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\$1



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2022



RED BREASTED NUTHATCH

Photos above by Snotty Moose Photography



PEP RALLY for the Ely Nordic skiers going to skate was held Wednesday morning. Seated were Zoe Devine, Phoebe Helms, Ava Skustad, Sydney Durkin, Gracie Pointer, Anna Dunn, Claire Blauch, Rena Johnston, Anna Larson, Gabriel Pointer and Jon Hakala. Photo by Nick Wognum.

Cliffs to idle Northshore

Fight over royalty fees intensifies

by Lee Bloomquist
Mesabi Tribune

Northeastern Minnesota's economy could be in for a rough and tumble ride. Northshore Mining Co. facilities in Babbitt and Silver Bay will be temporarily idled May 1, Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. officials announced Friday.

The idling will put 410 Northshore Mining Co. employees out of work.

Babbitt Mayor Andrea Zupancich says fallout from the idling will be felt across the region.

"It's bad all the way around," Zupancich said. "I'm really concerned for the city and for the (Northshore) employees. It's going to trickle down to businesses and the school will be affected as well. I hope this is just a temporary thing and not something that would be permanent. That would be devastating."

The idling comes amid an ongoing dispute between Cleveland-Cliffs and Mesabi Trust over royalty payments

"The results we achieved in 2021 are a clear demonstration of how powerful Cleveland-Cliffs has become, as our revenues grew more than 10 times, from \$2 billion in 2019 to over \$20 billion in 2021."

Lourenco Goncalves - CEO of Cleveland Cliffs

that Cleveland-Cliffs makes to the trust for taconite mined at the Peter Mitchell Mine in Babbitt.

The taconite is shipped by rail to Northshore's processing facility in Silver Bay and turned into iron ore pellets.

"With the use of additional scrap in our BOF's (basic oxygen furnaces), our iron ore needs are not as high as before and we no longer need to run our mines full-out," Lourenco Goncalves, Cleveland-Cliffs president and chief executive officer said during the company's 2021 year-end earnings call. (Continued on Page 2)

Mask mandate under fire

As other districts change course, committee to reconvene

by Tom Coombe

After first indicating they'd wait a month, Ely school officials are set to determine the fate of the district's indoor mask mandate.

A special meeting of the school's safe learning advisory committee has been called for Tuesday at 3:30 p.m., when an end to the year-long mandate figures to be the only issue up for debate.

The meeting, which may lead to a recommendation for school board action, comes amid public pressure to end the forced masking policy, and while mask mandates at numerous other schools are going by the wayside.

Monday night, when school board members in Ely indicated they'd wait until Mar. 14 to address the issue, school board members at the newly-formed Rock Ridge district in Virginia and Eveleth rescinded their mask mandate.

Cloquet also ditched its mask policy the same night, as did a slew of other districts across Minnesota and following similar action in many other states.

As of Wednesday, Hibbing and Ely were the only Iron Range districts to still require masks while numerous others, including schools at Babbitt, Tower, Cook and Aurora, have gone the entire

year without a mask edict. School board members were largely silent on the issue at Monday's meeting, although they heard from three parents who requested an immediate end to the mandate.

"We need a reasonable end date," said parent Devon Luthens, a member of the safe learning advisory group. "Waiting until March 14 is unacceptable. We've been waiting since Sept. 7 for this mask mandate to be lifted. Asking us for more time is just a slap in the face."

Luthens added "we continue to watch our neighboring school districts demonstrate success without

mandates in place," and suggested that high vaccination rates among staff and high school students, combined with over 200 cases reported during the school year, have led to more immunity on campus.

Ely children are masking in no other settings, Luthens told the board, and she pressed for the district to justify its rules and consider adverse affects of masking.

"Why do we continue to subject our children to masking when we do not have data that it's working," she said.

A similar charge was leveled by Ely area resident

(Continued on Page 2)

Morse-Fall Lake adds members, vehicles

The Morse-Fall Lake fire department and first responders have added members and purchased two new vehicles.

The department is run through a joint powers board made up of the supervisors from Fall Lake Township and the Town of Morse.

Board chair Terry Soderberg said the two actions were tied together.

"I wanted to see our departments add members before we purchased any more vehicles and in the past two months we've hired nine people," said Soderberg.

Both departments were busy in 2021 with the fire department responding to 123 calls and the first responders responding to 152 calls.

"Plus we had people on the different forest fires over the summer, it was a busy year," said Soderberg.

The windfall from working for the Forest Service will pay for the new vehicles.

