



CROOKSTON WATCH

"NORTHWEST MINNESOTA'S REGIONAL NEWSPAPER"



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City Council hires finance director

City applies for Redevelopment Grant and housing grant

by Anna Phalen Correspondent

The Crookston City Council appointed Jon Roscoe as the city's new finance director at its meeting Monday, Jan. 5.

The Bemidji resident holds a degree in accounting and management of information systems. He brings more than 20 years of experience working with Minnesota municipalities and other governmental entities, including service as an auditor. He has held his previous position at Miller McDonald, a certified public accountant firm in Bemidji, since 2003. Roscoe is scheduled to begin working for the City of Crookston Monday, Jan. 12.

Interim City Administrator Darin Selzler said the finance team is comfortable with Roscoe working remotely, with no immediate timeline established for relocation.

Council members also approved authorization to apply for a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Redevelopment

Grant for the former Tri-Valley building located at the intersection of Broadway and Robert Street. The city intends to request up to \$650,000 to support demolition and site preparation due to blight and public safety concerns at the property. A 50% local match would be required if the grant is awarded. It was noted that the city has received a couple of inquiries regarding potential redevelopment of the site.

The council expressed support for a Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Phase II grant application to extend the railroad spur within the Crookston Industrial Park to serve the former Ag Innovation Center property. Either Farmers Union Enterprises or Minnesota Northern Railroad will serve as the grant applicant and provide the required 50% match, with no city funds requested. The city indicated its willingness to lease city-owned property necessary for construction, subject to future council approval.

Related to the rail spur project, the council approved a non-binding memorandum of understanding outlining potential cooperation and a future land lease should the MRSI Phase II grant be awarded and a final agree-

ment approved.

Council members also authorized an application for the Greater Minnesota Small Cities (Tier II Cities) Housing Aid Grant Program, Round 2. The program offers grants of up to \$75,000 with no local match required. If the grant were awarded, the Crookston Housing and Economic Development Authority plans to use the funds to support the Broadway Villas housing development.

The council approved the city's 2026 fee schedule. During discussion, it was noted that there will be no charge for open skating this year due to insufficient staffing to manage fee collection.

As part of its consent agenda, the council:

- Approved the appointment of Tanner Holten as city attorney for 2026;
- Accepted a \$2,045.65 donation from the Crookston Baseball Association for a new baseball field cover; and
- Appointed Baker Tilly as the city's audit firm.

During council reports, Selzler congratulated Maureen Kostrzewski on her retirement and thanked her for her many years of service to the City of Crookston. Kostrzewski retired from the Parks and Recreation Department.

Ways and Means Committee Proposed Downtown Corridor Redevelopment Strategy outlined

by Anna Phalen Correspondent

The Crookston Ways and Means Committee has heard about a proposed Downtown Corridor Redevelopment Strategy tied to the Minnesota Department of Transportation's planned 2027 Highway 2 Downtown Roadway Improvement Project. The committee met Monday, Jan. 5 after the council meeting that evening.

Council members received an informational packet prepared by Community Development Director Karie Kirschbaum outlining the proposed strategy. The MnDOT project will reconstruct Highway 2 between the Red Lake River bridge and the railroad underpass, including West Roberts Street, North Main Street, North Broadway and West Sixth Street. The City of Crookston may also choose to improve two blocks south of Robert Street on South Main and South Broadway. The project area lies within the Crookston Commercial Historic District, which is listed on the National Regis-

ter of Historic Places and documented through a 1988 historic building inventory.

Kirschbaum explained that the reconstruction project presents an opportunity to coordinate public infrastructure improvements with redevelopment, historic preservation, and private investment. Several properties along the corridor, including the city-owned former Tri-Valley building at the intersection of Broadway and Robert Street, have been identified as presenting public safety concerns.

Staff outlined the potential creation of a Downtown Redevelopment Tax Increment Financing District, which would allow the city to capture increases in property tax revenue generated by new development and reinvest those funds into eligible improvements such as demolition, site preparation, infrastructure, and redevelopment incentives. A redevelopment TIF district can remain in place for up to 25 years. City staff will work with Ehlers Municipal Advisors to prepare a feasibility study should the project move forward.

Additional funding tools discussed included Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants, which support historic building rehabilitation, and the USDA Intermediary Relending Program, which could create a low-interest revolving loan fund for business expansion and building rehabilitation.

Kirschbaum noted that the city could potentially gift city-owned land not acquired by MnDOT to a developer selected through a request for proposals, with conditions requiring redevelopment within a set timeframe. She explained that land gifting could strengthen grant applications. Council member Dylan Klatt commented that the area could be well-suited for parking; however, staff noted that land used for parking would not qualify under certain grant programs.

Council member Morgan Hibma requested that future safety concerns, including additional signage outside of town directing trucks to the bypass, be brought to

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Vitalant announces blood drives in region

Two to be held in Crookston

Vitalant announces the following blood drives in January:

- Tuesday, Jan. 13, from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church in Hallock
- Tuesday, Jan. 13, from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Thief River Falls Eagles Club
- Monday, Jan. 19, from

12 to 5:15 p.m., at the McIntosh Community Center

• Tuesday, Jan. 20, from 1:30 to 6 p.m., and Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church in Crookston

• Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at New Flyer in Crookston

This January, nonprofit Vitalant is calling on all generous blood donors to be a lifesaver during National Blood Donor Month. Vita-

lant is grateful for all blood donors who are especially vital at the start of a new year, following the holiday weeks when office and school blood drives are scarce and busy schedules cause a dip in donations. As a special thanks between now and Feb. 8, Vitalant is giving donors 26 chances to win \$500 to start off 2026.

To schedule an appointment, go to www.vitalant.org.



"Stardust & Soul: 'it's in everything,'" an exhibit featuring paintings by Sarah Pester, is on display now at the Historic Fournet Building in downtown Crookston. The pieces are on display through mid-April. (Submitted)

NWMAC announces opening of "Stardust & Soul: 'it's in everything'"

The Northwest Minnesota Arts Council has announced the opening of "Stardust & Soul: it's in everything," an exhibit featuring paintings by Sarah Pester at the Historic Fournet Building in downtown Crookston. This exhibit includes 41 original pieces of art in oil, watercolor, and mixed media. The exhibit is open through mid-April.

"I really love how this collection captures the thread running through everything," said Sarah. "Earth, space, and us – all of it being more connected than we usually realize. I hope these pieces remind people that we aren't just out here on our own but a part of the

whole and connected to everything."

Sarah is an artist and yoga teacher from Crookston. Her work is an expression of her inner world and her connection to something beyond the physical. When she paints, she's exploring the unseen energies and emotions that guide us. Sarah mainly uses oil, acrylic and watercolor paints to create vibrant pieces, and she also finds joy in crafting crystal-beaded bracelets.

As a yoga teacher and energy practitioner, Sarah's artistic and healing practices are deeply connected. The sense of flow and connection she finds in her work

is a direct reflection of the healing and spiritual exploration she shares with others through her business, Burnham Creek Healing. Through her paintings, bracelets, yoga and healing practices, she shares a piece of her spiritual journey, inviting others to explore their own inner worlds and find their own sense of peace and connection.

