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## The Messenger Recipe Contest



Share your favorite recipe with other readers and you can win a free dinner out on us. Just e-mail your favorite recipe to us. Each month we will feature 2 recipes. If we use your recipe and print it, you will receive a free certificate.

(see ad on page 8)

## Dodge Center Council Minutes Monday, January 10, 2022

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of the January 10, Dodge Center City Council meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing at City Hall, 35 East Main Street or online at [www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us](http://www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us).

Present: Bill Ketchum, Gary Trelstad, Cathy Skogen, Paul Blaisdell, Matt Maas, Bryce Lange, Tina Kozisek, Mark Barwald, Dave Kenworthy, Rod French, Kevin Dostal, Rex Edge, Jeff Stevenson, others.

(continued on page 9)

## City Plans: Better Internet Connection, More Housing Options, and Road Construction

By Kenya Narveson

Successful economic development efforts require agile planning and a comprehensive approach to implement solutions that make your community a more attractive place to live, work, and play. The City of Dodge Center collaborates with higher levels of government to determine the community needs, goals and opportunities, to create positive change and economic recovery and growth. Better internet connection, wider range of housing options, and road construction are solutions to improve our community.

Broadband is so influential on society that we would now call it essential infrastructure. Despite its importance, broadband is still far from ubiquitous. Millions of households do not have access to high-speed wireline or wireless services. The City received a grant to provide its citizens with better internet



connection. The Department of Employment and Economic Development or DEED administered the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) to

support Minnesota's COVID-19 response efforts.

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## Announcements

• The United Methodist Church of Dodge Center at 20 First Street NE offers a meal carry out from 5:00-6:00pm the third Wednesday of each month.

Do you have an announcement?  
Email: [hometownmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:hometownmessenger@gmail.com)



Kiya Avery



Cadence Spearman

## Beyond the Cows and Plows

By Megan Ziegler

While conducting an interview for two of the Region 8 Future Farmers of America (FFA) members heading to the state competition, Vice-President of the Triton FFA chapter Cadence Spearman stated very eloquently, "FFA is more than just cows and plows. We are leaders and achievers." Many of the readers of this paper have strong agricultural ties and are proud of that heritage. We all know of the profound impact agriculture has on our world, and we all know of companies, organizations, and individuals who positively impact the agricultural sector. The FFA is a great example of one such organization. Let's dive into the experience two students have had with FFA to learn about and strengthen our appreciation for the organization and what its members do.

(continued on page 5)

**Triton FFA**

# STEAK FEED

Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup> • 4:00-8:00 PM

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## Plosive Screens, Gas Chroma Mass Spectrometry, and Christian Terms

By Pastor Chad Christensen  
Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church,  
West Concord and  
Dodge Center  
United Methodist Church

Do you like words? I know that reading novels is a winter pastime for many Minnesotans. Many of you like words and a lot of them! I particularly like words that are specialized terms. A couple of terms that I have learned about lately are “plosive screens” and “gas chroma mass spectrometry.” I learned what a plosive screen was when I made an innocent question to a music store technician asking what I could do to keep the popping sound in my church’s microphones to a minimum. He said in a matter-of-fact way, “Oh, you need a plosive screen” as if he were telling me to use toothpaste to clean my teeth. A plosive screen?? This is a screen that is put over a larger microphone so that words that start with “p”, “t”, and “b” spoken into the mic can be softened and don’t emit the pop that can be heard. Pretty interesting, I did not know what this device was called.

Then a TV crime show indicated another interesting term. Forensic Files on HLN, the crime series, has Peter Thomas, the narrator for the program, emphasizing how contemporary crimes and cold cases are solved using DNA and other new-age forensic capabilities. Thomas does this by describing how scientific means greatly aid in catching criminals, and his oral flair is especially effective in describing certain scientific tools. He described in this episode how a gas chroma mass spectrometer (GCMS) busted open a long overdue unsolved crime. Gas chroma mass spectrometer seems to roll off Thomas’s lips with particular clarity and enthusiasm. It is compelling! HLN definitely tapped the right guy to narrate this program.

[This kind of spectrometer analyses purified compounds and their chemical makeup, useful for examining trace material left behind in crime scenes.]

Well, where is this all taking me? Like plosive screens are to the world of music equipment, and GCMS is to the science of forensics, the Christian faith has its own in-depth terms like eschatology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. You won’t hear me use these words in a Bible study, much less a sermon, but each “trade” has its own useful terms to capture the essence of reality. Eschatology (the end time), soteriology (the study of our salvation through Jesus Christ), and ecclesiology (theology of church life) are real and important and describe what we do and why

we do Christian ministry. Why do I say all of this? Because in our trade... in our church life, words are our primary tools and they have incredible and radical strength in moving our faith, caring for one another, and making our local community a better place to live.

If you haven’t done this in a while, I invite you to read through the entire Bible this year, or be faithful with reading devotionals provided by your church, or join a Bible study where Christian terms can explore the depths of the Christian faith together. These rich opportunities are in front of you. The invitation has been made. There will be words! And, Christ will be closer, and our understanding of him and his mission will be deeper.



