

BRAINERD DISPATCH

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SUMMER SPLENDOR

Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

A highlight of summer for wild orchid enthusiasts is the sight of the blooming cluster of showy lady's slippers in the Northland Arboretum on Wednesday. The Minnesota state flower needs special conditions for its special characteristics. The most common habitat is wetlands and moist woods, generally in limy sites, at low to moderate elevations. Rhizomes can live indefinitely, and plants may live up to 50 years, taking up to 16 years to flower for the first time, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Cekalla earns DFL endorsement for Senate District 10

RICE — Ordained minister and small business owner Suzanne Cekalla of Rice became the endorsed DFL candidate for the State Senate District 10 on Saturday, June 18.

"I am a firm believer in rural Minnesota," she told the gathered supporters, according to a news release. "We have so many great things to offer! I've always lived here, and those of us that live here know what it means in our hearts. It's a fabulous place to be."

Growing up on a family farm with six brothers and one sister, Cekalla learned early to work hard, put her faith in God and take care of her community, she said. After attending a one-

room school in North Prairie and graduating from Royalton High School, she said she put her faith into action: first becoming a nurse and then leading a regional Community Action Program initiative aimed at protecting children and young adults in central Minnesota.

Cekalla then opened a small business, became a founding member of the Rice Chamber of Commerce, and got her Master of Divinity degree — winning the Horace Bushnell Award for Christian education along the way — while raising three children.

Her faith brought her back to healing, she said, first as a pastor, then hospital chaplain in St. Cloud, and finally calling on her faith to help those in great need as a private grief and loss coach.

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COVID relief funds will go towards revitalization grants

By Theresa Bourke
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — The Brainerd City Council designated \$80,000 of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to be used as matching funds for Main Street Revitalization Program grants.

The grant program, administered by the Department of Employment and Economic Development, awarded \$4.5 million to the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls to fund development projects in downtown areas and select corridors in Brainerd, Cold Spring, Little Falls, Long Prairie, Pine River and St. Cloud.

Brainerd's allocation is about \$765,000, available for projects aimed at housing, child care, small business support and landscaping in the River to Rail corridor, which includes the area between the Mississippi River and the Northern Pacific Center, and from Washington Street to Oak Street.

The grants are 30% matching grants, which City Administra-



Theresa Bourke / Brainerd Dispatch

Downtown Brainerd in June 2021.

tor Jennifer Bergman previously explained as essentially a 2-to-1 match, meaning for every \$1 of grant, the applicant would need \$2 in matching funds, which cannot come from state or federal sources.

While the relief funds came from the federal government, the city intends to use them under the revenue loss provision allowed for allotments of less than \$10

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Board considers solutions to office space challenges

By Chelsey Perkins
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — With makeshift spaces in use for one office and another department split between multiple locations on the Crow Wing County campus, commissioners discussed how to create better accommodations for staff members in the county attorney and community corrections offices.

During its Tuesday, June 21, committee of

the whole meeting, the County Board heard from County Attorney Don Ryan and Corrections Manager Krista Jones, who said the current configurations of workspaces are not ideal. Ryan — prompted by Commissioner Paul Koering's concerns — repeatedly emphasized he's not asking for a new building, but rather seeking ways to use already existing

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Akeley festival keeps Paul Bunyan legend alive

By Lorie Skarpness
Park Rapids Enterprise

Akeley, Minnesota, will celebrate Paul Bunyan Days this weekend.

All through the year, people stop to take pictures at the statue of Paul Bunyan located along Minnesota Highway 34. But just who was Paul Bunyan, and how did his story become part of Akeley's history?

Paul's birthplace

According to history.com, there are many stories about Paul Bunyan, starting with his birth when it took five huge storks to deliver him.

While there are more than a dozen locations that claim to be Paul



Contributed / Paul Bunyan Historical Museum

The heyday of the Red River Lumber Company was from 1900-1915. The company, located on the 11th Crow Wing Lake near Akeley, used Paul Bunyan's image in its advertising, helping the legend of the larger than life lumberjack to grow.

Bunyan's birthplace, including Bemidji and Brainerd, Akeley has a giant cradle next to the

statue to signify that Paul Bunyan was born in that village.

Akeley historian Frank

Lamb said the cradle was built after a group of people got together in 1949. As part of the first Paul Bunyan Days celebration, they wanted something to show it was his birthplace.

"The reason Akeley is Paul Bunyan's birthplace is because the first printed word about him happened when the Red River Lumber Company used Paul Bunyan in advertising with a picture of their version of Paul Bunyan telling how the Red River Lumber Company was his logging company," he said. "Before, the stories about Paul Bunyan were just by word of mouth. So Akeley was the birth-

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