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Bell repair



Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

St. Paul's Episcopal restores historic bell in time for Easter

By Frank Lee
Brainerd Dispatch

Brainerd

Pam Perry knows what faith sounds like. St. Paul's Episcopal Church's bell resumed ringing after the historic bell tower was repaired March 25 in time for the church's 10 a.m. Easter service on Sunday. The bell dates back to 1875 and was inoperable for a decade or so.

"The housing was cracked and the rope broke. The bell was OK and thank goodness it didn't fall out of the tower," said Perry, who is head of the church council.

The Rev. Joyce Rush said, "We wanted to just get the rope replaced. Fortunately, God was with us and we didn't do that because if we had our organist, who rings the bell — the bell, which weighs in the vicinity of 900 pounds — could have fallen right on top of her."

The Verdin Co. was hired to repair the church bell housing. The company specializes in cast bronze bells, electronic carillons, clocks, towers and organs, according to its website.

"We had to go to that kind of trouble to get this fixed ... because it was expensive to fix,"

BELL: Page A14

Craig Rapp with The Verdin Co. bells and clocks loosens a bolt in the vintage 1875 bell on March 25 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brainerd. After being silent for nearly a decade, members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church have launched a campaign to repair the vintage bell at the church. Electricity was wired into the bell tower and an electric striker installed enabling the bell to ring again in north Brainerd.

Hahn offered superintendent job Has yet to accept offer from school board

By Theresa Bourke
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — Heidi Hahn is still deciding if she will accept the job as the next superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools.

After more than three hours of deliberation, Brainerd School Board members voted 4-2 in the early hours of Friday, April 15, to offer Hahn, the district's current assistant super-

intendent, the job.

The deliberation — which was livestreamed on YouTube — saw three board members advocating for Hahn and three others lobbying for Eric Schneider, the chief academic officer of Chicago-based education company EdIncites.

Board Chair Ruth Nelson ultimately switched her vote, choosing Hahn along with Charles Black

HAHN: Page A13



Theresa Bourke / Brainerd Dispatch

Brainerd School Board Chair Ruth Nelson, center, speaks on Thursday night as board members deliberate who to choose as the next superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools.

What came first — the chicken, the egg or the ordinance?

By Tim Speier
Brainerd Dispatch

BAXTER — When parents teach their children about civics and local governments, not often does that lesson actually include getting a city ordinance changed, but when Kennedy McCafferty was told she could not own chickens in Baxter, she did just that.

"Well, I've never really been a city girl, I'm more of a farm girl and I have a strong love of animals," Kennedy McCafferty said. "I just really

wanted more animals by me."

In 2020, Kennedy's parents, Breanne and Neal McCafferty, felt their daughter was old enough to take on the responsibility of caring for chickens. Looking to build a chicken coop and run behind their house, Breanne McCafferty called the city to get the building permits and found they did not allow chickens within city limits.

"So we sat down, and

CHICKENS: Page A14



Tim Speier / Brainerd Dispatch

Kennedy McCafferty holding her favorite chicken "Raptor" on Thursday in Baxter.

Resort, campground sector doing well in economic recovery

By Renee Richardson
Managing Editor

NISSWA — After two years of the coronavirus pandemic, the travel, tourism and hospitality industry is coming back but the recovery is uneven and there are still challenges ahead.

A lot of events are coming back this summer, Lauren Bennett

McGinty, new director for Explore Minnesota, the state's tourism promotion agency, told a group of more than 100 gathered for the Lakes Area Summer Kick-off event to preview the summer tourism season.

The event, hosted in partnership with the Brainerd Lakes, Crosslake, Pequot Lakes,

Nisswa and Cuyuna Lakes chambers of commerce, filled a meeting room Thursday, April 14, at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa.

Some businesses bounced back quickly after early shutdowns in the uncertain spring of 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. One sector that has been slow

to recover is business travel. That could also be changing as Explore Minnesota pointed to a recent industry survey with 39% of leisure travel businesses reporting being at or above pre-pandemic levels.

Whether the pandemic changed things for

RESORTS: Page A12

Rocketing property values rattle residents

County officials explain 'shocking' increases

By Chelsey Perkins
Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — If the county's phone lines are any indication, a significant number of Crow Wing County property owners experienced sticker shock when their valuation notices arrived by mail late last month.

"It has been a busy spring with the amount of increase in valuation that this county has experienced," said Gary Griffin, land services director, during the Tuesday, April 12, County Board meeting. "... We're getting numerous phone calls and we're just trying to get the word out that, you know, while your property valuation may go up 30, 40, 50, and in some cases even over 60%, depending exactly where you're located, that doesn't necessarily mean your taxes are going to go up 30, 40,

VALUES: Page A11



Griffin

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INSIDE TODAY VOL 142-066

DEATHS A5, A9 OPINION A6 CLASSIFIED D1 BUSINESS C1 SPORTS B1 DEAR ABBY A7 OUTDOORS B4



8 34246 00002 5

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B3

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CHICKENS

From Page A1

I told her, 'Well, the bad news is that we cannot get a permit for the chickens, but the good news is we live in a democracy so we can try and change their minds,'" Breanne McCafferty said.

For part of her civics project, Kennedy wrote a couple of emails to the council and then started a petition. She started contacting people through Facebook and attended several zoom meetings with the city council, in which she spoke to them and just explained why she wanted them to allow chickens within city limits.

