



Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

The Warrior girls swim team dedicate the new Brainerd High School pool with a mass jump on Wednesday. The official grand opening of the new facility is May 4.

With County Board approval, redistricting is complete

Unorganized Territory expands to 4 voting precincts

By Chelsey Perkins
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — Say goodbye to the Red, White and Blue — voting precincts, that is.

Crow Wing County commissioners approved a redistricting plan Tuesday, April 12, that included new precinct boundaries and added a fourth voting precinct in the First Assessment District, otherwise known as Unorganized Territory. The precincts will now be known simply by their numbers: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Some residents of Unorganized along with those living in north Brainerd will also be represented by a new commissioner district following the once-in-a-decade reorganization of political boundaries prompted by the 2020 U.S. Census.

Administrative Services Director Deborah Erickson presented the plan to commissioners and said all Crow Wing Coun-

ty voters will receive a mailing notifying them of the changes.

“To make sure everybody is aware of what changes have occurred — namely because of the fact that every person in our county is going to have a different legislative district, and in certain cases, their legislative district (boundary) has changed — we’ll be required to send notice to every affected voter,” Erickson said. “So they will receive notice of what their new legislative and commissioner districts (are) if that applies, as well as precinct information and then where their new polling location would be, if any of that has changed as well.”

BOARD: Page 8

Seasonal resident’s helipad proposal shot down again

Board agrees to prohibit private airports in shoreland district

By Chelsey Perkins
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — A change to Crow Wing County’s land use ordinance once again stymied the ongoing pursuit of a private helipad by a seasonal East Gull Lake resident.

County commissioners on Tuesday, April 12, unanimously approved updates to the ordinance, including a shift to no longer allowing private airports in the shoreland district. Previously, the ordinance permitted this use in the shoreland district, along with the agriculture/forestry and airport districts, through a conditional use permit.

Tuesday’s decision was the culmination of a moratorium established in August 2021 followed by a study of the issue, prompted by a conditional use permit application from Doug Schieffer to construct a helipad on property along Gull Lake Dam Road for the purposes of commuting by air. Schieffer’s conditional use permit application was considered by the Crow Wing County



Chelsey Perkins / Brainerd Dispatch

Kyle Hart, an attorney representing a seasonal East Gull Lake resident attempting to build a private helipad, speaks to the Crow Wing County Board during a meeting on Tuesday.

Planning Commission in July 2021, when the group tabled the matter, seeking more information in the face of opposition from neighbors.

Attorney Kyle Hart, who represents Schieffer, argued against the ordinance change during Tuesday’s meeting and said the board had no factual basis for the move.

“There’s nothing in

the record to suggest that anyone thought that airports were dangerous, noisy, had fuel issues, wildlife issues — none of that stuff was ever articulated,” Hart said. “... It’s safer than a Jet Ski, safer than a boat; it’s safer than your bathtub, safer than a car. All the evidence that we presented also shows that airports comply with all MPCA (Minnesota Pol-

lution Control Agency) requirements. Obviously, they would, otherwise they wouldn’t be allowed to exist.”

The issue originally arose in Cass County in 2019, when Schieffer bought land on Floan Point in East Gull Lake to build a seasonal home and wanted to use his helicopter to commute

HELIPAD: Page 8

SBA loan program helps small businesses expand

By Renee Richardson
Managing Editor

BAXTER — Investment in small business was celebrated and encouraged during a statewide tour to highlight a loan program’s success, which included a stop at LINDAR Corp. in Baxter.

The loan program provides expansion opportunities and officials spoke of its ability to offer access to capital and support job growth through local partnerships.

Spotlighting the Small Business Administration’s 504 loan program brought together a small group of economic development officials,



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Chief Financial Officer and Vice President Steve Lund leads a tour with Congressman Pete Stauber and LINDAR owner Tom Haglin on Tuesday. Stauber visited the company along with U.S. Small Business Administration’s Minnesota District Director Brian McDonald to highlight the success of the 504 loan program and job growth through local partnerships.

entrepreneurs, local and SBA representatives lenders, city officials for what was touted as

a Certified Development Companies Celebration Tour.

By highlighting success stories, part of the goal was to increase awareness of the long-standing 504 program and encourage others to consider the loan as a way to invest in property and equipment, looking at job creation and retention. The SBA’s 504/Certified Development Companies loan program guarantees long-term financing for

SBA: Page 9

Brainerd superintendent candidates begin their final interviews

By Theresa Bourke
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — Two of the three finalists for Brainerd Public Schools superintendent met with various community groups and interviewed in front of the School Board for the last time in hopes of securing the job.

Heidi Hahn and Eric Schneider spent their days Tuesday and Wednesday, April 12 and 13, respectively, meeting with teachers, stu-

dents, parents and other community members, who asked questions and gave feedback to the board members ahead of the final decision. The final candidate, Karsten Anderson, is set to interview Thursday, April 14, after which the board is expected to make a hiring decision.

Heidi Hahn

About a dozen community members showed up to a session Tuesday

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