The first responders have purchased a Chevy Tahoe that will be used for responding to calls and the fire department just ordered a 2022 Ford F350 4x4 crew cab for hauling hoses, pulling trailers and traveling to classes. It could also hold a small pump unit in the future.

"The Greenwood Fire benefited small departments like ours and allowed us to make these purchases," said Soderberg.

There has been a steady increase in calls for first responders, up from 138 in



Morse Fall Lake fire department and first responders did a joint training last week along with Tower and Ely Area Ambulance. They worked on auto extrication and thanked Tony's Towing/Mather Recycling for the vehicles.

2020 to 152 in 2021.

Of those calls, 62 were in Morse, 50 in Fall Lake, two in Stony River, 17 in Winton, three in the city of Ely, and 18 in the unorganized townships. The majority of the calls were general medicals, but there were also 15 motor vehicle accidents, 36 rescues (including BWCA extractions), six lift assists

and eight water emergencies.

"Mike Harri has done a good job with the first responders and it hasn't been easy dealing with Covid guidelines and making sure we always had enough PPE for our people," said Soderberg.

The fire department calls jumped from 67 in 2020 to 123 last year with 80 calls

in Morse, 27 in Fall Lake, six in Winton and 10 in unorganized areas, mainly up the Echo Trail.

"We cover both townships and five unorganized areas for St. Louis County plus the city of Winton so our people cover a lot of ground," said Soderberg.



The Ely speech team, coached by Donna Kari, competed at the Hibbing Heartbreak speech meet on Feb. 12. Esther Anderson and Maggie Dammann competed in Extemporaneous Reading, with Maggie placing 3rd in the category. Morgan McClelland and Leo Stalmer came to observe and learn, since this is their first year in speech. All four members will compete Feb. 19 at the Cherry Lucky Duck meet. "It's nice to be competing in person, rather than virtual, this year," said Kari.

Views from the North Country



We checked in with Russ Robertson, who was the first chairman of the Ely Sled Dog Races back in 1971. He's doing well at age 92 and said, "I'm a fugitive from the Ely Cemetery!"

Ecklund proposes economic assistance package for Canadian border businesses

The House Workforce and Business Development Committee held a remote hearing Wednesday to discuss legislation authored by Rep. Rob Ecklund (DFL - International Falls) to create a new Canadian Border Counties Economic Relief Program.

Grants under the program would help businesses adversely affected by last year's fires in and around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and the border closure between March 2020 and July 2021.

"In Minnesota, we have a long track record of helping out areas of our state when they experience hardship,

and last year's fires and the prolonged border closure have devastated many businesses along the Canadian border," said Ecklund.

"Even after the border reopening, travel and trade remain extremely difficult. This bill provides needed assistance to businesses along the border, the owners of which have invested their entire livelihoods so they can be successful. In the face of some unique challenges due to their locations, they have done everything possible to survive this crisis. Right now, we should step up with resources to help."

Ecklund's bill includes \$15 million worth of grants

for businesses in Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, Roseau, or Kittson counties with a documented revenue decline of at least 10% between 2020 and 2021. The maximum grant award is \$50,000.

Originally, the funding in the legislation was targeted to assist outfitters, but Ecklund worked with other business owners and civic leaders to expand the bill's scope.

Chairman Robert Deschambe of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Paul Nevanen, Director of the Koochiching County Economic Devel-

opment Authority, Mindy Fredrikson of Gunflint Lodge and Outfitters, Mike Boomer of Ryden's Border Store in Grand Portage, and Eric Johnson of Voyageurs Outfitters in Rainy Lake all provided testimony in support of the bill.

The committee laid the bill over for consideration in a future Workforce and Business Development finance bill. Video of the hearing will be available on House Public Information Services' YouTube channel.

Documents and other information from the hearing will be available on the committee web page.

Broadband expanded in Town of Morse

Approximately 350 underserved homes and several resorts in Morse Township recently received access to high-speed broadband internet through next generation fixed wireless and millimeter wave technology.

The homes and resorts are located in a coverage area surrounding Ely that includes the shoreline areas of Burntside Lake, Little Long Lake and Wolf Lake.

Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation supported the project with a \$150,000 Community Infrastructure grant to Morse Township. Morse Township invested \$100,000, and total project investment was \$450,000.

The area geology is very rocky with challenging bedrock that drives up the cost of burying fiber. Instead fixed wireless deployments were used which reduces costs by approximately 90% and drastically reduces project timelines.

The work was completed by Treehouse Broadband, an Ely-based internet service provider founded by local resident Isaac Olson.

