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Saving lives, one unit of blood at a time

Kerkhoven blood drive collects 40 units... that could help 120 people

by Cormac Dodd

A one-time blood donation can save up to three lives. With that said, upwards of 120 people may now benefit from the 40 units collected last Wednesday during the Red Cross Blood Drive held at the Kerkhoven Civic Center. Linda Amundson of Kerkhoven, who organized last week's bloodmobile on behalf of the local American Legion Auxiliary, praised the turnout.

"We had very good numbers," said Amundson. "A big thank you to Mona Doering and the financial donation from the Ottertail Power Company."

Ottertail's donation went toward a meal, served as a gesture of thanks for the hard work of the Red Cross employees. Those workers arrived in Kerkhoven from all over the area, some from as far as St. Paul.

A great deal of preparation must be done ahead of blood drives: calling potential donors, promoting the event and more, work that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Amundson said they worked in close coordination with the Red Cross employ-

ees to maximize donations, to great success, as it turned out.

"Actually, we had double the number of units compared to other blood drives. As a rule it was in the 20s before," she said.

Amundson attributes this spike in donations to up-front calling, one way of assuring word gets around, plus automated calls and emails reminding those who have signed up for drives in the past. A campaign at the Kerkhoven Farmers Market, where they had a booth, may also have reminded potential donors of the opportunity. Amundson said the blood drive sells itself, that everyone wants to donate blood to those in need.

Amundson was impressed by the efficiency of the drive and by the quality, effort and enthusiasm put forth by the Red Cross employees. Conversely, those workers appreciated local volunteers who offered their time.

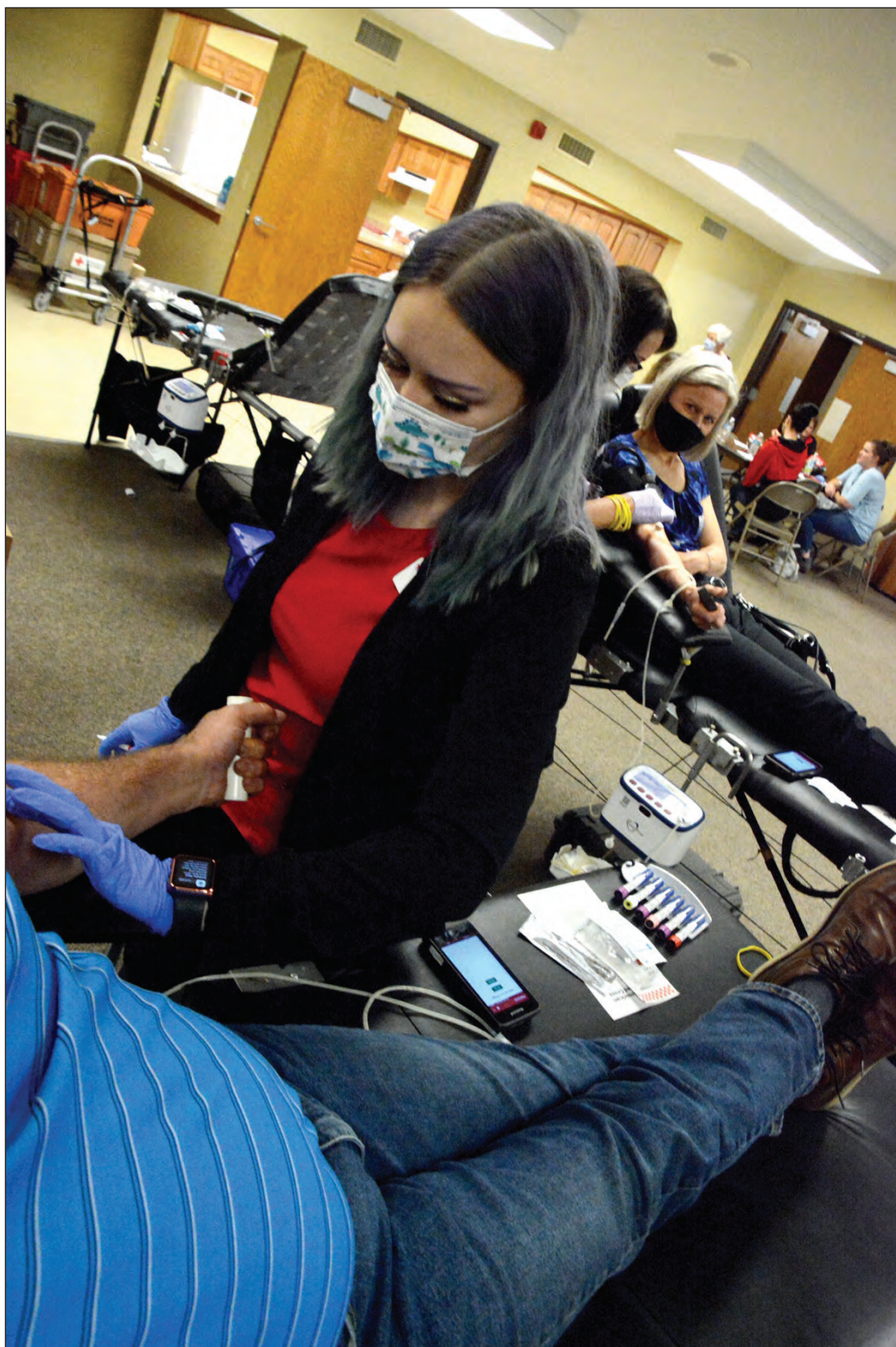
"This is not something you see in the Cities," Amundson said. "We show our appreciation this way, and they appreciate it."