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<p><b>Faith Lutheran Church</b> 308 2nd St. NW, Dodge Center Intern Pastor Kira Anderson • 507-374-2174 Traditional Worship 8a.m.; Fellowship 9a.m. Christian Education 9:15a.m. Contemporary Worship 10a.m.</p>	<p><b>Grace Lutheran Church</b> 404 Central Avenue N, Dodge Center Rev. Elliot Malm • 507-633-2253 Worship 9a.m.; Sunday School 10:30a.m.</p>
<p><b>Praise Fellowship Church</b> 602 Central Avenue S, Dodge Center Roger Langworthy • 507-374-6400 Kid: Church 9:15a.m.; Sunday Worship 9:30a.m.</p>	<p><b>Dodge Center Methodist Church</b> 201 1st St. SE, Dodge Center Rev. Chad Christensen • 507-374-6885 Worship 8a.m.</p>
<p><b>St. John Baptist De La Salle</b> 20 2nd St. NE, Dodge Center • 507-374-6830 Mass Saturday 5p.m.</p>	<p><b>Living Water Assembly Church</b> 104 1st St. NW, Dodge Center Roy Andrews • 507-374-6561 Sunday 10a.m.</p>
<p><b>Dodge Center SDA Church</b> 410 3rd Ave. SW, Dodge Center • 507-374-6895 Sabbath School 9:15a.m.; Saturday Worship 11a.m.</p>	<p><b>Anchor of Hope Church, a 7th Day Baptist Congregation</b> 203 E. Main St., Dodge Center 507-374-6755 Saturday 10a.m. Worship; 11:45a.m. Sabbath School</p>
<p><b>Bible Lutheran Church</b> (American Assoc. of Lutheran Churches) 11 1st Ave. N.E., Dodge Center <a href="http://www.biblelc.org">www.biblelc.org</a> • 612-803-1212 Sunday School 9:15a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m. (weekly sermons available on YouTube and on website)</p>	

## Area Church Directory

Learning Together

**Scripture Reading — Luke 24:13-19**  
*As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. — Luke 24:15*

Social media does not provide a healthy setting for Christian debate on controversial issues. It’s too easy for users to sound off with hurtful words over people’s interpretations of Scripture, judging them to be dead wrong or even devil-led.

Imagine such an online debate between people who believed in Christ’s resurrection and those who considered it fake news. Thankfully, the calm, respectful discussion we find on the road to Emmaus invites a genuine discovery of the truth. Where these two gathered, Jesus showed up and was there with them (see Matthew 18:20; 28:20).

God designed that his people would live, learn, and grow together in community. None of us has perfect knowledge of God’s Word, but we gain insight by studying it with others. “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).

I have participated in many small groups in which we studied the Bible, which is “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16), and applied it to life situations. As a pastor, I do not have all of the answers, but I have found that when we communally seek to know him better, Jesus joins us and we sense his presence.

As Christ-followers, we can scare people away with our insistence on being right, or we can attract people with our invitation to walk and learn together with Jesus as our guide.

**Prayer**  
*Thank you, Lord, for being with us in our life of faith, and for guiding us to search for truth together. Amen.*

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## JoAnn Louise Thoe

JoAnn Louise Thoe, 90, passed away on February 9, 2022, at Cascade Creek Memory Care in Rochester, MN.



JoAnn was born on the Peck Place in Beaver, Winona County, MN the daughter of Claude and Agnes (Yarolimek) Peck. The family lived in Beaver four- and one-half years and then moved to St. Charles where JoAnn started kindergarten. When she was in 6th grade, they moved to the Dover area, and she went 6 – 8th grade in a country school. As a freshman she attended high school in St. Charles and graduated in June 1949. JoAnn started Winona State and graduated in the spring of 1951. Her teaching experience include teaching in Byron, Dodge Center, Grand Meadow and a rural school in Simpson, MN. In 1953, she married Allen Scharberg. He was killed in an accident in 1958. She moved to Rochester in 1959 and finished her 4-year degree while managing an apartment house. On December 9, 1960, she married Donald Thoe and they made their home in the Hayfield area. JoAnn was a very active member in the church activities, circles and Auxiliary in both West St. Olaf and South Zumbro Lutheran Churches.

JoAnn is survived by her children, Gregory (Lisa) Thoe, Kasson, MN; Audrey Faulhaber, Rochester, MN; grandchildren, Joseph (Hillary) Hughes, Isaac Thoe, Kelsey (Nick)

Gleason, Mitchell Morris and Katie Morris and one great grandchild, Hadley and several loving nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, both husbands, and sisters, Frances, Arlene, Sharon, Beverly and brother, Lyle.

A private family funeral service was at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, February 12, 2022, at Czaplewski Family Funeral Home, 501 2nd Street NW in Hayfield. Reverend Pete Wyttenbach officiated.

Interment was in West St. Olaf Lutheran Church Cemetery in rural Hayfield. Blessed be her memory.

To share a special memory or condolence please, visit [www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com](http://www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com)

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## Em Yennie

Em Yennie, age 74, of Mazeppa, died peacefully at her home on Thursday, February 10, 2022. Visitation was from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at Michaelson Funeral Home in West Concord. A memorial service will follow at 7:00 pm that evening.