Treehouse uses fixed wireless technology to beam internet service from towers to homes and businesses, using directional antennas



FROM ON TOP of the Ely water tower, internet services are beamed by Treehouse Broadband to remote homes in the Town of Morse. The system includes relays from boat houses and islands to extend the service on lakes. The Town of Morse project totaled \$450,000 with Morse paying in \$100,000.

and receiver dishes.

The company also installs whole-home WiFi, ensuring high-speed coverage even in the corners of homes and businesses.

"A traditional fiber project to cover these 350 homes would likely cost over \$4 million and take years to deploy. We completed the project for a tenth of that price," said Olson. "Fiber requires a huge labor and

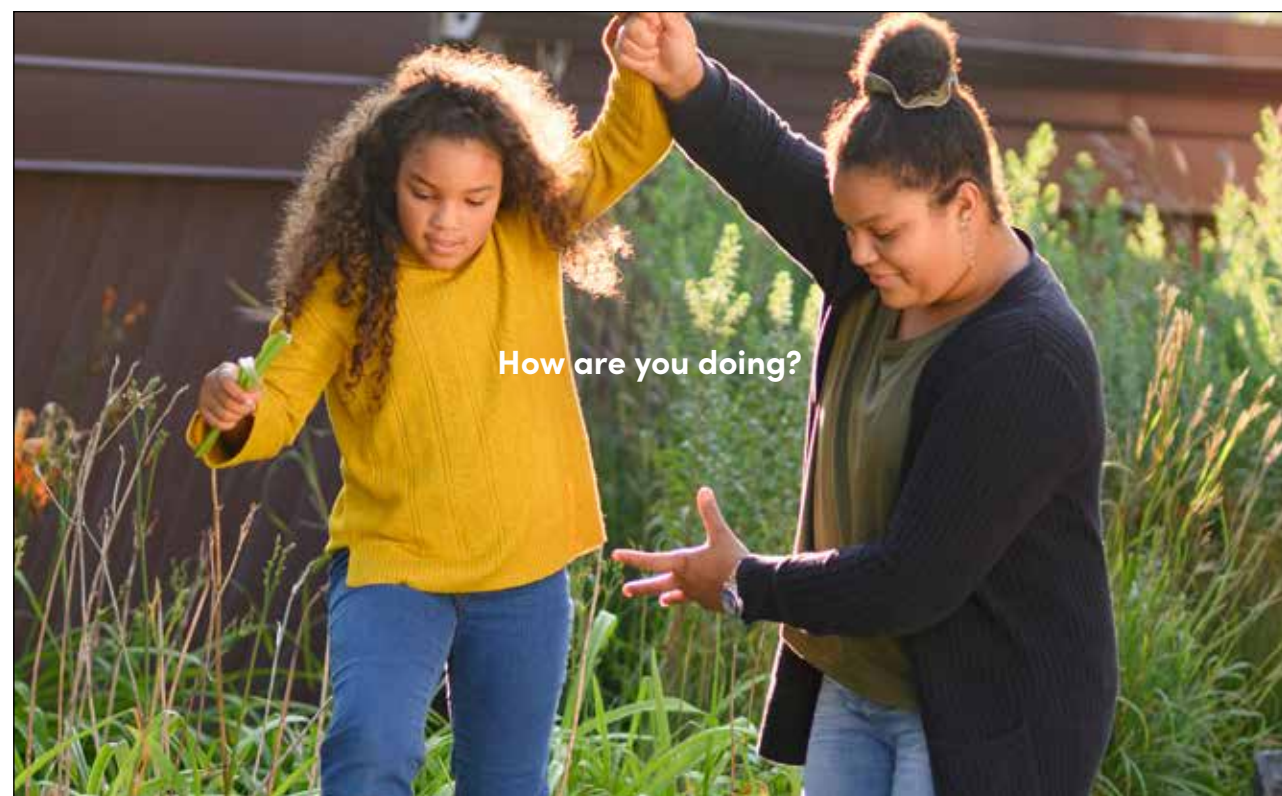
equipment investment. Fixed wireless can provide similar levels of service in a much shorter period of time."

When fully completed, customers will have access to internet speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload. Their previous access was real speeds below 10 Mbps.

"The new coverage and broadband service will allow a wave of remote workers to

spend more time at vacation cabins and resorts, which in turn stimulates the local economy," said Nick Wognum, Morse Township clerk. "The project served resorts and homes that were in desperate need of speed and connectivity improvements."

For IRRRB broadband grant information email Whitney Ridlon or call her at 218-735-3004.



