff Writer

Those who knew Al Sannerud remember him as a kind, generous man who would always lend a helping hand, no matter the project or reason.

But Anoka resident Dave Bonthius has a particular phrase he thinks suits Sannerud best: one of a kind.

“I know the term ‘one of a kind’ is maybe overused, but if it’s ever appropriate to use, it’s for him,” Bonthius said.

Sannerud, 97, of Ham Lake, died June 28.

Sannerud was a staple in the local community. He volunteered with numerous charitable causes in addition to creating a few of his own.

He was named the Minnesota Outstanding Senior Citizen at the Minnesota State Fair in 2018 when he was 94, based on his accomplishments since turning 65. The recognition application stated Sannerud “has worn dozens (maybe hundreds!) of volunteer hats over the years.”

To name just a few of those many hats, there was the Blaine-Ham Lake Rotary, Cars for Neighbors, Bikes 4 Kids, Faith Lutheran Church in Coon Rapids, Faith’s Global Missions Committee, the Democratic Party and the Children’s Shelter of Cebu.

“Around this area, anyone that’s really involved with the Anoka County area, chances are pretty good they’re going to know this guy,” Bonthius said.

At Faith Lutheran Church, Sannerud helped form a men’s group called FROGS — Faith Retired Old Guys.

In 2000, Sannerud co-founded Free to Be, now known as Cars for Neighbors, a nonprofit that provides restored cars to those in need.

Continued on 6A



Street racing problem in Anoka County

Continued from Page 1A

last month after stray bullets killed two bystanders at illegal events, but the activity has grown in popularity across the country during the pandemic, according to the Associated Press, and some states have passed laws aimed at curbing the problem.

In Anoka County, departments are coordinating with each other and increasing police presence in some areas where the racers tend to show up.

Titus said Fridley police are also encouraging

business owners to post no-trespassing signs if they don't want people congregating in the area.

According to Anoka Police Chief Eric Peterson, officers participating in the Toward Zero Deaths traffic safety program typically work details targeting DWI and distracted driving, but recently illegal street racing has been on the radar. On a single Saturday in May officers in Anoka County made 125 stops and six arrests related to street racing, Peterson said, calling the activity "very dangerous."

Ultimately safety is the

goal of the enforcement activities, according to Stahnke.

"It's important from a police standpoint that we enforce traffic laws to keep every motorist safe while on the roadways," he said.

Racers who don't follow traffic laws pose a danger to others.

"They like to drive fast, take chances," Stahnke said. "They're traveling at high speeds, and that just increases the risks and the danger to every motorist on the highway."

jonathan.young@apgecm.com

Man dies after motorcycle crash in Coon Rapids

A 44-year-old motorcyclist is dead after a crash with a vehicle June 30 in Coon Rapids. The Anoka County Sheriff's Office identified the man as Adam Glenn Bergstrom of Coon Rapids.

According to the Sheriff's Office, around 4:04 p.m. June 30 the Coon Rapids Police Department, Coon Rapids Fire Department, and Sheriff's Office were called to

a crash involving a motorcycle and vehicle at 119th Avenue Northwest and Hanson Boulevard Northwest.

It appears Bergstrom was headed north on Hanson Boulevard and a female driver was traveling south on Hanson Boulevard from the Lions Coon Creek Park entrance when they crashed, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Bergstrom wasn't wearing a helmet and was declared dead on the scene. The woman wasn't injured.

The investigation into the incident is still in the early stages by the Coon Rapids Police Department, Minnesota State Patrol, Midwest Medical Examiner's Office and Anoka County Sheriff's Office.

Al Sannerud, of Ham Lake, dies at 97

Continued from Page 1A

With a few Coon Rapids Kiwanis members in 2011, Sannerud helped form Bikes 4 Kids, a nonprofit with a similar mission as Cars for Neighbors: to give kids refurbished bikes and helmets.

Sannerud used his farm in Ham Lake to store the bikes. Bikes 4 Kids gets bike donations from local shops, recycling centers, individuals and police departments.

"He was a people person that was passionate about helping people in need," his daughter, Sue Savarese, said. "You can tell from the organizations that he helped found. ... He was kind of the business mind behind a lot of these organizations."

He got more involved after retirement, but he was still active before then, Savarese said.

Sannerud started his own accounting practice — Lake Accounting, now known as Sannerud, Savarese & Associates — in Ham Lake when he was 50. Savarese works there now as a CPA and a managing partner.

He started the firm, Savarese said, to work with small and family-owned businesses.

Sannerud was never bored, Savarese said.

Whether he was working on the farm, riding on the tractor with the grandkids, volunteering or helping new organizations get started, Sannerud always had something on his plate.

"There was always something he was passionate about," Savarese said.

Savarese credits her father with helping Ham Lake grow from a township to a city in 1974.

Sannerud could convince anyone to help him out in his volunteering,



Al Sannerud sits in his bike shop in July 2018 at his home in Ham Lake, where he collected and refurbished donated bikes for Bikes 4 Kids. File photo

too, Bonthius said.

"I called him the 'gentle arm twister,'" Bonthius said. "He could get people to do anything. We'd tease him about it. We'd say, 'Al, you twist arms so gently we don't even know it, but you always get us to do stuff.'"

Another playful nickname for Sannerud? The Energizer Bunny.

"Even into his 90s, he didn't slow down," Bonthius said. "You could always go to Al with a project and get support of one kind or another."

Since Sannerud's death in late June, Savarese has received an outpouring of positive Facebook comments about her dad.

One of her favorites said Sannerud was "an amazing example of what later life in Christ is all about."

"When you finish working, your life doesn't end," Savarese said. "You still have so much to give in your later life, in your retirement. Being Christ-centered, you're doing as Jesus said to feed the hungry and ... take

care of those who are not as fortunate as we are."

Sannerud had a clear purpose in life: to give to others.

"Having a purpose in your life is what leads to a long life," Savarese said.

In a final act of generosity, Sannerud donated his body to the Anatomy Bequest Program at the University of Minnesota.

Sannerud was preceded in death by his parents Christian and Margaret, son Daniel, granddaughter Kristin and sister Lois. He is survived by his wife Margaret; brothers Curtis, Eugene (Sharon), G. Peder (Sandy); children Robert (Kim), Paul (Peggy), Susan (Timothy), James (Mary); grandchildren Erin (Carsten), Eric (Rachel), Kevin, Bryn, David, Kiri, Haakon; and great-grandchildren Keegan and Paxton.

A memorial service for Sannerud will be held 11 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 6, at Faith Lutheran Church, 11115 Hanson Blvd. NW in Coon Rapids. Visitation begins at 9 a.m.

emilee.wentland@apgecm.com

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