Em Lee Yennie, the daughter of John H. and Edith A. (Dawson) Cornwell, was born on October 3, 1947,

in Owatonna. She grew up in West Concord and graduated from West Concord High School in 1965. She was united in marriage to Danny Jo Yennie at her parents' home in West Concord. They lived in Dodge Center, Lake City and Mantorville where she farmed. Em also worked off the farm at Energy Economics, Waters Instruments, Celestica and at Images on Metal where she retired. After her husband died, she moved to Mazeppa in 2003. She enjoyed her animals, reading, words search puzzles and doing laundry. She loved her family and spending time with them. She would travel as far as Missouri just to visit relatives. Everyone that knew her loved her so much.

She is survived by her daughter Shelley Lynn Yennie Voeltz of Mazeppa; grandchildren, Brittany (and Eric) Yennie-Richter of Mazeppa, Nicole (and Alex) Drake of Oronoco, Daniel Yennie of Mazeppa, Nicole (and Tylor) Voeltz of Mazeppa, Kelsey Voeltz of Pine Island; great grandchildren Azrael, Trinity, Brooklyn, Brody, Rylan, and Quintin. She is also survived by her sister Joan Nott of West Concord and nephew Kari (and Marge) Cornwell of Indiana. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Danny Yennie, son David Allen Yennie, brother Ronald Cornwell, great grandson Ezekiel David Drake and nephews Dan and Douglas Nott.

## Westley Gorham Receives High Distinction Rating

Westley Gorham, student of Nadine's Piano Studio, Dodge Center, recently received a High Distinction rating in the Preparatory Level of the Comprehensive Piano Exam, one of the many events Minnesota Music Teachers Association (MMTA) offers throughout the year. Westley's score was 99/100.

The requirements of this level in the Piano Exam program are to know and play major and minor pentascales, both with legato and staccato touch; perform two pieces from the official repertoire list by memory; identify such elements as rhythm, intervals, note reading and performing a short piece on sight as accurately as possible.

The pieces Westley chose and performed were Tuba Talk by Melody Bober and A Skeleton in My Closet by Wynne-Anne Rossi. He has been taking piano lessons for two and a half years.



Westley Gorham

# LIVE MUSIC!

February 25 *Milkweed Alley* 7:00pm  
 March 11 *Leonard McCracken* 7:00pm  
 March 25 *The D'Seivers* 7:00pm  
 April 8 *Nathan Davidson Jazz Band* 7:00pm  
 April 22 *The Dreamers* 7:00pm  
 May 6 *Jaggedease* 7:00pm

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**Craig Schlichting**  
Superintendent

I realize that another COVID variant could happen, but I believe we are getting to a point where it will not continue to be such a disruption in our schools. In the past month, we have actually had days where we didn't have any students out of the district due to COVID related absences. Not having to worry about the number of students out ill on our dashboard is a welcomed relief. I am looking forward to Spring for more than the weather! I am so excited to be looking toward the light at the end of the tunnel when it comes to COVID. The pandemic has certainly been a point in our history that we will talk about for years to come.

Even though it has been a difficult and challenging time for all of us, I can't help but

think and reflect on the positive things that have been going on all along. One of the things that I can't mention enough is the hard work and dedication of our staff at Triton. The staff at Triton continues to be amazing during this pandemic in their efforts to serve our communities. One example of this is their willingness to cover for one another and filling in wherever possible due to the shortage of people available or willing to fill in as subs. We are fortunate to have a couple of people from the community that are in the buildings regularly subbing for us. Even though they are not on our staff, their commitment to helping out has been extraordinary and they rarely miss a day of helping. We are blessed to have so many amazing people that work in our school district. If you get a chance to thank them, that encouragement to let them know that they make a difference would be appreciated. Without these great folks, this pandemic would have been much more difficult than it has been. We have been able to keep our doors open the majority of the time due to their commitment to serve our communities.

Another big positive is the work that we have been able to have completed to upgrade and maintain our facilities. To begin with, our timing on the interest rates turned out to be in our favor. Then our district received an upgraded Moody's rating for our bond which made it more competitive when it went out for bid and saved the district even more. Our timing of getting bids from contractors also went extremely well. There were a number

of other projects that I heard about that lacked competitive bids due to the worker shortage. Being the first in line for a number of the projects that were in need of workers helped us get our project done and on time. Even though things were not perfect, the overall progress of the project was not hindered due to a lack of materials like many other projects around the state. This year we don't have to worry about losing quality educational time when the weather gets warmer. We will have the building fully air conditioned, including the gymnasium. If you have ever sat through a graduation in June, you know how hot and humid the gym can get.

One other item that I am very pleased with is the way we were able to address the technology needs of the district using the additional monies that were allocated from the government. Our district has a device for each and every student to utilize during the learning day. We have also been able to create an additional layer of safety by adding a software that helps us monitor any inappropriate documents or text that is generated by the stu-

dents on their devices. Part of that software was the addition of the Speak Up Program that allows anyone to report any concerns with school safety. The line is monitored 24/7 by actual people and they contact us any information that we need to address. It is a great system to help keep all of our students safe.

Even though the pandemic has created a number of challenges and difficulties, I am looking forward to continuing all of the great things we have happening in our district. Please reach out to me with any questions that you may have regarding our school district. You can email me at [schlich@triton.k12.mn.us](mailto:schlich@triton.k12.mn.us) or you can call me at 507-418-7530 to reach me at the district office. I would be happy to set up a time to meet with you or your organization. I believe that communication is an important aspect of my job responsibility, and I welcome the opportunity to learn from your perspective. GO COBRAS!