Sarah explained that her paintings "invite viewers on a journey beyond the visible, exploring the profound interconnectedness that binds all living things. Each canvas is a vibrant

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"Galaxy," a painting by Sarah Pester, is among the pieces on display now through mid-April at the Historic Fournet Building in downtown Crookston. (Submitted)

“Stardust & Soul” opens

(Continued from Page 1) testament to the idea that beneath the surface of our physical reality is an intricate web of energy that connects every living thing from the smallest earthly creatures to the grandness of the universe. Through layers of oil or acrylic, I dive into spiritual dimensions, suggesting that our individual forms are merely temporary vessels for an eternal soul and spirit, mirroring the universe's own boundless energy. My artistic process is one of meditative exploration, where I aim to visualize the unseen forces that unite us. I get lost in blending celestial space clouds, allowing colors to flow and merge, nebulae forming new stars, with delicate intricate details. Everything is purposeful as I feel we are. “Stardust and Soul” seeks to awaken an awareness of the deeper spiritual currents

that flow through us and around us, encouraging reflection on our shared origins in energy, the essence of who we truly are.” An artist reception will be held at the Fournet. Watch the NWMAC website, newsletters or social media for an announcement of the date, time and other details. The Fournet Building is located at 101 N. Broadway in Crookston. Parking and admission is free. Take the stairs or elevator to the second floor, where the gallery is located in the atrium. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A virtual tour of the exhibit can be found <https://youtu.be/tzfxVHhgDM> or find it on the NWMAC website (nwmac.org) under the exhibits tab at the top of the homepage.

Proposed Downtown Corridor Redevelopment Strategy

(Continued from Page 1) MnDOT's attention. **Classification and Compensation Study discussion** The committee also discussed an independent classification and compensation study conducted by ABDO, a firm specializing in municipal wage and equity analysis. The study reviewed job descriptions, market wages, and internal equity using salary data from the League of Minnesota Cities and included both union and non-union positions. According to the study, union wage scales currently start approximately 6% below market average and extend to roughly 13% below average, though union employees fall within established wage ranges. Non-union employees, however, have never been placed

on a step-based wage scale and currently fall at the minimum level of their assigned ranges. City staff outlined a two-phase approach if the council chooses to act on the study. Phase one would place non-union employees onto the nearest step within their pay grade, resulting in an estimated two percent increase. Phase two would involve a cost-of-living adjustment of approximately 6% for all employees. Interim City Administrator Darin Selzler stated that implementing phase one would create a more consistent framework for future wage growth and reduce disparities between departments. Committee members noted long-standing inconsistencies in wage adjustments across departments. Selzler added that the city

currently has three unions, with non-union positions including department heads and administrative staff. **Board, commission and committee appointments** The committee reviewed board, commission and council committee compositions for 2026, with formal appointments expected to be considered at a future City Council meeting. Discussion included concerns regarding the Charter Commission, which currently has more members than recommended. Mayor Dale Stainbrook suggested reducing the commission to seven members and adjusting meeting schedules to improve attendance and compliance with reporting requirements to the Ninth Judicial District. Several board appointments and reappointments

were discussed, including changes to the Library Board, Park Board, and Development and Policy Review Board. Council liaison assignments were also outlined for the Crookston Housing and Economic Development Authority, Planning and Zoning, the airport, Golden Link, and other committees. During the discussion, Klatt raised the topic of council member compensation, noting that many meetings are currently unpaid and suggesting that compensation could help attract qualified candidates. Stainbrook responded that any changes to council pay would need to be addressed prior to an election year. No action was taken as the meeting was informational in nature.

Applications sought for Community Challenge Grants

AARP Minnesota invites local eligible nonprofit organizations and governments to apply for the 2026 AARP Community Challenge grant program, now through Wednesday, March 4 AARP Community Challenge grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable by improving public places, transportation, housing, digital connections, and more. This year, AARP will award over \$8 million in grants as part of its nationwide Livable Communities initiative, which supports the efforts of cities, towns, neighborhoods and rural areas to become great places to live for all residents, especially those age 50 and older. “Through the Community

Challenge grant program, AARP Minnesota works closely with local residents, advocates and policymakers to improve the quality of life for people of all ages, especially Minnesotans 50-plus,” said Cathy McLeer, AARP Minnesota state director. We look forward to the opportunity this year to provide increased support to communities across the state.” This year, the AARP Community Challenge is accepting applications across three grant opportunities. All projects must be consistent with AARP's mission to serve the needs of people 50 and older along with other eligibility criteria. • Flagship grants support projects that improve public places; transportation; hous-

ing; digital connections; and disaster resilience. Awards range from a few hundred dollars to \$15,000. • Capacity-building microgrants are paired with expert support, webinars and cohort learning for projects to improve walkability and bikeability; implement safe, accessible home modifications; and disaster preparedness training. Awards are \$2,500. • Demonstration grants fund projects that encourage replication of exemplary local efforts. This year's focus is on improving pedestrian safety, with funding support from Toyota Motor North America; expanding high-speed internet access and adoption, with funding support from Microsoft; and housing choice design com-

petitions. Awards typically range from \$10,000 to \$20,000, not to exceed \$25,000. “The impact that our Community Challenge grants have had in cities, towns and counties nationwide is significant, supporting everything from crosswalks and home improvements to increased community engagement while also serving as a catalyst for further action,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP executive vice president and chief advocacy and engagement officer. Since 2017, AARP has invested \$24.3 million toward 2,100 livability projects across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through the Commu-

nity Challenge. Forty-five projects were completed in Minnesota. The program aims to provide support to all community types, including rural, suburban and urban communities with a special focus on the needs of those 50 and older. AARP Minnesota partners with communities to bring people together and provide the resources and expertise needed to make cities, towns and counties great places to live for people of all ages. Through this work, AARP supports quick-action projects that strengthen local livability. Recent grants have funded digital skills training for older adults in Koochiching County, new accessible garden spaces in Waite Park and Woodbury, and a trans-

portation program in Hutchinson that lets older adults request rides when they need them. The Community Challenge is open to eligible 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(6) nonprofit organizations and government entities. Other types of organizations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Grants can range from several hundred dollars for small, short-term activities to tens of thousands for larger projects. The application deadline is 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 4. All projects must be completed by Tuesday, Dec. 15. To submit an application and view past grantees, visit www.aarp.org/community-challenge.