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State ends Twin Metals review Fed mineral lease cancellation led to decision

by Tom Coombe

In the wake of federal action that has derailed the Twin Metals Minnesota copper-nickel mining project, the state of Minnesota has followed suit and ended its environmental review of the proposed mine near Ely.

The action was announced Tuesday, with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Sarah Strommen notifying the company that the agency "has directed its staff to stop work on the environmental review for the proposed Twin Metals project."

That decision, which came after consultation between DNR staff and Twin Metals officials, follows a late-January edict by the Biden Administration to cancel two federal mineral leases that are pivotal to the project.

Despite the key blows, Twin Metals is pressing on with its plans to develop an underground mine that promises hundreds of new jobs. Legal action may be next in an attempt to rejuvenate the project.

In a statement released this week, the company said:

"Twin Metals Minnesota is working to determine the next steps to continue to advance our underground copper, nickel, cobalt and platinum group metals project. A pause on the environmental review process is necessary and appropriate while we defend our project and our mineral rights in court. We remain committed to the communities of northeast Minnesota and to advancing a modern mine that will produce the minerals necessary for combating

climate change, strengthening domestic supply chains and creating American jobs."

The DNR meanwhile, is at least for now closing the books on Twin Metals.

In a letter to Twin Metals CEO Kelly Osborne, Strommen said that over the next several weeks, "The DNR will take the necessary steps to assemble the project record to ensure documents and data are appropriately archived. Once that process is complete, the DNR will close the administrative record for this project and manage it pursuant to the agency's record management requirements."

The DNR also indicated that in a separate matter, the agency has concerns about the proposed location for the tailings disposal facility," needed for the mine.

Strommen said the current proposal would potentially encumber school trust mineral resources and "pose an unacceptable finan-

cial risk to the state and potentially to the school trust fund."

The decision is the latest in what has been a back-and-forth series of conflicting rulings on the project, predicated on political control.

The Obama Administration first pulled the Twin Metals leases in late-2016, and that decision was later reversed by former President Trump, a Republican.

Last fall, the latest ruling was foreshadowed by the Democratic Biden Administration, which rejected preference right lease applications for Twin Metals and announced plans to seek a 20-year moratorium on mining on national forest land near the BWCA.

Twin Metals remains in the development stage and is controlled by Chilean mining giant Antofagasta. The company has pressed for the government to follow existing regulatory processes and has promised to meet and exceed all environmen-

tal standards. It contends the minerals it proposes to mine -copper, nickel, cobalt and platinum group metals - are needed for clean energy technologies that are essential to combat climate change and secure domestic supply chains.

Opponents have sought a permanent ban on mining near the BWCA and say the Twin Metals project would destroy the region's water-rich environment and devastate the area's tourism based economy.

The U.S. Forest Service has restarted a previously canceled study of the environmental, cultural and economic impacts of mining near the Boundary Waters.

A public comment period has included a series of recent, remote public meetings on the topic.

Twin Metals Minnesota, which has offices and storage facilities in Ely, formally submitted its mine proposal in late 2019. This proposal was the culmination of more than a decade of engineering, hydro-geological, environmental and engagement work including the evaluation of dozens of project-specific configurations and technologies that maximize environmental protection, according to company officials.

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Funds sought for ambulance garage

by Tom Coombe

Ely area leaders are looking south - to the state capitol - in their quest to build a new garage for the area's ambulance service.

Members of the area's ambulance joint powers board discussed the project Tuesday at Winton's city hall, agreeing to back resolutions of support for a project that could cost as much as \$1.5 million.

The ambulance garage would be located across from Sibley Manor near the campus of Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital.

It's a project that has been in the works for more than a year and gained some steam in late-2021 when it was addressed with area lawmakers during the economic development joint powers board's annual legislative meeting at the Grand Ely Lodge.

The ambulance joint powers, made up of representatives from Ely, Winton and both Morse and Fall Lake townships spent much of this week's session talking

strategy as they pursue state funding for the project.

Talks with area lawmakers including State Sen. Tom Bakk and State Rep. Rob Ecklund, as well as others including State Rep. and House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt of the suburban Twin Cities, have been productive according to former Ely mayor Chuck Novak.

"We've got a lot of support at this point," said Novak. "There's a lot of money down there."

Novak said the joint powers needs to further engage engineering and architectural firm TKDA to come up with more detailed cost estimates for construction, and the respective governing bodies are expected to pass resolutions in support of the initiative.

Then it's on to St. Paul and hopes that legislators will earmark capital investment funding for the project.

