

# Here's what to expect for the fishing opener

By Michael Johnson  
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If you're an angler looking to part waters for the opener, May 15, you'd be hard pressed to find a better batch of waters than the 1,000-plus Otter Tail County calls their own.

It just so happens Minnesota Governor Tim Walz plans to make a visit to Otter Tail County this weekend to commemorate the annual Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener. Word has it he may be motoring out on Otter Tail Lake, like the last two governors to visit the area in the history of the event.

Event organizer Erik Osberg said Walz has indicated he plans to attend, though an emergency could pull him away from the event. Leadership from both the Senate and House as well as party leadership from both the Republican and Democratic parties have also been invited.

"We won't have 100% certainty until Wednesday or Thursday," Osberg said of Gov. Walz attending. "This is the case with every opener event, every year."

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Photo courtesy Erik Osberg

Randin Olson hoists three walleye caught on Otter Tail Lake. Olson is the owner of Lock Jaw Guide Service in the Ottertail lakes area.

# Businesses share mixed expectations for fishing opener

By Elizabeth Vierkant  
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Those involved with the upcoming Governor's Fishing Opener believe the event will boost Otter Tail County's economy, particularly in the hospitality industry, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, do businesses in and near Perham feel the same way?

The Governor's Fishing Opener won't have the hoopla that the event has brought to host cities in years past. In interviews, only a few businesses representatives really expect to see a large increase of business with this year's more cautious approach. If anything, several of these businesses see the fishing opener as a way to kick off what's expected to be a busy and successful tourist season for Otter Tail County.

The pandemic has affected a variety of industries in several different ways. For Perham's Landmark Liquors, their store has been thriving throughout the past year. According to Manager Robert Dreger, the liquor industry has had great sales throughout the pandemic.

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Taylor Johnson smiles, watching all the students cheering for her on May 7. Photos by Elizabeth Vierkant / Focus

# A DAY TO CELEBRATE

First grader celebrated for leukemia recovery

By Elizabeth Vierkant  
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The Perham community came together to help one child. On the morning of Friday, May 7, Heart of the Lakes Elementary School took the opportunity to celebrate this child with Taylor Johnson Day.

Taylor, a first grader at Heart of the Lakes, was diagnosed with leukemia in early 2019. After going through multiple types of chemotherapy, lumbar punctures and bone marrow biopsies, she completed all treatments in late March of this year.

Taylor Johnson Day was organized by Taylor's teacher,



Signs were made to welcome Taylor to school on Taylor Johnson day May 7.

Ann Kostynick, and Taylor's previous teachers, Kim Flatau and Sam Lachowitz, to celebrate her finished treatment.

"Perham is amazing with the outpouring of support they give when it is needed.

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Students wait outside of Heart of the Lakes Elementary in Perham to welcome Taylor Johnson on May 7.

## OTTER TAIL COUNTY COMMISSION

# Public land expands near wetlands center

By Karen Tolkkinen  
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Hunters, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts will finally be able to reach a previously landlocked wildfowl production area behind the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls.

The Otter Tail County Commission on Tuesday,

May 11, approved the sale of 42.65 acres to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The parcel will connect the learning center with the 338-acre Tungseth Waterfowl Production Area, providing access to the public.

The land is temporarily being held by the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club, pending sale to

the federal government. It was the desire of the previous owners, the Johnson family, that the land belong to the learning center, Neil Powers of Fish & Game told commissioners.

"The possibility of a private entity acquiring this property and engaging in a business venture that detracts or nega-

tively affects the programming of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center is a real possibility," according to documents he presented to the board.

"Right now that parcel, because it's landlocked, does not offer opportunities, for example,

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# City Council approves PACC bonds

By Elizabeth Vierkant  
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The Perham Area Community Center project to update and add activities such as a therapy pool, has gotten underway. At a City Council meeting on Monday, May 10, two bond sales were approved to help pay for the project.

Northland Securities will issue a \$4.55 million sales tax revenue bond. This bond will be paid by sales tax revenue. Piper Sandler and Co will issue a \$4.085 million tax abatement bond. This bond will be paid by donations and pledges. Both of these bonds are for the PACC project.

All financing for this project is now in place. The total cost of the project is \$9.684 million. Cash donations make up the difference between the many raised through bonds and the total project price.

Several other matters discussed at the

council meeting are as follows:

► The Perham Police Department was approved for a budget increase after they hired a new full-time officer, Brady Sazama. He will be starting on Thursday, May 13.

► The following donations for the disc golf course were approved: \$555 and \$455 from Big Cat Disc Golf LLC, \$500 each from Swan Machine, Kitmasters, Inc., Schoeneberger Funeral & Cremation Services and Nyhus Family Sales, Inc., \$250 from JC Electric and Kunz Law Office PC, \$125 from Esser Plumbing & Heating, Inc. and \$50 from All Creatures Veterinary Hospital.

► Northland Securities issued a \$865,000 general obligation improvement bond for the Westwind 4 housing development plan.

► The Hazardous Household Waste Day is scheduled for Thursday, July 15, from 10 a.m. through 2 p.m. at the Public Works Garage.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Sen. Tina Smith visits Perham  
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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Be patient and calm - for no one can catch fish in anger."  
-Herbert Hoover

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## NEWS TIPS

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