Crookston Area Ministries

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
23928 265th St SW - Crookston
(East of Highland School)
Church: 281-5629
Preston Hoiseth, Pastor
Web: www.biblebaptistcrookston.org
Email: biblebaptist@midco.net
Sundays: 7:45 a.m. & 10:05 a.m., Heavenly Sonlight radio program on KROX, 10 a.m. Bible Classes for all ages including adults, 11 a.m. Morning Worship, 6 p.m. Evening Worship
Wednesdays: 7 p.m. Bible Study & Prayer Service

CLIMAX LUTHERAN CHURCH SAND HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH
P.O. Box 49 - Climax, MN 56523
Pastor Matt Williams
218-857-2215 • 218-857-3362
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Worship
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN
100 Jefferson Ave SW - Fertile
Pr. Dan Morton
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
Check out website for further information www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org

FISHER LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)
209 2nd Street S - Fisher, MN
www.fisherbygland.org
Pastor Gretchen Enoch
218-891-4632
Sundays: Worship times alternate, please visit our website or call for information.
FREEDOM CHURCH
Pastor Joel Schwartz
218-275-2350
101 W 2nd St Crookston
hellofreedomchurch.com
Sundays: 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Worship

KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
1727 Widman Lane - Crookston
For information call: 218-281-6252
Sundays: 10 a.m. Public Talk, Watchtower Study
Thursdays: 7 p.m. Christian Life, Ministry Meeting
LITTLE NORWAY LUTHERAN
10802 423rd St SE - Fertile
Pr. Dan Morton
Sundays: 11 a.m. Worship Service
Check out website for further information www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org

RESURRECTION FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC
415 West 6th St - Beltrami
Pastor Joel Kangas
Church email: resurrect@gvtel.com
Church website: www.resurrectionfree.org
Sundays: 9 a.m. Worship
RODNES LUTHERAN
35473 180th Ave SE - Erskine
South of Hwy 2 on City 210
Office: 218-687-4345
Pastor Joel Smeby
www.facebook.com/RodnesLutheran
Sundays: 7 a.m. Radio Broadcast on KRJB (106.5FM), 10 a.m. Worship (live on Facebook and in person)

TRINITY LUTHERAN
402 6th St E - Beltrami
Pr. Dan Morton
Sundays: 11 a.m. Worship
Check out website for further information www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org
MAPLE LAKE LUTHERAN
13960 380th St E - Fertile
Pr. Dan Morton
Sundays: 9 a.m. Worship Service
Check out website for further information www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org

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40976 235th Street SW - Fisher, MN
www.fisherbygland.org
Pastor Gretchen Enoch
Phone: 218-893-4243
Sundays: Worship times alternate, please visit our website or call for information.
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702 Summit Avenue - Crookston
218-281-1735, Parish,
218-281-1835, School & RE Offices
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The Very Reverend
Msgr. David Baumgartner
Saturdays: 5 p.m. Mass at Cathedral, 10:30 a.m. Mass at Gentilly
Daily Mass: 7:45 a.m. Tuesday-Friday (Monday Communion Service 7:45 a.m.)
Please visit our website: www.crookstoncathedral.com for more information.

ENCOUNTER CHURCH
209 North Main - Crookston
Pastor Mathew McWaters - 218-281-4017
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FAABERG LUTHERAN AT RINDAL, MN
4391 340th Ave - Fertile
Pr. Dan Morto
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. Worship Service
Check out website for further information www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org

GOSEN CHURCH, INDEPENDENT
Gary Johnson, Pastor
<http://www.gosen-church.com>
Facebook: Gosen Church
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service (also on Facebook and gosen-church.com)
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Pastor Noah Thompson
Pastor John Merseth
1221 Barrette St #2605 - Crookston
Phone: 218-281-4342
Sundays: 1:30 p.m. Worship

LIVING WATER FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
Nielsville, MN
Monty & Amanda Brown
For information call: 218-946-2675
Sundays: 9 a.m. Sunday School, 10:30 a.m. Worship
Wednesdays: 7 p.m. Evening Service
MAPLE BAY FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Pastor David Jore
Parsonage: 218-574-2222
Sundays: 9 a.m. Sunday School, 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
707 4th Ave. NE - Crookston
Phone: 218-456-2568
Pastor David Jahn
Saturdays: 10 a.m. Sabbath School, 11:30 a.m. Worship
ST. JOSEPH CHURCH - FERTILE
10490 438th St SW
Fertile
218-945-6649
Fr. Larry Delaney
Sundays: 8:30 a.m. Mass

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)
205 S Broadway - Crookston
Rev. Gregory Isaacson, Senior Pastor
Rev. Michael Ozaki, Associate Pastor
218-281-4276
9 a.m. Broadcast Worship live over Crookston Cable TV Channel #3, KROX Radio 1260AM, KROX 105.7FM and streaming live on Facebook: Trinity Lutheran Church, Crookston, MN.
For additional information and calendar updates, please check out our website at www.trinitycrookston.org
Sundays: 9 a.m. - Worship at Trinity Lutheran Church, 10:45 a.m. - Worship at First Presbyterian Church
Thursdays: 1 p.m. - Book Study at First Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OF CHRIST
321 5th Avenue South - Crookston
218-281-5402
Pastor David Johnson
Sundays: 10:30 a.m. Worship
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
2814 Cherry Street - Grand Forks, ND
Bishop Derek Pruitt
435-979-4491
Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, MENTOR
105 Harrison Ave N - Mentor
Pastor Rev. Michael Sletto
218-637-8263
Sundays: 9 a.m. Worship
FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH - LUTHERAN CHURCH, MISSOURI SYNOD
33276 339th Ave. SW - Eldred, MN
c/o Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Crookston, MN - 218-281-1239
Pastor: Steven Bohler
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Service
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
510 North Broadway - Crookston
218-281-4853
crookstonfirstpres.org
Rev Michael Ozaki, pastor
Sundays: 10:45 a.m. Worship (live-streaming at crookstonfirstpres.org or on our Facebook page) Communion 1st Sunday
Thursdays: 1 p.m. - Book study

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, ERSKINE (NALC)
Church Office: 218-687-4035
332 Vance Avenue - Erskine, MN 56535
Rev. Pamela Thorson, Pastor
Sundays: 9 a.m. Worship
Worship also on GVTel TV, Facebook and Youtube
HARVEST CHURCH
520 Fisher Avenue - Crookston
218-281-2264
Pastor Dave Finsaas
www.harvestchurchcrookston.com
Sundays: Worship Service online or in-person at 10:30 a.m. Livestream can be found on our Facebook and YouTube channel. Facebook: Harvest Church Crookston YouTube: Harvest Church Crookston, MN Instagram: @harvestchurchcrookston

NEXUS CHURCH
605 3rd Ave NE - Crookston
Lead Pastor, Danny Holwerda, Jr.
Sundays: 10:30 a.m. Worship
OUR LADY OF SORROWS' CHAPEL - Society of St. Pius X
600 E Robert St - U.S. Hwy 2 E - Crookston
218-281-6880, 218-773-8020
Sundays: 2 p.m. Holy Mass
OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN - LUTHERAN CHURCH, MISSOURI SYNOD
Crookston
Pastor Steven Bohler
Sundays: 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Services, 9:30 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH - MENTOR
Fr. Larry Delaney
Sundays: 10:30 a.m. Mass
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - EUCLID
Sundays: For the months of January, February, and March, weekend Mass on Sundays at 8:30 a.m.
Tuesdays: Mass at 8:30 a.m.
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN (ELCA)
1214 University Avenue - Crookston
Email: stpauls@midconetwork.com
Website: stpaulscrookstonmn.com
Phone: 218-281-3638
Pastor Curt Peterson
Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship
You may worship via Facebook Live: [facebook.com/stpaulscrookstonmn](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulscrookstonmn)