Baxter Mayor Darrel Olson remembers her presentation, as a 9-year-old, being very

sincere and said she did a very good job putting together a request for her local government.

Kennedy said the whole process was interesting, although attending city council meetings was "definitely a little bit nerve-wracking."

On the day of the vote, it did take some convincing for Kennedy to leave her family at the swimming pool and attend the council meeting where her amendment would be voted on, Breanne McCafferty said.

After much debate, the Baxter City Council, in a split 3-2 vote Tuesday, July 21, 2020, decided in favor of permitting urban chickens in R1 residential properties.

"They voted and said we could do it," Breanne McCafferty said. "So she got her permit and we got four chickens."

Breanne McCafferty said her daughter still goes out every morning, rain or shine, to care for the chickens. "It's been a real fun adventure for her," Breanna McCafferty said.

"It's a lot about responsibility and it's a commitment," the now 11-year-old Kennedy McCafferty said. "So I'm doing the water every day and feeding them. See, if I grow up on a farm, it's twice as much work."

During the wintertime, Kennedy's out at the coop around 7:30 a.m. grabbing the water jug to bring inside to get it defrosted, Neal McCafferty said. "It's her project, and she's doing a good job with it."

As she talked about how all her chickens have different personalities, Kennedy said some of them can get on

your nerves and sometimes they can be a little bit a little naughty, trying to get out of or into things they shouldn't.

Also helping his big sister with her chores is Brody McCafferty and as they are part of the family, the chickens's names are Raptor, Kennedy's favorite - probably because it's the one her brother helped pick out, Henrietta, Evie and Kaite-Cluckston.

Getting about four eggs a day, keeping chickens is not really cost-effective Breanne McCafferty said, but the family always has a fresh supply of eggs.

As of April of 2022, Baxter and Brainerd each have two permitted residents within city limits keeping chickens on their property.

Kennedy said her chickens lay better tasting eggs.

Her parents recalled a time the family was eating out for breakfast and Kennedy asked why the restaurant's eggs tasted funny.

Kennedy looks to own a farm one day where she can have all the animals she wants, especially horses, her favorite. Until that day, these chickens will go from leading a civics lesson to teaching responsibility and commitment.

"They're just overall such fun little animals to have around," Kennedy McCafferty said, grinning from ear to ear. "This morning, it was kind of raining and I went out, and I had let them out to run around in the run. So they were all a little bit wet and they just ran around."

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BELL

From Page A1

Perry said of hiring the Ohio-based company.

Rush said, "The bell is the original bell from St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and we were the first church in Brainerd, so the historic value in my book is really priceless."

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Verdin Co. has more than 55,000 installations in churches, universities, municipalities and businesses across the country, according to the company's website.

"It took probably three or four months before they could fit us in their schedule," Rush said Wednesday.

Perry said, "They had to custom rebuild the housing that the bell sits in and then what we did, instead of having a rope, we now have an electronic thing up there

that moves the thing to get the bells ring, so it's actually computer-assisted ... so we no longer have the rope."

The church sanctuary was constructed in the 1930s, and has beautiful and historic stained glass windows. St. Paul's congregation includes about 40 members, according to Perry.

"The first Episcopal service was held in 1870 in a log house in Brainerd, and the population in Brainerd was about 400 people," Perry said. "And apparently the city of Brainerd had just started, and it was a pretty rough group."

The 70-year-old Brainerd resident is a former Minnesota Department of Natural Resources biologist and wife of the late Ken Perry, a Brainerd lakes area science teacher.

"The bells were originally our call to service — a call to come to the church and that's how some people still

think of it — but it's also just the beauty of the bell-ringing," Perry said of the working bell. "All of our congregation members, everyone just smiles and says, 'The bell is ringing.'"

The church sits on the corner of North Seventh and Juniper streets on the southeast corner of Gregory Park, about two blocks north of Brainerd's historic water tower on Washington Street.

"This was a historic bell in a historic church. ... We wanted to get it fixed," Perry said of the \$18,000 restoration project.

Rush said of the church bell, "We rang it right before every church service. ... The yoke on the bell was disintegrating."

Bell Boy

Terry McCollough is no longer a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church but the former Brainerd Dispatch publisher used to ring the bell at



McCollough

ring the bell before the service," McCollough said Wednesday, April 13.

McCollough said he was an acolyte for almost a decade, starting when he was 8 years old in 1952.

"We were so small that if we pulled down on the rope and we got the thing going ... it would literally lift us up to the ceilings and later on, of course, we did it for fun," McCollough said while chuckling. "We would hang on to it just so we could go up in the air and come down again."

The rope to ring the church bell came down through pipes down into the back of the kitchen area, McCollough said.

St. Paul's Episcopal as an acolyte, or server, at the altar.

"We would also, as a part of our duties,



Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

Craig Rapp of Verdin Bells and Clocks removes the mechanical striker in the vintage 1875 church bell on March 25 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brainerd.

"The bell was always so much fun because we got to do it on our own after we were carefully instructed on how to do it and how not to do it," McCollough said.

The Rev. Edward G. Barrow was in charge of St. Paul's Episcopal Church when McCollough was an acolyte and gave how-to instructions to the young boys entrusted to ring the church bell.

to do it, of course, then he wouldn't come down and supervise us," McCollough said. "We could, you know, ring away on the thing and fly up to the ceiling as much as we wanted to. ... And if you did it really wrong, you could actually hit your head."

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