The joint powers is taking on the project as a result of discussions with Bakk, who indicated that funding would

more likely be funneled to a government entity rather than the non-profit Ely Area Ambulance Service.

Discussion Tuesday centered on the city of Ely serving as the fiscal agent, despite some concerns about staff time needed to coordinate the project. Officials said it's likely Ely's city clerk office would be tasked to take on those duties.

"I feel that we probably have enough council support to do this," said council member Al Forsman. "It's not like they're sitting around twiddling their thumbs, but if it's something everybody is for and it's not contentious they're willing to put in the work knowing it's for the good of the whole community."

In other business this week, the ambulance joint power steered clear of action on what could be a hot-but-not issue: a funding formula for the ambulance service operations.

Currently, each entity contributes \$10.10 per per-

son, but there has been talk that the amount may need to be doubled or tripled to meet service needs.

No action was taken at this time as the group awaits budget numbers from the ambulance service.

Earlier discussion had honed in on the need for more money for capital improvement, but for at least three years local officials have haggled over proposed increases.

One idea, which would shift funding from a per person to one that assesses each parcel of property in the area, has been resisted by leaders of Morse Township.

Morse has pressed for a continued per person subsidy, noting Ely's population and that Ely generates most of the ambulance calls.

Supporters say that collecting per parcel is a more fair way to collect money for ambulance operations and allows the service to get tax money from those who are seasonal or temporary residents.



Matthew Janeksela accepts a check from Steve Eisenmenger of the Great Nordic Beardfest.



A \$500 check from the Great Nordic Beardfest was accept by Zoe Lampman, Jill Nocera-Swanson, Julie Hignell and Ryan Stewart of Ely Community Resource.

Beardfest gives back

The Great Nordic Beardfest raised \$210 through donations and added another \$500 for a total of \$710 donated to Ely Community Resource. Event organizer Shaun Chosa said next year's designated charity will be Contented Critters.

Also, the first Great Nordic Beardfest Sunrise Scholarship was given to Matt Janeksela. He received \$500.

"We sold out the Historic Ely State Theater's 235 seats, plus 37 competitors," said Chosa. "I will need more help and volunteers next year and I need to add a few judges, I would like a lady judge if anyone's interested

they can contact me via the GNB Facebook page."

In the plans for next year will be bringing back the Bearded Dog photo contest and adding the Iced Beard photo contest. Chosa said there will be a Bearded Ladies division in the belt competition, a Gentlemen's Choice category and a Dynamic Duo, a two person paired category.

"We may also be looking for a venue for a daytime event for kids, a mini competition for kids who can make their beards and moustaches out of whatever they want," said Chosa.

Online St. Louis County tax forfeited land auction results in nearly \$1.25 million in sales

St. Louis County's first online auction of the year featuring newly offered tax forfeited properties has closed with 33 properties sold back into private ownership for a total of nearly \$1.25 million. The auction, conducted through public-surplus.com, closed February 10.

Of the properties sold in this most recent auction, nearly half were purchased by adjoining owners or others in the near vicinity. Seventeen properties had competing bids resulting in sales above the original listing price. The auction fea-

tured a variety of properties including recreational land, buildable lots, waterfront property and more. Properties purchased include 12 lots that had been cleaned up and structures razed, a home in Virginia, three lakeshore lots and two with rivers or streams.

Properties that were not purchased at the auction are now available for sale on a first come, first served basis through the St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department until sold or put back on the online auction. There are approximately 50 properties currently posted on the

Available List for purchase. More information on those properties, along with results from this latest auction, can be found online at stlouiscountymn.gov/landsales.

St. Louis County offers new tax forfeited properties for sale by auction three times each year. The others will be held in June and October. Additional auctions are offered throughout the year for properties that remain unsold from previous sales.

Within St. Louis County there are nearly 900,000 acres of tax forfeited land, which the County's Land

and Minerals Department is responsible for managing. Most of the land is maintained for resource management, however, the County is working to sell parcels that are not planned for management as a way to encourage development and increase the property tax base.

For more information about tax forfeited land sales, or to subscribe to receive email notifications about updates and future sales, visit stlouiscountymn.gov/landsales or call the Land and Minerals Department at (218) 726-2606.

Do you like to read? Join a reading team to select Northeastern Minnesota Book awards

If you like to read books you could be part of the Northeast Minnesota Book Awards program this year.

Join a NEMBA Reading Team and you could help choose a winning book that captures the spirit of northeastern Minnesota.

Who can serve on a Reading Team? NEMBA is looking for book-lovers to serve on one of the reading teams that will select the winning book in each of the six categories—Nonfiction, Fiction, Art/Photography, Children's Literature, Poetry, and Memoir.