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, FISHER (LCMS)
Church Office: 218-891-4581
Pastor Doug Thompson
Website: tclstpaul.org
Email: trinity.st.paulparishes@gmail.com
Sundays: 10 a.m. Bible Study, 10 a.m. Sunday School, 11 a.m. Worship Service - Communion celebrated on the second and last Sunday of the month.
WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
701 Eickhof Blvd - Crookston
218-281-3393
website: crookstonmethodist.com - view services here
email: wesleyumcrox@gmail.com
Rev. Ruth Sanders, Pastor
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (Sept. - May), 10:45 a.m. Worship (Communion 2nd Sunday)

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THIEF RIVER FALLS Times

OFFICE HOURS

The Times office hours are:
 Monday - Thursday
 8 am - 5 pm

Friday
 8 am - 3 pm

Park Board to meet Monday

The Crookston Park Board will meet Monday, Jan. 12 at 4:30 p.m. at City Hall in the conference room. All notices may be found at www.crookston.mn.us. There may be a quorum of City Council members present at the above-mentioned meeting.

Fire escape planning tips

Experts estimate someone has as little as two minutes to safely escape their home once a smoke alarm sounds. The Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Office provides the following tips regarding a fire escape plan:

- Designate a safe meeting place outside your home everyone can get to after a fire. Make sure everyone in your family understands where to go.
- Use graph paper to draw a floor plan of your home and show two ways out of each room.
- Make sure each family member is aware of two ways out of each room.
- Practice your family escape plan twice each year.
- Practice at different times of the day to make sure people know what to do during nighttime hours.
- Walk through your home periodically and inspect all exits and escape routes.

Extension to host "Fridays with a Forester"

Join the University of Minnesota Extension foresters to discuss some of the key issues and questions around forest and woodlands facing Minnesota landowners. These online sessions will be informal, open to the public and free of charge. Each session will start with a brief presentation, followed by a discussion framed around participants' questions on the topic. Each Zoom session will be on the following Fridays from 9 to 10 a.m. The 2026 topics and presenters are listed below.

- Jan. 30: Life, death, and dinner in the forest canopy: The spruce budworm and its predators – Jessica Rootes
- Feb. 13: Stewardship strategies for resilient forests – Anna Stockstad
- Feb. 20: ParSci summary from 2025 and what's coming in 2026 – Angela Gupta and Hana Kim
- Feb. 27: Climate ready trees for windbreaks and silvopasture – Gary Wyatt, Angie Gupta and Kira Pollack

DEATH NOTICES

James Jerde, 80

James (Jim) Jerde, 80, of Crookston, passed away on December 16, 2025. A funeral service to celebrate James' life will be held on Monday January 19, 2026 at 2 p.m. from the chapel at Stenshoel-Houske Funeral Home. Visitation will begin at 12 pm.

LaVern Samshal, 89

LaVern Samshal, 89, passed away on Saturday, January 3, 2026. A funeral service honoring LaVern's life will be held at Stenshoel-Houske Funeral Home in Crookston on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at 2 p.m. Visitation will be one hour prior.

Mark Altepeter, 72

Mark Patrick Altepeter, 72, of Walker, passed away on December 30, 2025. Celebrations of Life will be held in Mesa, Arizona, in the coming days and in Minnesota in the spring.

Timothy Bolstad, 70

Timothy (Tim) G. Bolstad, 70, rural Fertile, passed away on December 25, 2025. A memorial service was held on Saturday, January 3, 2026 at Concordia Lutheran Church, Fertile. Inurnment was in Concordia East Cemetery, Fertile.

Alice Norton, 101

Alice Ann Norton, 101, of Princeton, formerly of Crookston, passed away on December 26, 2026. Service will be Saturday, January 10, 2026 at 11 a.m. at Christ Our Light Catholic Parish in Princeton. Internment will be in May 2026 at Calvary Cemetery in Crookston.

Thomas Socha, 81

Thomas Edward Socha, 81, of Halstad, passed away on Sunday, January 4, 2026. Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Friday, January 16, 2026 at Holy Family Catholic Church, Halstad, with a prayer service and Rosary to begin at 6:30 pm. Memorial Mass will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, January 17, 2026 at Holy Family Catholic Church, Halstad. A Funeral Mass will take place at a later date at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Lincoln, NE, with interment and full military rites at Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Lincoln.

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Rural Reflections ...

Farm shops: The possibilities are endless

by Grant Nelson



The farm shop has become as stylish as Carhartt stocking caps. Being rural has never been more popular and one of the beneficiaries of that trend is the farm shop. We now have shops used as party places or even places of residence. We now like farm shops which are not farm shops as much as we love country music which is not country music; however, I kind of like the trend in shops.

The first farm shop I remember would now be about the size of a chicken coop on the farm where I grew up. It had a decent bench and smelled of grease from the open barrel we used to fill a

City collecting Christmas trees now

City crews are collecting Christmas trees now through Friday, Jan. 16. Place trees on the boulevard for collection. No metal tree stands will be accepted.

grease gun prior to grease cartridges. I built some of my first birdhouses in this little shop and I always worked quietly as there was a bee nest in the rafters. It was here I learned how to be both productive and quiet.

Our next shop was called a "Miracle Span" building, I think some of these types of buildings were also called "Miracle Brutes." These buildings were short lengths of corrugated metal bolted into semi-circular spans that were bolted together into a shed. I thought the slab was the best part and spent one summer in the 1970s riding figure 8s on the concrete prior to construction.

The farm shops I see today have become more like industrial structures; they are massive and multipurpose. The width of a modern farm shed is often greater than the length of a farm shed erected even a few decades ago. The new generation of farm sheds include decent full bathrooms, break rooms with a kitchen and sometimes even living areas for the hired man.

I like small things, I find they challenge my creativity and resourcefulness. My shop is a two-car garage with a small shop area. I have finished many projects in my little shop but have needed to shape my process to fit my surroundings. Some of my projects have

been built in modules and then assembled once they were removed from the shop. One vertical project was built horizontally as my shop lacked the height but had enough length to allow construction.

I have also greatly enjoyed the challenge of organizing such a small shop where each square foot is precious real estate. I am a fan of pegboard since it allows you to arrange various accessories that you may need. The ceiling area has also been a good source of unexploited territory as I hang utility-cord reels and heating sources from the ceiling.

The farm shop has become something unique to everyone who builds such a structure. For some, it is utilitarian; for some, it is a place to gather friends and for some, it is home. For me, it is a container for possibilities. It is here that I have built the creations of my imagination, fulfilled dreams of how things might be and relived the portions of my own personal history that I either enjoyed or failed to satisfy me the first time I lived them.

A recent social media meme stated, "A garage isn't a building. It's a sanctuary where broken things and sometimes broken people get rebuilt." That's about right.

A turning point for the state of Minnesota

by Rep. Steve Gander District 1B

We're barely a week into the new year, and Minnesota politics has already wasted no time reminding us that 2026 is going to be anything but quiet.