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## TRITON CLASS OF 2022

### SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Mackenna Johnson is a senior at Triton. Her parents are Chad and Sarah Johnson and she has one younger sibling, Keanna, who is in sixth grade.

She is on the year book staff and was in the musical Wizard of Oz in 2020.

Mackenna has been active in cheerleading in her junior and senior year, serving as the captain for the 2021 season.

She has been on the dance team since seventh grade and has been the captain since her sophomore year.

Outside of school she enjoys shopping, fishing, doing make-up, hanging out with friends, painting and all kinds of music. Mackenna plans to attend Minnesota State University-Mankato after graduation for a career in dental hygiene. She also plans to try out for the Mankato dance team.



**MACKENNA JOHNSON**

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## Beyond the Cows and Plows

(continued from page 1)



On Friday, January 28, 2022 Triton High School FFA members competed in the FFA Region 8 Winter Leadership Day. Although it was a good day for many teams and participants, senior Kiya Avery and sophomore Cadence

Spearman had two of the biggest days. Both Kiya and Cadence, along with other Triton FFA Chapter members, will be heading to the Minnesota FFA State Convention held April 24-26 of this year in the Twin Cities.

Recapping their exciting day on January 28th, Kiya stated, "I placed 1st in the region with discussion meet, 3rd Silver with my Beef Placement Proficiency, was also named Region 8 Star in Agricultural Placement, and had

an interview for my state degree which I will be receiving at State Convention in April." As for Cadence, she recalls, "A couple members of our chapter and I went to this year's Region 8 Winter Leadership Day. Our group competed in numerous events, I competed in Employment Skills and got 1st in the Region for that event. I competed with my Proficiency in the Diversified Agricultural Production Placement category and got a silver rating. I will be continuing onto state with both Employment Skills and my Proficiency, along with my Dairy Evaluation team!"

Senior Kiya Avery has spent her high school career as a member of FFA. She recalls that "growing up I have always lived on a farm where we raise beef cattle. When I was in 8th grade, I started getting more involved and a lot more interested. It was a couple of friends of mine that actually encouraged me to join and that was my freshman year of high school." She credits the multi-faceted approach FFA takes to agriculture as part of the broad interests it encourages. Kiya explains, "FFA to me is a place where people from all aspects of agriculture can come together and just have fun and really embrace what agriculture means to them. It is also a place where people outside of the agricultural world can come and find different opportunities such as speaking events along with other business-based competitions FFA has to offer." The ability to

bring people together and foster agricultural discussions and community connections is a strength of FFA.

Sophomore Cadence Spearman's journey with FFA officially began in 8th grade when she joined her school's chapter. Like many other members, agriculture has always been an important part of her life. Cadence explains, "The National FFA Organization is the largest student-led organization in the nation with more than 735,038 members! What FFA is to me is a family of kids working towards strengthening agriculture and educating others on what ag is for us."

I asked them to briefly explain the structure and competition details for any readers who aren't currently involved with FFA. To summarize, the Minnesota FFA Association has 8 regions in total. Triton FFA is a chapter within the 8th region. In general, Kiya explained that they may be "4-5 people per team from every school across the region" competing in each event, but that it can vary. She also said that who makes it to state can vary by which competitions the teams compete in. The judging and rules for each competition are also set up differently, so students learn to adjust to rules such as being split up from your other team members and to curb the talking as needed. Cadence added, "Competitions occur at the local, regional, state and national levels. There are 3 main categories in which you can compete. First is the LDE category. LDE stands for Leadership Development Event. In this event you have different events within it where you develop lifelong leadership skills that you can compete with! Second is the CDE category. CDE stands for Career Development Event. In this event there are different events within which you can grow yourself in different careers in Ag. There are different limits of students that can compete on a team. If there are more kids wanting to be on the team, they will have a chapter contest in order to make a team to continue onto the regional level. Lastly you can create a Proficiency. A Proficiency can either be Entrepreneurship, Placement, or both. An Entrepreneurship Proficiency is where you invested money into your SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) and have made money in return. A Placement Proficiency is where you work and keep track of your hours and how much you've made without being invested in your SAE."

Attire for events can range from everyday clothes to the official FFA dress outfits, which Kiya explained as, "your Blue Jacket, white button up shirt, a scarf which is what the ladies wear, and either a black skirt or black dress pants with black dress shoes." Cadence said the following about dress code. "You are expected to be in Official Dress when competing at a Region Leadership Day. When you are just competing any other time that's not on Leadership Day then our teams wear our chapters merch."

Next, we touched on how students choose their events. Kiya explained, "You essentially get to choose what you want to compete in but you have to get a certain placing on the regional level in order to move on to state. For example, for discussion meet you have to place in the top 2 in order to move onto the state competition." Cadence added, "A normal region competition is at a school during

a school day, teams from different schools around the region compete. Judges are either in person or on a Zoom call, there are different judges for different events. They place you on how well you performed and then you're placing determines if you will continue onto state or not. You can go to state individually and as a team."