They are not looking for professional literary critics, but rather a group of open-minded readers who represent the different backgrounds and lifestyles of the Northland.

How does a Reading Team work? Each of the six reading teams will be composed of up to four members



with a designated leader. When you apply, you share your preference as to which team you would like to serve on, and they do their best to place you on the best team for you.

After receiving their bundles of books, teams will meet several times (meeting by Zoom can be an option) between June and September 2022 to discuss the nominated books, with winners notified on October 1, 2022.

The Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards recognize books that substantially represent the history, culture, heritage or lifestyle of northeastern Minnesota, which includes the follow-

ing counties: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis.

This is the first year that Lake Superior Writers will present the awards, previously coordinated by UMD's Kathryn A. Martin Library with the last awards announced in 2020.

This year, the Reading Teams will be looking at books published in 2020-2021, with winners announced in fall of 2022.

If you would like to join a Reading Team, complete an online application form at <https://tinyurl.com/bd-f54jwf>. Applications will be accepted from February 15 to May 1, 2022, and you will be notified of your Reading Team assignment in mid to late May.

For questions contact nemba@lakesuperiorwriters.org.

College Campus news

The following students are among the 2021 Fall Semester graduates of Vermilion Community College: Annika Bixby, AAS, Veterinary Technician; Matthew Egan-Ostrokol, CERT, Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy; Kahsha Hyde, CERT, Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy; Louise Schmitt, AA, Liberal Arts and Sciences; Brandi Smith, AAS, Veterinary Technician.

The following students were named to the Fall 2021 honors List at Vermilion Community College in Ely. Students named to the honors list have attained a GPA as listed below for the semester. From Ely: Elijah Anderson, honors; Alexander Barker, highest honors; Kale Beno, highest honors; Amanda Block, honors; Zoe Devine, highest honors; Kesley Ebbs, highest honors; Chloe Ecklund, honors; Matthew Egan-Ostrokol, highest honors; Dylan Fenske, High honors; Taylor Gibney, highest honors; Phoebe Helms, highest honors; Adam Hornstein, honors; Jonathan Huju, honors; Kahsha Hyde, highest honors; Caleb Janeksela, High honors; Jeremiah Kaercher, honors; Jaicee Krings, honors; Sophia Kurnava, honors; Chelsea Larson, highest honors; Sidney Marshall, highest honors; Brett Moschel, highest honors; Cedar Ohlhauser, High honors; Lauren Olson, High honors; Gabriel Pointer, highest honors; Gracie Pointer, High honors; Lauren Porthan, High honors; Abigail Rehbein, highest honors; Madelyne Roderick, honors; Louise Schmitt, highest honors; Jennifer Shuster, highest honors; Lindsay Sikora, High honors; Brandi Smith, honors; Deborah Spengler, highest honors; Kelly Thompson, highest honors; Nacomis VanMeter, High honors; Kayley Wika, highest honors; Emilie Wojcik, honors; From Soudan: Michael Trucano, highest honors; From Tower: Ethan Zaitz, highest honors; Andrew Zika, honors; From Winton: Elijah Anderson, honors.

Local students attending Bethel University in St. Paul, have been named to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the fall 2021 semester. From Ely: Abigail Schwamm, Senior, daughter of Rebecca Zwolinski and Stephen Schwamm.



PRESENTING a check for \$12,439.68 was Joe Hiller and Amy Consoer of the Morse-Fall Lake Fire Department Relief Association to Morse-Fall Lake board chair Terry Soderberg for the equipment fund. Morse-Fall Lake has turned its relief fund over to PERA.

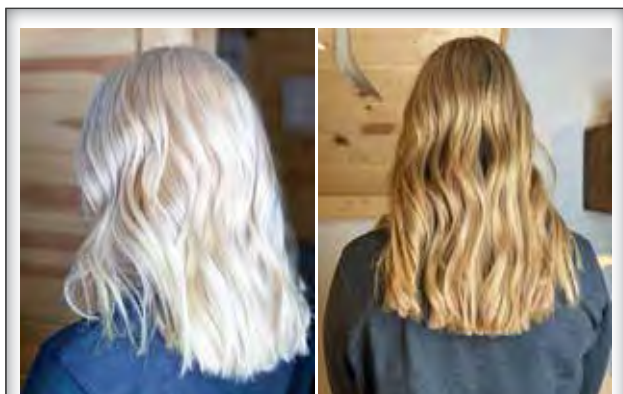


Congrats to "The Jersey Boys" - Winners of the 2022 Ely Community Resource Broomball Tournament! The winning team included the following players: Ben Bialik, Michael Lah, Bob Kellogg, Max Gantt (not pictured), Billy Bradley, Andy Krunnkala, Louie Gerzin (not pictured).