On Monday, Gov. Tim Walz announced he won't seek reelection. That decision comes amid mounting scrutiny and a massive fraud scandal that has shaken Minnesotans' trust in state government. While today's headlines may focus on one person, I want to be clear: Minnesota's fraud epidemic does not begin or end with any single officeholder.

What we're facing is the result of nearly two decades of misguided governors - backed by their legislative allies - building a culture of complacency and weak oversight. That culture has cost Minnesota families billions of dollars. Swapping out one failed candidate for another won't fix a system that was broken by design. Fixing fraud requires a full house-cleaning - not a new face running the same machine.

As I stated in a press release from back in May, the fraud epidemic must be stopped. Just two nights before that statement went out, we had a real opportunity to pass meaningful oversight legislation by establishing an Office of the Inspector General. The Senate had already passed the bill, and on the House side, we had worked on it all year. Rep. Patti Anderson (R-Dellwood) did the heavy lifting, guiding the bill through every relevant committee. And yet it was stalled.

At the time, I asked a question that still deserves an answer: It felt like someone didn't want this to happen. Why? Who stands to gain from blocking government accountability? We had reached a bipartisan, bicameral compromise - version 12 of the bill, cleaned up

and ready to go - yet House Democrats rejected it. That decision should trouble every taxpayer in this state.

So I asked Minnesotans then, and I ask again now: do you support effective oversight of state agencies, or are you comfortable with your hard-earned tax dollars being thrown away?

Looking back now, it's hard not to shake your head. Here we are just nine months later, and we're finally seeing the truth behind many of the votes cast during last legislative session.

My message to Minnesotans is simple and unwavering: My colleagues and I will not rest until fraud, waste, and abuse are rooted out of our government. And just as importantly - I don't want you to lose hope. The power still rests with the people. Democracy only fails when good people disengage.

We still have time before the polls open in November. Between now and then, I urge you to stay engaged. Ask questions. Demand answers. Advocate for the kind of government you expect. Have honest, informed conversations with your neighbors about Minnesota's future. I cannot stress this enough: changing candidates without changing the system will not end fraud in Minnesota.

Looking ahead to the 2026 session

The 2026 legislative session gavel on Feb. 17, and if you think the work slows down before then - think again. There's a lot ahead, and none of it is optional.

Last year's session was largely about setting the state's two-year budget. We made meaningful cuts to government spending, but new budget projections are flashing warning signs. Deficits are on the horizon. While the 2026 session will focus heavily on bonding, make no mistake: deeper

spending reforms are coming, and they will need to be addressed head-on.

Rooting out fraud remains at the very top of the list. We will hold the Governor's Office and the judicial branch accountable for their roles, cooperate fully with federal authorities, and push state agencies to implement real safeguards that stop fraud before it happens - not after millions are already gone.

Bonding will also take center stage in 2026. Bonding funds the basics Minnesotans rely on every day - roads that don't crumble, bridges that don't close, and infrastructure that actually works. Responsible bonding isn't flashy, but neglecting it puts our state on a fast track to disrepair, and that's not a risk we should accept.

School safety will be addressed directly and without apology. Parents deserve confidence that their children are safe. Teachers deserve classrooms where they can teach without fear. Just two years ago, state mandates effectively pushed school resource officers out of many schools, and the results were chaos and declining safety. I will continue to fight for more safety measures - not fewer - while preserving local control through our elected school boards.

Capitol security will be stepped up. It's unfortunate, but it's reality: violent crime exists. Everyone who comes to the Capitol - families, staff, and lawmakers alike - deserves to feel safe, and we will take every necessary step to ensure that happens.

As we head into the final stretch before session begins, I invite you to stay tuned. This is the start of a new chapter for Minnesota. Together, we can fight for a state that is once again a great place to raise a family, build a career, and retire with dignity.

As always, thank you for trusting me to serve you.

POLICIES

Letters To The Editor: The staff of the *Northern Watch* encourages written responses to editorial comment or letters with original thoughts or ideas of general interest. Letters should be intended for publication in *Northern Watch* exclusively; letters sent to multiple publications will generally not be accepted. Right is reserved to edit letters for length and clarity and to reject letters deemed to be promotional in nature or in poor taste.

Letters Must Be Signed: All letters must be signed and contain an address or phone number of the writer so authenticity can be verified. **Signatures must appear on letters published.** The staff believes that there is greater credibility in

letters signed in print and will not withhold names of writers from publication.

Responses Invited: Letters critical of individuals or other entities may be shown to those individuals or representatives of those entities in advance of publication with an invitation by newspaper staff for response in the same issue as the original letter.

Corrections: If an error is made in news or advertising publication, the staff encourages readers to call it to our immediate attention by calling 681-4450. We will attempt to correct the error or clarify the misunderstanding in the next issue.

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from the staff of

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Make a resolution for good health with Direct Laboratory Access at RiverView Health



Phlebotomist Misty Schulz draws blood from a patient at RiverView Health in Crookston. Direct Laboratory Access is an option at RiverView for those patients who want to monitor their lab values between regular visits to their primary care provider. (Submitted)

As the calendar has transitioned to 2026, many individuals are establishing resolutions to adopt a healthier lifestyle. If you're among those seeking to improve your well-being, consider RiverView Health's Direct Laboratory Access (DLA) program.

DLA is available to anyone who wants to monitor their lab values between regular visits to their primary care provider. For example, you may wish to check your glucose or cholesterol levels at the beginning of the year, then retest a few months later to see whether your recent lifestyle changes are positively impacting your results. Additionally, if you discover that your insurance or Medicare does not cover a specific screening test, you can choose to pay for it out-of-pocket through the DLA program.

While the DLA program is not a substitute for annual check-ups or other acute visits, it offers a valuable opportunity to take a more proactive role in your health care decisions by allowing you to select laboratory tests from an available menu.

The following tests are offered through RiverView's DLA program:

- Blood Type, \$25
- Cholesterol, \$12; cholesterol is a fat-like substance manufactured by your body to make cell membranes and hormones. When cholesterol

levels are elevated, arteries can become clogged or narrowed.

- Lipid Panel (12-hour fast), \$30; panel includes cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, and calculated LDL. These measurements can provide more comprehensive diagnostic information for the determination of cardiac disease.
- Glucose, \$10; this blood sugar provides the body with energy. An abnormally high glucose level may indicate diabetes. An abnormally low glucose result may indicate hypoglycemia.
- Hemoglobin, \$10; hemoglobin is the molecule responsible for carrying oxygen in red blood cells. Low hemoglobin may indicate anemia, chronic bleeding, or iron deficiency. Elevated hemoglobin may indicate bone marrow disease, chronic lung disease, heart disease, or thyroid disease.
- Pregnancy Test (blood or urine), \$16
- Colorectal Cancer Screening, \$20; tests for hidden blood in stool. This test requires three stool specimens collected over at least three days. Dietary restrictions apply.
- Prostate-specific Antigen (PSA), \$40; a screening test for prostate cancer.
- Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH), \$30; this is a hormone in the blood that stimulates the thyroid gland

to secrete hormones. TSH is used to determine if thyroid disease is present.