Both students are looking forward to representing their chapter and community at their upcoming events for the state convention. Kiya had this to about state. "So far at State Convention I will be having another interview for my Star application which will then determine how I do on a state level. I will also be competing in discussion meet with people all over the state of Minnesota. There are 2 rounds that people go through on the State level. I will also be having another interview for my proficiency, and will be walking across stage at Convention to receive my state degree." Cadence said, "This year I am going to state for 3 events, Dairy Evaluation CDE which is judging dairy cattle, Employment Skills LDE which is testing your ability to become hired for a position of your choice. I am also going with my Proficiency! And I will be continuing onto state with both Employment Skills and my Proficiency, along with my Dairy Evaluation team!"

As for awards, they can be given at the Chapter, Regional, and State levels. Cadence explained, "There are many awards you can receive while in FFA. At the chapter level, when you first start out you get your green-hand degree, once you get to 10th grade you get your chapter degree. Finally, once you're a senior you can apply to get your state degree. There are also different medals, plaques, certificates, and ribbons you can receive from succeeding in your CDE's, LDE's, and also your proficiency."

Kiya Avery and Cadence Spearman wrapped up their interviews highlighting her passion for this pro-agricultural organization that has been around for almost 95 years.

Kiya stated, "I always plan to be a part of the FFA alumni once I graduate high school and hope to always be a helping hand for future FFA members." She wants to, "share my wisdom and knowledge with them for years to come." Her commitment to agriculture and her success in FFA go hand in hand. Kiya explained, "I will always be involved in the cattle industry and will always strive to give out the message about how great agriculture is and what it does for this world." Kiya stressed that FFA has taught her to overcome challenges which for her "is very essential for future success."

Cadence summarized her experience and future plans by stating, "FFA brings so many career opportunities along with life-long learning. Friendships that last a lifetime are found within every chapter; members are family." She added, "In the future I would like to continue my active state in FFA, whether it be as a Region, State, or National officer or just a part of my local Alumni. I will always support FFA as a whole."

Congratulations, Kiya and Cadence, and best of luck at the state FFA competition in April! From cows to plows and beyond, we know you'll represent our community well.



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## Community Child Care Solutions



**Tim Penny**  
So. MN Initiative Foundation

It is no secret that our child care system is strained. Even before the pandemic, rural Minnesota was struggling with a child care shortage. For parents, this has made it challenging to enter or stay in the workforce. For communities, the challenge is attracting and retaining residents if they do not have enough care available in town. Fortunately, at Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) we have seen some real progress through our work addressing this challenge.

One of the ways we have helped develop solutions to the child care shortage is by offering complimentary consulting services. Jeff Andrews, SMIF's early childhood business consultant, provides direct support to

family providers, owners/operators of child care centers and communities.

SMIF is currently working with multiple communities as they approach ways to support child care locally. One thing that is clear is that there is not a one-size-fits-all answer, which is why SMIF helps communities develop solutions that are unique to them. One example of this is Jeff's work in Northfield. Under his guidance, Three Rivers Community Action and Healthy Community Initiative created a plan to open a new family child care owner initiative at the Northfield Community Resource Center. Using this partnership model, they will be able to provide classroom space and business support to individuals who are looking to start a new career or relocate their current family child care business.

When a major business closed a few years ago in Waseca, community partners came together to reimagine how to use the large, vacant building that was left behind. SMIF has worked alongside partners from the City, Chamber, EDA, County and School District to create a plan for this building which will include a traditional child care center as well as spaces for family care. Additionally, with Jeff's guidance, the partners will also be focused on supporting existing providers in town through trainings and other initiatives.

Supporting existing providers is another critical tool in addressing the child care shortage. Providers are often stretched thin in a very demanding job which can lead to burnout and, ultimately, leaving the industry. Additionally, the needs of families are changing and evolving due to how the pandemic

has impacted people's work lives and personal lives. Providers are finding themselves at a crossroads and realizing that the way they have always done things isn't working any more. Because of this, SMIF offers consultation services that help providers create a more sustainable business model that also aligns with their own personal goals.

One of the most recent success stories in this space is a partnership between SMIF and Families First of Minnesota that has been a joint effort to get more providers into Parent Aware, Minnesota's quality rating program. All 17 participating providers, from across SMIF's 20-county region, have had an opportunity to work directly with Jeff to discuss changing their business models to adapt to the current climate and reimagine their future, all the while providing the same quality care for families and kids.

Finally, the owners and operators of child care centers are a third area where SMIF's consulting services are available. Jeff's approach with centers, whether new or existing, is more in-depth and complex to help owners understand the nuances of the child care center business. Recently, through Jeff's support, a new preschool opened in Caledonia and a new child care center opened in Lake Crystal. The preschool at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Lanesboro has also been expanded. Additionally, a new child care center, Leo Augusta Children's Academy, will be opening soon in Blooming Prairie.

The availability of quality child care undoubtedly plays a critical role in our communities. In 2022 I encourage community



partners, providers and center owner/operators to reach out to SMIF for our complimentary consultation services. We are ready to help you reimagine your future.

The best way to start is by filling out a form on our website at [smifoundation.org/early-childhood](http://smifoundation.org/early-childhood) or by contacting Jeff at 507-214-7056 or [jeffa@smifoundation.org](mailto:jeffa@smifoundation.org).

