

# Pine Knot News

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This week in Carlton County's only independent, locally owned newspaper.



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# Full-on Fourth planned in Cloquet

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It's baaaack. After the Covid-19 pandemic led to a full-scale cancellation of Cloquet July Fourth events in 2020 and no activities at Veterans Memorial Park in 2021, organizers are planning for a return to normal in 2022.

Like last year, there will be a parade and fireworks, plus the Sawdust 5K and 1-mile race in the morning, a car show at the Northeastern Hotel and Saloon and a 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Pinehurst Park.

For the first time since 2019, there will also be activities in Veterans Park following the 11 a.m. parade and an outdoor movie in the park before the fireworks, also at Veterans Park.

"We really want to make July Fourth the place to go for families," said Jana Peterson, Fourth of July celebration co-coordinator and longtime July Fourth volunteer. "Bringing people back to the park is really important. Without that community gathering spot, it kind of ripped the heart out of the festivities."

The afternoon activities at Veterans Park will be familiar and mostly free. The Dash for Cash, when kids dig in sand or sawdust for quarters, will return, and so will the pie eating contest. There will be family-friendly fun ranging from the popular balloon toss to a three-legged race, wiffleball games and a variety of bouncies and inflatables from noon to 4 p.m. After that, things will slow down for a few hours before the outdoor movie starts around 8:30 p.m.



Fourth fun in Cloquet returns to Veterans Memorial Park this year, including an outdoor movie. *Pine Knot News*

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## HATS OFF TO ESKO GRADS



A blue wave of seniors graduated from Esko High School Friday. And they made a little history. Find more photos and read about their big night on **Page 3**. *Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News*

### WRENSHALL SCHOOLS

# Principal contract OK'd; the rest is mystery

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John Edison isn't a Wrenshall school board member, but for all practical purposes on Tuesday night, he was. The attorney representing the school district was on hand for public discussion on the fate of principal Michelle Blanchard and also for two closed sessions on "allegations" against two employees of the district.

The board approved another one-

year contract for Blanchard, on the advice of Edison, who provided the board a "confidential legal analysis" on how it might proceed with the principal.

"I'll make that motion," member Jack Eudy said without expressing what the motion was. Superintendent Kim Belcastro clarified, saying the motion was for the board to approve another one-year contract for Blanchard with negotiations to go through the superintendent, board chairwoman Misty Bergman, and

business manager Angela Anderson. That contract will be reviewed by Edison and vote on by the board.

Bergman said the discussion Tuesday, and delay in approving a contract after a public evaluation last month, wasn't about Blanchard, who has received mostly rave reviews about her first school year on the job. Wrenshall moved last year from a superintendent and dean administration to having a part-time superintendent and full-time principal.

Bergman told the board Tuesday that it was difficult to decipher how the new arrangement was working, considering the unusual circumstances at the school as it returned to in-person instruction after mostly online classes during the pandemic.

Other board members reiterated the praise for Blanchard, only to be shut down by Bergman, saying the discussion was about the position and not the employee.

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