- Triglyceride (12-hour fast), \$12; triglycerides are fat-like substances that may increase your risk of heart disease.
- Protome/INR, \$20; used to monitor anti-clotting medications such as Coumadin, which must be carefully monitored to prevent clots or excess bleeding.
- Hemoglobin A1C, \$15; a measure of diabetes control over the previous two to three months.

Payments can be made using cash, check or credit/debit card.

Test results are available in MyChart, allowing both the patient and their primary care provider to review them. Patients can also choose to pick up their results or have them mailed. If any results are abnormal, they will be evaluated by a provider, and, if necessary, a letter of explanation will be sent to the patient.

To schedule a DLA appointment at the lab of your choice, call 218-281-9595 in Crookston; 218-945-6695 in Fertile; or 218-253-4606 in Red Lake Falls. While appointments are appreciated, walk-ins are welcome in Crookston on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on weekends from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register at the main registration desk.

Northwest RSDP seeks proposals for community-led sustainability projects

Northwest Minnesota residents with an idea to strengthen their community can now apply for a project partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership.

Northwest RSDP supports local innovation by connecting community ideas to University of Minnesota resources. Community members work on diverse project teams that research, design and plan local sustainability projects with University students, faculty and staff.

Northwest RSDP seeks ideas from diverse populations and encourages those who have not previously partnered with the University to consider applying. In 2026, priorities identified by the Northwest RSDP Board and work groups seek projects that foster a resilient food system, address climate change and other ecological impacts, increase opportunities around energy efficiency and renewable energy, and

encourage local community action that welcomes all residents and celebrates the region's rich cultural traditions, natural assets and vibrant local economies.

"Community members know best how to make changes toward stronger social connections, valuing nature and fostering a home-grown economy. We're excited to hear what comes next for your community, and share with you how the RSDP can help," said Northwest RSDP Executive Director Shannon Stassen. "I encourage people to get in touch with me to talk about their ideas for making our communities more sustainable places."

Applications are being accepted through Saturday, Feb. 14. Visit the link z.umn.edu/RSDPIdeaBrief to read more about the programs and download application forms. Contact Shannon Stassen at [sstassen@umn.edu](mailto:ssstassen@umn.edu) or 218-281-8027 or Crystal Rayamajhi, Northwest RSDP

outreach specialist, at craya@umn.edu or 218-236-2009 to discuss their ideas and ask any questions. Successful projects are selected by the Northwest RSDP community-university governing board through a competitive process.

Examples of projects recently supported by the Northwest RSDP include working with rural grocers to improve their energy efficiency, creating new opportunities for youth to experience nature and partnering with city leaders to plan their sustainable future. For more examples of projects supported by the Northwest RSDP, visit z.umn.edu/RSDPProjectExamples.

The Northwest RSDP serves Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Clearwater, Beltrami, Polk, Norman, Mahnom, Clay and Wilkin counties, and the Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation.

Bienek named to Trine vice president's list

Crookston resident Aleah Bienek, a Trine University student, was named to the vice president's list for the fall 2025 semester. Bienek is majoring in exercise science.

To earn vice president's list honors at the Angola,

Ind., university, an undergraduate student must be registered for 12 or more total semester credit hours, including graduate courses, with fewer than 12 credit hours at the undergraduate level. The student must

have a semester combined undergraduate/graduate grade point average between 3.750 and 4.000, with the undergraduate semester grade point average not lower than 3.500.

Applications open for Beginning Farmer Tax Credit

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Rural Finance Authority is accepting applications for the 2026 Beginning Farmer Tax Credit. This is an annual program available to landlords and sellers (asset owners) who rent or sell farmland, equipment, livestock, and other agricultural assets to beginning farmers.

There is \$4 million available for the program. Credits are funded in a first-come, first-served manner, so applicants are encouraged to apply early before the stated deadlines. Funds ran out in late January for the 2025 tax credit.

Both asset owners and beginning farmers must submit applications with lease and/or sale documents to be eligible for funding and to hold their place in line. They may apply before sales close with a valid purchase agreement, if needed.

Asset owners can claim credits in one of these categories in a given tax year for each beginning farmer they lease/sell to:

- Cash rentals – Tax credit amount of 10% of annual rental income with a maximum tax credit of \$7,000. Applications are due July 17.
- Share rentals – Tax credit amount of 15% of annual rental income with a maximum tax credit of \$10,000. Applications are due July 17.
- Sales – Tax credit amount of 8% of sale price (12% if the buyer is a Limited Land Access Farmer)

for a maximum tax credit of \$50,000. Applications are due Nov. 1.

• Beginning farmer Farm Business Management tuition reimbursement – Tax credit amount equal to tuition paid out of pocket for a maximum tax credit of \$1,500 for 3 years. Applications are due Nov. 1.

Qualifying asset owners can include individuals, trusts or qualified pass-through entities renting or selling land, livestock, facilities, buildings, or machinery used for farming in Minnesota to a beginning farmer. Parents, grandparents and siblings are eligible if they sell farmland to a direct family member. However, this does not apply to leases or non-land sales (e.g., livestock, equipment).

A beginning farmer is a Minnesota resident with the desire to start farming or who began farming within the past 10 years. They must provide positive projected earnings statements, have a net worth less than \$1,042,000, and enroll in or have completed an approved Farm Business Management program.

Beginning farmers are also eligible for a nonrefundable Minnesota tax credit equal to the amount paid for FBM tuition, up to a maximum of \$1,500. This tax credit is available for up to three years.

New for 2026: "Limited Land Access Farmer" replaces "Emerging Farmer" in the program. To qualify for the 12% rate for a sale,

the Limited Land Access Farmer must meet all the following:

- Does not own any farmland.
- Does not rent land from a relative. This includes anyone related to the Limited Land Access Farmer by blood or marriage (ex. parent, in-law, grandparent, aunt/uncle, great-aunt/uncle, sibling, stepsibling, cousin, second cousin, etc.).
- Does not have a lease term greater than three years.

For more information, go to www.mda.state.mn.us/bftc. Questions may be directed to Jenny Heck at mda.bftc@state.mn.us or 651-201-6316.

Hygge and Fika hangouts set

The Crookston Public Library will host free programs exploring Hygge, the Danish art of relaxing, and Fika, the art of the Swedish coffee break. These concepts are about embracing life's simple pleasures.

The programs are scheduled Friday, Jan. 16 at 11 a.m. and Friday, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. The library will provide beverages and treats, along with puzzles and coloring activities. Participants are encouraged to bring their own items, such as fiber arts, coloring materials, journals and more.

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Registration opens Feb. 3 for spring trap season

Registration opens Tuesday, Feb. 3 for the spring trap season, with shooting scheduled to begin March 29. Additional information is available at Crookston High School.

The Pirates competed in both trap and 5-stand disciplines during the fall 2025 season.

Award winners in the 5-stand discipline were Garrett Wilkens winning the team's top-gun award for high sea-

son average (13.00), and Elijah Hoppe receiving the most improved award (average change) for raising his average 3.00 points over the course of the season.

"Since this was our first season for 5-stand, they all were rookies," said Head Coach Randy Prudhomme. "We also did not have any letter winners for this season, but we have a few that could do it next season. They all did great trying a new

sport and all improved as the season went on."