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at [timp@smifoundation.org](mailto:timp@smifoundation.org) or 507-455-3215.

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## Recipe Contest

Show your friends and neighbors as well as all the readers your culinary expertise!

Just send us your recipe with the ingredient list and preparation instructions and we will draw 2 recipes each month to run in the Messenger with your name as the submitter.

**E-mail your recipe to  
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**If we use your recipe and print it, you will receive a free certificate. Be sure to include your name and address so we can mail you a gift card if your entry is the winner.**

### *The original Minnesota Tater Tot Hot Dish*

We'll walk you through how to make this classic tater tot casserole recipe. There are lots of variations on the hotdish, but this easy recipe is a good place to start. You'll need:

- 3/4 to 1 pound ground beef
- 1 small onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen tater tots
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 2/3 cup 2% milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese

To start, break out your favorite large skillet—cast iron works great here! Heat it over medium heat, then add the ground beef and onion. Season with salt and pepper and cook until the meat is cooked through. Drain any excess grease.

Transfer the ground beef and onion mixture to a greased, two-quart baking dish. Top with the frozen tater tots.

In mixing bowl, whisk together the milk and condensed soup and then pour it over the potatoes. Top with shredded cheese—use whatever cheese you like best.

All that's left is to pop this hotdish into a 350°F oven and bake uncovered for 30 to 40 minutes, or until heated through.

Serve this up with a quick side salad and some homemade rolls and you've got dinner! If you really want a full Midwestern experience, try these dessert recipes right from the heartland. They're just the way to finish off this hearty meal dontcha know!



## THE SAVVY SENIOR



By Jim Miller

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Dear Savvy Senior,

**Can you give me a brief rundown of Medicare's enrollment choices along with when and how to sign-up?**

**--Approaching 65**

Dear Approaching,

The rules and timetables for Medicare enrollment can be confusing to many new retirees, so it's smart to plan ahead. Here's a simplified rundown of what to know.

First a quick review. Remember that original Medicare has two parts: Part A, which provides hospital coverage and is free for most people, and Part B which covers doctor's visits and other medical services, and costs \$170.10 per month for most enrollees in 2021.

#### When to Enroll

Everyone is eligible for Medicare at age 65, even if your full Social Security retirement age is 66 or later.

You can enroll any time during the "initial enrollment period," which is a seven-month period that includes the three months before, the month of, and the three months after your 65th birthday. It's best to enroll three months before your birth month to ensure your coverage starts when you turn 65.

If you happen to miss the seven-month sign-up window for Medicare Part B, you'll have to wait until the next "general enrollment period" which runs from Jan. 1 to March 31 with benefits beginning the following July 1. You'll also incur a 10 percent penalty for each year you wait beyond your initial enrollment period, which will be tacked on to your monthly Part B premium. You can sign up for premium-free Part A, at any time with no penalty.

#### Working Exceptions

Special rules apply if you're eligible for Medicare and still on the job. If you have health insurance coverage through your employer or your spouse's employer, and the company has 20 or more employees, you have a "special enrollment period" in which you can sign up. This means that you can delay enrolling in Medicare Part B and are not subject to the 10 percent late-enrollment penalty as long as you sign up within eight months of losing that coverage.

#### Drug Coverage

Be aware that original Medicare does not cover prescription medications, so if you don't have credible drug coverage from an employer or union, you'll need to buy a Part D drug plan from a private insurance company (see Medicare.gov/plan-compare) during your initial enrollment if you want coverage. If you don't, you'll incur a premium penalty - 1 percent of the average national premium (\$33 in 2022) for every month you don't have coverage - if you enroll later.

#### Supplemental Coverage

If you choose original Medicare, it's also a good idea to get a Medigap (Medicare supplemental) policy within six months after enrolling in Part B to help pay for things that aren't covered by Medicare like copayments, coinsurance and deductibles. See Medicare.gov/medigap-supplemental-insurance-plans to shop and compare policies.

#### All-in-One Plans

Instead of getting original Medicare, plus a Part D drug plan and a Medigap policy, you could sign up for a Medicare Advantage plan instead (see Medicare.gov/plan-compare) that covers everything in one plan. Nearly half of all new Medicare enrollees are signing up for Advantage plans.

These plans, which are also sold by insurance companies, are generally available through HMOs and PPOs and often have cheaper premiums, but their deductibles and co-pays are usually higher. Many of these plans also provide coverage for extra services not offered by original Medicare like dental, hearing and vision coverage along with gym/fitness memberships, and most plans include prescription drug coverage too.

#### How to Enroll

If you're already receiving your Social Security benefits before 65, you will automatically be enrolled in Part A and Part B, and you'll receive your Medicare card about three months before your 65th birthday. It will include instructions to return it if you have work coverage that qualifies you for late enrollment.

If you're not receiving Social Security, you'll need to enroll either online at SSA.gov/medicare or over the phone at 800-772-1213.

## City Plans: Better Internet Connection, More Housing Options, and Road Construction

(continued from page 1)

The CDBG CARES Act funding (CDBG-CV) is being directed towards projects that assist communities, particularly low-to-moderate income communities, in preventing, preparing for, and responding to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Researchers have found that better internet access and connection leads to economic growth, higher incomes, and lower unemployment. And can directly improve health outcomes, especially for those who otherwise lack access to medical providers. The city administration is in the process of meeting

with various contractors and consultants for the project.

