



NEW STAFF AT H-F: Meet the new teachers at Hinckley-Finlayson P6

Shoreland ordinance stirs debate with area businesses

BY JAMIE LUND
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Two Sand Lake business representatives expressed concern that a proposed shoreland ordinance is too restrictive and could have a negative impact on shoreland property owners future expansion projects, including businesses.
“The goal is not to stop businesses

from doing what they want to do,” said Skip Thomson, chairman of the Pine County Zoning board.

The representatives shared their concern about the proposed Pine County Shoreland Ordinance 2021-43 and the variance mitigation process with the board during the regular meeting on Thursday, Aug. 26.

Caleb Anderson, Pine County Land and Resource Manager, said the

proposed ordinance came about due to the 2017 PC Comprehensive Plan. At that time economic development and protecting the county’s natural resources rose to the top of the county priority list.

Anderson explained that property owners who intend to expand structures that do not conform to setback requirements from lakes and rivers must receive variances to do so. The

contemplated variance mitigation requirements would only affect those property owners applying for such variances, said Anderson.

Shoreland is land located within 1,000 feet from the ordinary high water level of a lake, pond or flowage and 300 feet from a river or stream, according to the shoreland management

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JENNIFER YOCUM-STANS | PINE COUNTY COURIER

The root cellar that saved a wedding party during the Great Hinckley Fire of 1894 is still standing near Skunk Lake between Hinckley and Sandstone.

‘The root cellar can save us’

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On September 1, 1894 Hinckley and the surrounding areas were engulfed by a firestorm we now know as the Great Hinckley Fire. Although there were many tragic stories that day there were a few

amazing stories of survival.

On that fateful day in 1894 Minnie Samuelson and John DeRosier were preparing to exchange wedding vows at Minnie’s family home (John and Hattie Samuelson’s) near Skunk Lake. Family and friends were gathered to share in the couple’s happy day. Inside the home

final preparations were being carried out, there was conversation, joking, laughing and loud music. No one could hear or was prepared for what was happening outside.

Just an hour before the wedding ceremony was to begin, the fire hit,

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Hemp growers look to the future

BY MIKE GAINOR
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On Aug. 18, Regen Industrial Hemp USA – a new Pine County business – hosted a workshop at the Kunze family farm near Hinckley to talk to local farmers about the potential hemp holds for growers and manufacturers.

Regen CEO Jane Burnes Leverenz said the business is about creating a systems approach to growing, harvesting and processing industrial hemp into useful products.

“We’re here to get acquainted with industrial hemp and the different hybrid seeds and their properties – and to find out what is the future and the next third crop for farmers in America,” Leverenz said.

Leverenz and Lois Kunze grew a 22 by 70 foot test plot with three varieties of hemp plants on it, and invited area producers to come see how a hemp crop could develop in just 80 days of growing in East Central Minnesota.

Officials from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota Extension and other agricultural nonprofits also came to find out more and offer support and information for interested hemp growers and manufacturers.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen, a Pine County resident, noted that there was once a hemp rope factory not far from the Kunze farm. However, for decades hemp was illegal to grow in Minnesota. That changed when the 2014 Farm Bill contained a provision for states to administer hemp pilot programs, and lawmakers passed the Minnesota Industrial Hemp Development Act in 2015.

“I worked for many years to get the

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