The Pirates' 5-Stand team finished seventh in a seven-team conference that included Stewartville, who finished first with a five-week total score of 752; McGregor-Aitkin-Cromwell with 616 in second; and Richfield with 522.5 in third. Rounding out the conference standings were fourth place Austin with 508.5, fifth place Mahtomedi with 414, sixth place Kingsland with 224, and the Pirates with a seventh-place score off 113.

"To emphasize how much

more difficult 5-stand is compared to trap, we can look at how many times someone shot 50 or 25 in a row," Prudhomme said. "In trap there were 104 times that someone shot 50 in a row and 807 times that someone shot 25 in a row in the state. In 5-stand there was only one time that someone shot 50 in a row and only five times someone shot 25 in a row in the state."

The Pirates finished fifth in their seven-team conference in trap with a five-week total score of 636. Apple Valley, 925.5, Cretin-Derham

Hall, 754, South Ridge, 739, and Duluth Denfeld, 670, finished in spots one through four.

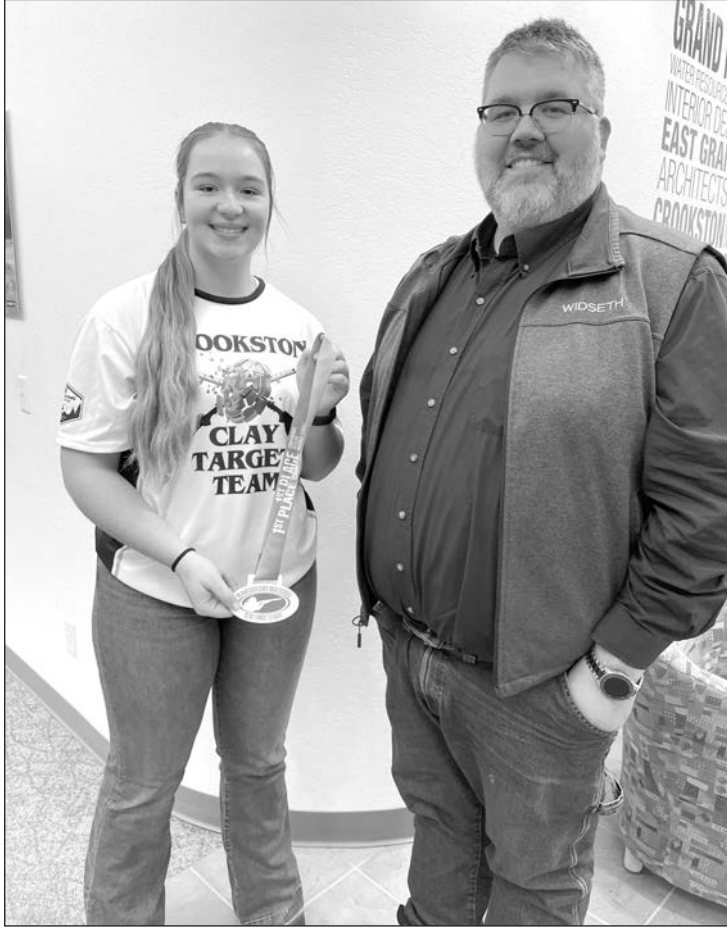
Team award winners for the Pirates included:

- Top Gun Overall (Season Average) - Jayde Uttermark (21.50);
- Top Gun Female (Season Average) - Jayde Uttermark (21.50);
- Top Gun Male (Season Average) - Austin Thode (20.20);
- Rookie of the Year (Season Average) - Parker Broten (13.50); and
- Most Improved (Aver-

age Change) - Garrett Guzman (2.70).

Letter winners for the fall 2025 season were Uttermark, Thode, Garrett Wilkens and Evan Boucher.

"Jayde Uttermark was also Top Gun Female in the conference and she received a medal from USA Clay Target League," Prudhomme said. "Our four letter winners were all in the top 25 for the conference, with Jayde being tied for ninth overall in the conference."



Jayde Uttermark, pictured with Crookston Clay Target Team Head Coach Randy Prudhomme, was the Pirates' Top Gun Overall, Top Gun Female and Top Gun Female in the conference at the conclusion of the fall 2025 Clay Target Season. In addition to those awards, Uttermark tied for ninth overall in the conference. (Submitted)

Pirates go 1-1 in road games against PRA, TRF

The Crookston boys hockey team scored 13 goals over the course of two games Monday and Tuesday night, defeating Park Rapids 9-1 Monday night, before coming up short in a 7-4 decision at Thief River Falls Tuesday night.

The Pirates were firing on all cylinders Monday in the blowout win over the Panthers. Garrett Fischer, Greyson Ecker and Jay Reese scored first period goals, with Reese, Isaiah Donarski, Grant Funk, Ecker and Tate Hamre recording assists.

The Pirates continued the offensive onslaught in the second period with a pair of goals by Fischer, single tallies by Reese and Aakhus, and assists by Donarski, Hamre (2), Fischer, Funk and Reese.

The Pirates led 7-0 through two periods and added to their lead in the third with Fischer scoring his fifth and sixth goals of the night, giving him 20 on the season. Cody DeMarais, Ecker and Reese added assists.

Bradly Chandler came

close to recording his second shutout of the season. Chandler saved the first 23 shots he faced Monday night. The 24th, unfortunately, found the net, as Park Rapids Area's Chad Pinoneimi scored a power play goal with 48 seconds remaining.

The Pirates fell behind early Tuesday night in Thief River Falls before making things interesting late.

The host Prowlers scored three times in the opening period, with goals from Jed Kelly, Weston Olson and Spencer Anderson in a span of six minutes and 20 seconds. Anderson's goal came with just four seconds left in the period.

The Pirates got on the board 1:10 into the second period with a goal by Ecker and assist from Reese.

The Prowlers added to their lead with goals by Ian Winter and two more by Anderson to make it 6-1 through two period of play.

The Pirates got hot in the third and made things interesting. Reese and Fischer scored on power play goals 35 seconds into the period and at the 6:03 mark, respec-

tively, to make the score 6-3.

Fischer scored his second goal of the night with 4:07 remaining to make the score 6-4.

The Pirates couldn't draw any closer over the final four minutes.

Anderson scored his fourth goal of the night on an empty net shot with 51 seconds remaining, pushing the Prowler lead back to three goals.

Picking up third period assists for the Pirates were Fischer, Ecker, Donarski, Reese and DeMarais.

Scoring	1	2	3	T
Crookston.....	0	1	3	4
Park Rapids Area.....	0	0	1	1

First period - Crookston, Garrett Fischer (Jay Reese) 8:50; Crookston, Greyson Ecker (Isaiah Donarski, Grant Funk) 9:26; Crookston, Jay Reese (Greyson Ecker, Tate Hamre) 12:13.

Second period - Crookston, Garrett Fischer (Isaiah Donarski, Tate Hamre), 2:24; Crookston, Jay Reese (Garrett Fischer) 3:21; Crookston, Gavin Aakhus (Grant Funk) 7:35; Crookston, Garrett Fischer (Jay Reese, Tate Hamre) 13:02.