The Kerkhoven Blood Drive has taken place at the Civic Center for many years. The chairs were spaced at even intervals, and many who donated blood were smiling behind their masks.

Employees and volunteers from the Red Cross's Central Minnesota chapter were dressed in red and also wore masks inside the building as a Covid-19 virus precaution.

Donating blood helps those who are undergoing treatment for various ailments. Daily, life-saving blood transfusions are needed in emergency treat-

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A Red Cross worker looked for a vein to tap as she prepared to draw another unit of blood during last Wednesday's bloodmobile at Kerkhoven

Celebrating 57 years, DeGraff's Labor Day shindig happens this Sunday

by Cormac Dodd

Jill Gunderson has been attending the Labor Day Celebration in DeGraff for over 40 years. She feels as if it is their holiday, certainly the largest festival hosted in DeGraff throughout the year.

Gunderson cites the family atmosphere as one discernable characteristic of the celebration; on the schedule, event planners do well to include a series of activities that appeal to a wide variety of age groups.

The tractor pull is one such event that entices many from out of town to DeGraff. Raffles, too, are always a source of excitement. The drawing for the Dineen Park Raffle will be at 9:00 p.m. during the street dance. The prize for first place... a 36" Blackstone Griddle.

"The parade is open," Gunderson said. "There will be children and businesses alike in the parade. All are invited."

"It's just a fun day for people to gather. People in the community who have moved away and have come back bring their families too," Gunderson said.

Gunderson said many anticipate the Whitesidewalls' performance. The Whitesidewalls are a doo-wop rock and roll show band known throughout the upper midwest for their covers of the Everly Brothers and Chuck Berry. A band formed over 45 years ago, the Whitesidewalls are a talented group who have

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A LifeLink helicopter lifted from the scene of a fatal two-car accident which took place at the intersection of Highway 12 and Kandiyohi County Road 7, about five miles east of Kerkhoven, last Wednesday morning. Killed was Dolores Berg of Sanborn, MN.

Two-car crash on Highway 12 east of Kerkhoven results in fatality

by Cormac Dodd

A fatal accident occurred last Wednesday at the intersection of Highway 12 and Kandiyohi County Road 7, five miles east of Kerkhoven.

According to the incident report filed by the Minnesota Highway Patrol, two vehicles collided in the intersection at

11:34 a.m., killing one.

Dolores Matilda Berg, 84, of Sanborn, MN died in the accident, and six more were treated at the Rice Memorial Hospital with non-fatal injuries.

A 2007 Kia Spectra5, driven by Rae Ann Lynn Baker, 22, of Redwood Falls, was traveling west on Highway

12. The vehicle had two passengers, Kyri Elaysia Cox, 17, of Redwood Falls, and Thomas Bryan Zempel, 20, of Mankato.

A 2020 Honda Odyssey, driven by Frederick Henry Berg, 84, of Sanborn, had been traveling north on County Road 7. Passengers were Dolores Matilda Berg,

Irene Lucille Mathiowetz, 83, of Sleepy Eye, and Robert Wendelin Mathiowetz, 88, of Sleepy Eye, all of whom were wearing seatbelts.

Airbags were deployed in the accident, and alcohol was not involved, according to the incident report.

Responding to the scene were the Kerkhoven Ambu-

lance, Kerkhoven Fire Department, Pennock First Responders, CentraCare and Raymond Ambulances, MN Highway Patrol, Kandiyohi and Swift County Sheriff Departments, MN Department of Transportation and a LifeLink helicopter.

COVID trending up in Swift County; more young are affected by variant

by Cormac Dodd

As of this Monday, there were 29 active cases of COVID-19 in Swift County, at a time when the Delta variant has been spreading across the state. Ninety-six percent of cases statewide have been attributed to the Delta variant, according to Countryside Public Health. More concerning, infection rates in children have risen in the state, almost doubling.

Liz Auch of Countryside Public Health said one development in recent weeks is the increased number of young people who have tested positive for the virus.

"In 2020, the older demographics were the subject of higher case numbers, but now that many in those categories are vaccinated, we see more of the young population with it," said Auch.

New statistics have emerged regarding the CO-

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