Ely Community Resource's broomball tournament included the "Broomis Ballis" from Camp Widjwagan: Top row (l-r): Sophie Klein, Sam Glenn; middle: Sal DiVita, Cooper "Buzzsaw" Sawyer, Ben "Sunshine" Gardner, Spencer WareJoncas. Bottom: Peter Shao

Just about everybody reads the Ely Echo



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Little change in police activity in 2021

by Tom Coombe

A report on police activity in Ely last year looked a lot like it did last year.

And the year before that. Statistics compiled by St. Louis County's 911 emergency dispatch showed that Ely police were called 2,392 times in 2021.

That's 45 more times, or less than once a week, than the 2,347 calls reported in 2020.

In 2019, there were 2,370 dispatches.

Council members reviewed the data presented

by assistant police chief Mike Lorenz during a brief regular meeting on Tuesday.

"Nothing really jumped out at me as far as a big difference in any type of call," said Lorenz, who filled in for chief Chad Houde at the meeting. "It kind of stayed about the same."

Overall, the numbers encompass more than 100 different case descriptions.

As they were in 2020, traffic stops were most frequent, with Ely officers making 311 last year, up from 274 the year before.

Medical emergencies were next with 210 in 2021, compared to 181 the previous year.

Next up were paper service and public assist calls at 128 each, with general disturbances at 111 in fifth place.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

- Animal disturbance, 89;
- Call backs, 86;
- Lock ins/lock outs, 78;
- Checking on welfare, 77;
- Information, 64.

Right outside the top-10 were reports of suspicious

activity (59) and child neglect (49) calls.

"There was nothing glaringly obvious as far as a change from year to year," said Lorenz.

Other notable numbers included 43 property damage calls, 31 reports of theft, 32 reports of a person with psychological problem, 29 reports of an unwanted person, 19 domestic incidents, 11 burglaries or burglaries in progress, 18 loud music calls, seven vehicle thefts and three assaults.

Minnesota School Board Recognition Week scheduled for February 21-25

The Minnesota School Boards Association has set Feb. 21-25 as Minnesota School Board Recognition Week to build awareness and understanding of the vital function elected school board members play. The Ely school district is joining other public school districts from across the state to celebrate School Board Recognition Week to honor local board members for their commitment to Ely and its students.

"Strong schools help build strong communities - and the Ely School Board devotes countless hours to

making sure our schools are helping every child learn at a higher level," said interim superintendent John Klarich. "School board members make the difficult decisions every month - and spend many hours studying education issues and regulations in order to provide the kind of accountability our citizens expect."

Klarich said the key work of boards is to raise student achievement by:

- Creating a vision for what the community wants the school district to be and for making student achievement the top priority;

• Establishing standards for what students will be expected to learn and be able to do;

• Ensuring progress is measured to be sure the district's goals are achieved and students are learning at expected levels;

• Being accountable for their decisions and actions by continually tracking and reporting results;

• Creating a safe, orderly climate where students can learn and teachers can teach;

• Forming partnerships with others in the community to solve common problems; and

• Focusing attention on the need for continuous improvement by questioning, refining and revising issues related to student achievement.

"Even though we're making a special effort to show our appreciation this month, school board members' work is a year-round commitment," Klarich said.

Ely school board members currently are: Ray Marsnik, chairman; Rochelle Sjoberg, clerk; Tom Omerza, treasurer; Tony Colarich, director; Hollee Coombe, director; Darren Visser, director.



IRRRB Commissioner Mark Phillips was part of a group that toured the Ely school buildings project on Tuesday. Phillips said the agency has limited funds available to help with an estimated \$4 million project shortfall after initially putting in \$7 million. Memorial high school principal Megan Anderson explained how the new space would be used for a media center, gymnasium, shop classes, commons area and office space. Photos by Nick Wognum.



NO LONGER PART of the school project will be to replace all of the windows in the Washington building. Elementary principal Anne Oelke showed IRRRB Commissioner Mark Phillips how the windows open so far a child could climb out and fall.



WITH THE CLOCK ticking workers were pouring a concrete floor in cold temps Tuesday morning at the Ely school building project. Workers have been battling winter weather conditions to keep the project on track.