The installation of better internet access and connection will begin Spring 2023.

Well built and affordable housing is essential to the vitality of communities. Young singles and couples are forced to buy a house if they want to live in Dodge Center. There is a huge demand to provide more housing options for people who are not ready to buy a house. The city administration is zeroing in on how it can convert empty or unused space to address the housing shortage. The "Old School" site is a landmark of Dodge Center. The proposed development plan is to tear down the landmark building and build a 56 unit apartment complex. The city also acquired Hoaglund Subdivision which are land parcels along Airport Drive and is working with a housing developer to utilize the residential lots.

The "orange cone season" is approaching fast. Road construction on 3rd Avenue also known as "Old 56" will get new concrete. Drivers need to remember that construction zones aren't there to personally inconvenience you. They're necessary to improve the

roads for everyone. Safe, efficient, and sustainable roads are vital to the quality of life

and economic success of our city.

## Dodge Center Council Minutes

(continued from page 1)

The City Council approved the following items:

- Agenda, minutes, and accounts payable as presented;
- Resolution 2022-002, A Resolution Rezoning Property;
- Resolution 2022-003, A Resolution Calling a Public Hearing on the Establishment of Tax Increment Financing District No. 1-16;
- Resolution 2022-004, A Resolution Designating Acting Mayor for 2022;
- Resolution 2022-005, A Resolution Fixing Fees for Licenses, Permits, and Services for the City of Dodge Center;
- Resolution 2022-006, A Resolution Designating Official Depositories of the City of Dodge Center;
- Resolution 2022-007, A Resolution Fixing Utility Rates and Charges for Municipal Utilities;
- Purchase of upgraded surveillance camera system for City Hall using \$5,423.99 of the City's ARPA Funds;
- Hiring a paid on-call EMT for the Ambulance;
- Having Corey's clean the community center chairs for \$420;
- The Dodge County Republicans to use the community center on Saturday, March 12, 2022;
- Begin the hiring process for a new aquatic center manager.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm

(council minutes continued on page 10)

## Brushing is Best for Pet Dental Health

Every February, the veterinary community celebrates National Pet Dental Health Month. It's a chance to call attention to the link between your pet's oral health and its overall health.

Did you know that gum disease is the most common health problem in cats and dogs and it is completely preventable?

Dr. Suma Rao, a veterinarian working in the dentistry service at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Urbana, offers her insights.

Keeping bad breath at bay, although a plus, is not the most important reason for attending to your pet's dental health. In pets as in people, the mouth can harbor harmful bacteria that can affect other parts of the body.

"Gingivitis can lead to systemic inflammation that can affect other organs in the body," says Dr. Rao.

She also notes that problems in the mouth can be painful for your pet.

"Swollen and red gums indicate inflammation of the gums, also known as gingivitis. Calculus, the hardened form of plaque, shows that there is inflammation as well," she says. "With proper preventive care, your pet's mouth won't hurt and your pet will be happier."

The best way to help prevent dental disease of any type in dogs and cats is for their teeth to be brushed every day.

"The consensus is that brushing teeth every day is the most beneficial," says Dr. Rao. "Brushing every other day can help too. Anything less than every other day is not going to prevent buildup of plaque."

So how do you go about daily tooth brushing for your pet? Since it can be hard to get pets used to brushing, Dr. Rao recommends that you start when they are young.

"When you get a new puppy, it is best to start brushing their teeth early, so they get accustomed to it," she says. "First, let the puppy lick the toothpaste from your fingers. Then, introduce a finger brush with paste. Finally, graduate to a small children's toothbrush."

This strategy could also be used with young kittens.

It's very important to use toothpaste marketed specifically for animals. Toothpaste not formulated for animals can contain chemicals that are harmful to pets, such as xylitol or fluoride.

Consult your local veterinarian to learn about recommended dental products for pets. The Veterinary Oral Health Council maintains a list of approved products for pets.

So what if your dog or cat doesn't cooperate with your daily toothbrushing plan? Dr. Rao offers other dental health options that can slow down the buildup of bacteria in your pet's mouth. "Besides brushing teeth, owners can use pet dental care products such as oral rinse, water additive, dental diet, teeth sealant, and dental chews to help keep the mouth healthy," she says. She recommends using a combination of these dental care products designed for animal use.

For dogs, feeding a diet of hard kibble has been shown to help control calculus buildup. "The kibble is abrasive, so it removes plaque on the teeth before it hardens into calculus," says Dr. Rao. "Prescription dental diets, such as Purina DH and Hill's t/d, have been proven to prevent plaque buildup."

However, if you have a pet that does not chew its food, then that mechanical action of the food against the teeth won't take place, so it won't be effective in reducing plaque.

Even with the best daily dental routines, your pet will periodically need a dental exam and cleaning by your local veterinarian. During this process, your pet will be put under general anesthesia so the doctor can perform a thorough oral exam to check for problems and remove any calculus buildup that is present.

"When you bring your pet to the dentistry service at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, we first perform bloodwork to determine if the pet is healthy enough to undergo general anesthesia," explains Dr. Rao.