DNR Conservation Officer weekly reports

District 6 - Two Harbors

CO Sean Williams (Ely 1) reports: heavy snowmobile use in the Ely area in spite of lows of -40 and highs only in the single digits. High compliance was seen by most riders, but several groups were contacted driving too fast for the conditions. Violations included: excessive snowmobile speed, angling with an extra line, and failure to display current snowmobile registration.

CO John Velsvaag (Ely) checked anglers and snowmobilers this past week. Fish house owners are reminded that identification in addition to displaying the shelter tag is required on permanent shelters. Cold temperatures reduced activity over the weekend and angling was slow this past week.

CO Thomas Wahlstrom (Grand Marais) spent time working on snowmobile trails and remote trout lakes. Fishing has been slow. The trails have been

busy due to all the recent snow. Enforcement action was taken for snowmobile violations.

CO Mary Manning (Hovland) followed up on complaints in the state park and reports of bobcats visiting homes, checked cross country ski passes, patrolled area Grant in Aid snowmobile trails and checked ice anglers. UTV riders are reminded that tracked machines are not allowed on the CJ Ramstad or GIA snowmobile trails.

CO Anthony Bermel (Babbitt) worked snowmobile, fishing, and ski trail enforcement throughout the week. Weekend snowmobile traffic was high. Some groups need to slow down and stay to the right. The corners and hills were getting badly blown out from aggressive riding, numerous places were observed where people had gone off the trails, and some riders contacted spoke of scary close calls meeting other

sleds. Enforcement action was taken for snowmobile violations and unattended lines.

District 5 - Eveleth area

CO Darrin Kittelson (Int'l Falls #1) reports snowmobiling and ice fishing activities continue to be the main focus in the area, however participation has been slow with the frigid weather. A youth snowmobile safety class was held with 18 area youth getting their safety certificates. People are reminded that safety should be a priority when out snowmobiling.

CO John Slatinski IV (Ray) Despite arctic temperatures in the area snowmobiling activity remains consistent. Increased slush off trails is causing problems for anglers with one group reporting six inches of slush around their house from the previous day when they initially drilled holes. Wild animal complaints were fielded. CO Slatinski assisted a

neighboring officer with a snowmobile safety class and field day event.

CO Troy Fondie (Orr) reports weekend temps at -30 below found a slow start to outdoor activity. Angling activity appeared non-existent. Numerous snowmobile violations were dealt with. Deer appear to be struggling as we approach close to 2 feet of snow on the ground, and a lot of winter left. Wolf activity is plentiful. Administrative tasks were tended to.

CO Aaron Larson (Tower) worked primarily angling and snowmobile enforcement. Larson investigated cases relating to the illegal operation of snowmobiles. A reminder to be cautious while traveling on Lake Vermilion and any frozen lakes. The cold temperatures have caused cracks in the ice that could cause dangerous travel conditions.

Scenic Rivers Clinics —Clinics— COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Available

Scenic Rivers is now scheduling appointments for individuals to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at our medical locations following state eligibility guidelines. Supply is limited and call volumes are high, so we appreciate your patience. If you believe you meet the MN state vaccine eligibility requirements, please call the number below to schedule an appointment.

Tower Medical Vaccine Scheduling

415 N 2nd St, Suite 2
(218) 753-2405



1-877-541-2817 24 Hour Emergency Care Available Through Cook Hospital
www.ScenicRiversHealth.org

Donald C. Gardner Humanities Trust

Is seeking a dynamic and experienced leader to serve as its **Executive Director** to advance the mission of the organization as it enriches life and the arts in the Ely community.

The Trust is seeking an Executive Director who will be responsible for managing and growing the grants program and endowment. The Executive Director will be the face of the organization, building on established relationships with artists, arts organizations, arts supporters, City of Ely, and Ely Chamber of Commerce. The Executive Director reports to the Trust's Board of Directors.

Minimum Qualifications: College graduate with experience in nonprofit organizations or the arts. Experience building and managing budgets or working with an endowment. Outstanding written, oral and interpersonal skills. Strong planning, organizational and analytical skills.

Position is 20-22 hours/week. First year may require ¼ time. Great opportunity with job flexibility in an arts-rich, beautiful northern Minnesota community.

The full job description is posted on the Trust's website at www.gardnertrust.org.

Application Deadline: Friday, April 1, 2022
Position begins June 1, 2022.

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HELP WANTED

Would you like to work outside? Would you like to work on the lake? Docks on Wheels, Ely Minnesota is looking to fill a variety of positions. All positions require the ability to lift 50 lbs continually. Starting Pay is \$15.00 per/hr. Stop in and apply or call 218.365.6210 to schedule an interview.