"Then, we place a catheter to give intravenous fluids during the procedure. We perform full-mouth dental radiographs, just like your own dentist does. We carefully check for pockets of infection in the gums, fractured teeth, tumors, and loose teeth.

"If extractions are needed, we give your pet a local anesthetic block to prevent pain before performing the extraction and send your pet home with pain medicine."

Your pet's dental health is just as important as other preventive health strategies to help your pet live a long healthy life!

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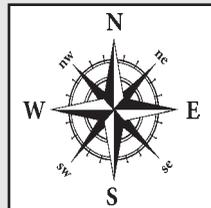
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## Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes River Boats



By Terry Campbell

*This column is written by Messenger editor and Minnesota native Terry Campbell. Terry now splits his time between Minnesota when it's warm here and Tennessee when it's cold here.*

One thing that always fascinates me are the barges moving up and down the Cumberland River near where we live in Tennessee. They seem huge, especially when you pass them on the river in small runabout.

They call them pusher boats or tow boats and they are about fifty feet long with a 4,000 horsepower diesel engine powering them. The towboats on the Cumberland River are limited to a tow of 15 barges lashed three wide and five long because of the locks at the dams and the channel of the river. On the Mississippi River, south of St. Louis the tows can be three times that size with a pusher boat with an 11,000 horsepower diesel engine.



Each barge is 195 feet long and 35 feet wide. It can carry 1,500 tons, which is 15 times the capacity of a rail car and sixty times the capacity of a semi-trailer. They carry 20% of the nation's coal and that is the standard load that goes up the Cumberland River to the power plant at Cumberland City. This payload can take up to half a mile to stop, so boats on the river are supposed to

give the barges a wide berth. The barges have a draft of 9 feet when fully loaded but the hull is designed so they don't create a large wake. With the number of small fishing and pleasure crafts on the river this is an important feature.

Crews on the towboats work thirty day shifts with a month off in between. There are six to eight guys living on the towboat and one of them is a full time cook to keep the crew fed. They like the schedule because it allows them a free month to hunt and fish.

The towboats have the most modern navigational systems to keep them on course and

a large screen GPS that shows where the boat will be 90 seconds ahead. There are many turns in the river and the captain has to keep that long barge in the center of the channel. Another challenge is looking out for stalled fishing or leisure crafts in front of the barge. In the event of a boat dead in the water ahead of them, the crew will sprint to the front of the barge to try and push the helpless boat aside. The tow boat uses all the power it has to push the loaded barges up river, but coming back with a tow of empty barges it hardly works at all.

### Dodge Center Council Minutes

Monday, January 24, 2022

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of the January 24, Dodge Center City Council meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing at City Hall, 35 East Main Street or online at [www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us](http://www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us).

Present: Bill Ketchum, Gary Trelstad, Cathy Skogen, Matt Maas, Bryce Lange, Marianne Sobek, Mark Barwald, Dave Kenworthy, Gerald Runnells, others.

The City Council approved the following items:

- Agenda, minutes, and accounts payable as presented;
  - Zumbro Valley Mutual Aide Agreement and fees;
  - Purchase of fitness equipment for the Fire Department;
  - Purchase of laptops and radios not to exceed \$50,000 for the Fire Department;
  - Purchase of a new utility truck for the Fire Department from Sugar Loaf Ford;
  - Purchase of a new overhead door for the maintenance shop;
  - Authorize the City Administrator and City Treasurer to run a short payable run when there are more than 2 weeks between Council Meetings to avoid late fees;
  - Purchase a new folding machine for City Hall;
  - Hangar Lease transfer of Hangar 19;
  - Purchase of general liability insurance for \$500 to cover a Community Event to be held over Father's Day Weekend;
  - Pheasants Forever gambling permit.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm

### A Minnesotan: Ice Fishing



By RosaLin Alcoser

Minnesota is the land of 10,000 lakes and as Minnesotans we spend a good chunk of our lives at the lake. We spend the late spring and summer out on the lake as well as the fall and the winter out on the lake. Basically Minnesotans spend our free time on the lake.

While the summer months have boating and playing on the lake all the seasons have one lake actively in common. Fishing. No matter what there seems to be some point in every season when Minnesotan's fish weather that be from the shore, a boat, or by walking out into the middle of the frozen lake drilling a hole in

the ice and fishing through that.

Now my Southern family is not from up here, but I did spend most of my childhood in Minnesota and well now... I'm still in Minnesota. So, I have been ice fishing, once as a child and was so annoying that I never got taken again.

Which I was fine with at the time and am still fine with now. While my older sister enjoyed ice fishing when we were kids I did not mostly because I didn't care for the cold, fishing or walking out onto the frozen lake.

You might be asking exactly how seven-year-old RosaLin got herself banned, by Grandpa, from ice fishing for life. Well as I have already mentioned it was for being annoying but it was how I was annoying that got me banned.

At the time I was very into Lilo and Stitch on Disney and as a result at the time I knew a couple of Elvis songs. Which I sang down the fishing hole the one time I was taken ice fishing. I must say the fish of the mid-2000's were not big Elvis fans and we did not catch much that day- the guy on the other side of the lake who never caught anything did, but we didn't nor did others around us.

I honestly think that's a good enough reason to never take me again and I'm ok with that.

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