Third period - Crookston, Garrett Fischer (power play) (Cody DeMarais, Greyson Ecker) 3:46; Crookston, Garrett Fischer (Jay Reese) 12:20; Park Rapids Area, Chad

Pinoneimi (Ethan Torola, Brayden Crissinger) 16:12.

Shots - Crookston 10-24-8 - 42; Park Rapids Area 9-8-7 - 24.

Power plays - Crookston 1-for-3; Park Rapids 0-for-4.

Penalties - Crookston 4 (8 minutes); Park Rapids Area 3 (6 minutes).

Goalie saves - Crookston, Brady Chandler 23; Park Rapids Area, Rylie Wesa 33.

Scoring	1	2	3	T
Crookston.....	0	1	3	4
Thief River Falls.....	3	3	1	7

First period - TRF, Jed Kelly (unassisted) 10:36; TRF, Weston Olson (Johnathan Rogalla) 12:42; TRF, Spencer Anderson (power play) (Hudson Brouse, Cooper Roff) 16:56.

Second period - Crookston, Greyson Ecker (Jay Reese) 1:10; TRF, Ian Winter (Spencer Anderson, Hudson Brouse) 5:59; TRF, Spencer Anderson (Hudson Brouse) 7:51; TRF, Spencer Anderson (power play) (Hudson Brouse) 10:03.

Third period - Crookston, Jay Reese (power play) (Garrett Fischer) 0:35; Crookston, Garrett Fischer (power play) (Greyson Ecker, Isaiah Donarski) 6:03; Crookston, Garrett Fischer (Jay Reese, Cody Demarais) 12:53; TRF, Spencer Anderson (even strength) (empty net) 16:09.

Shots - Crookston 10-9-10 - 29; TRF 12-17-12 - 41.

Power plays - Crookston 2-for-4; TRF 2-for-5.

Penalties - Crookston 5 (10 minutes); TRF 4 (8 minutes).

Goalie saves - Crookston, Tegyn Johnson 34; TRF, Cooper Roff 25.



2025-26 Crookston Pirates

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT



Pictured from left to right are members of the Crookston High School Fall Clay Target Trap Team: front row - Garrett Guzman, Evan Boucher, Jayde Uttermark, Adisyn Schiller, Korynn Uttermark, Parker Broten; back row - Austin Thode, Range

Safety Officer Steve Videen, Coach Randy Prudhomme, Assistant Coach Wyatt Wilkens and Garrett Wilkens. (Photo by Nicole Wandrie, Joyful Heart Photography)

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MN Crookston women's basketball falls in last-second heartbreaker

Savea Mansfield hit a jumper with two seconds remaining to send South Dakota Mines to an 80-79 win over the University of Minnesota Crookston women's basketball team Sunday, Jan. 4 on Gary Senke Court at Lysaker Gymnasium. The Hardrockers overcame a six-point deficit with 2:49 remaining to pick up the heartbreaker. The Golden Eagles had taken a 79-78 lead with 15 seconds remaining on an Anna Westby (Fr., F, Eveleth) basket, but a late turnover led to the game-winning shot for Mansfield. The Golden Eagles dropped to 3-11 (2-6 NSIC) with Sunday's non-conference loss. Minnesota Crookston finishes their non-conference slate with a 1-5. The Golden Eagles are 1-1 all-time against South Dakota Mines. The Hardrockers improved to 5-7 with the victory.

The Golden Eagles were guided by a double-double from Riley Jenkins (R-Jr., G/F, Galesburg, Ill.) with 19 points, 11 boards, and six assists. She notched her sixth career double-double, but first of the season. Emma Miller (Sr., G, Albertville) came close to a double-double with 24 points and nine boards. Rayna Klejeski (Jr., F, Barnum) was also one rebound shy of a double-double with 12 points and nine boards. Westby finished with 12 points and six rebounds, while Halle Winjum (So., G, Crookston) notched four points and seven boards. Hope Dudycha (R-

Jr., G, Austin, Minn.) came off the bench for six. Minnesota Crookston shot 28-of-66 for 42.4%. They went 8-of-26 for 30.8% from distance, and 15-of-16 for 93.8% from the stripe. The Golden Eagles had 14 assists to 16 turnovers. They outrebounded the Hardrockers 46-34, including 15 offensive boards. South Dakota Mines was paced by Morning Grace Spotted Bear with 27 points and nine rebounds on 12-of-23 from the field. Mansfield added 26 points and eight boards. Abigail Dille came off the bench for 13 points. The three players accounted for 66 of 80 points Sunday. The Hardrockers went 33-of-72 for 45.8 percent from the field, and 6-of-24 for 25% from three-point range. They finished 8-of-12 for 66.7% from the line. South Dakota Mines had 22 assists, and just eight turnovers.

South Dakota Mines jumped out to a 7-3 lead on an Addison Miranda trey, as they set the tone early. They held a 12-7 advantage following a Mansfield jumper. South Dakota Mines continued to hold stride with a 16-11 advantage after a Mansfield bucket with 2:01 left in the quarter. The Golden Eagles closed the stanza on a 5-1 run to pull within 17-16 after a pair of Jenkins free throws. Minnesota Crookston set the tone in the second quarter with a 10-0 run propelled by eight points from Miller. The Golden Eagles held a 26-17 advantage with 6:58

remaining in the quarter. The U of M Crookston led 32-23 after a pair of Westby free throws with 3:38 left in the frame. South Dakota Mines hit back-to-back buckets to pull within 32-27. The Golden Eagles would be able to hold the lead, having a 40-34 edge after a Jenkins free throw. The Golden Eagles extended their lead to nine on a Westby trey out of the locker room. South Dakota Mines countered with a 7-0 rally, as a Mansfield basket cut the deficit to 43-41 with 7:32 left in the section. The Golden Eagles used a 4-0 run to go ahead 47-41 with a Winjum jumper. Minnesota Crookston pushed their lead to nine on Klejeski free throws with 5:18 left in the quarter. The Hardrockers came back with an 8-0 run, using a Spotted Bear basket to pull within 55-53. The Golden Eagles were able to lead by three after Jenkins put-back her own missed trey to make it 59-56 heading into the quarter sojourn. Mansfield opened the stanza with a trey to knot the game 59-59. The Hardrockers took a 64-63 edge on an old-fashioned three-point play from Spotted Bear with 7:55 left in the tilt. Minnesota Crookston fired back with an 8-0 run, as a Dudycha old-fashioned three-point play put the Golden Eagles ahead 71-64. Minnesota Crookston held a 75-68 advantage after a Klejeski bucket with 4:41 remaining in the game. A Mansfield triple brought the Hardrockers within three,

but Miller came back with a bucket to give the Golden Eagles a 77-71 edge with 2:49 remaining in the contest. South Dakota Mines responded with a 7-0 rally as an Emma Martin bucket gave them a 78-77 lead with 45 seconds left. Minnesota Crookston was able to give themselves chances off of offensive rebounds, resulting in a Westby bucket on a great out-of-bounds play with 15 seconds remaining to give the Golden Eagles a 79-78 advantage. On the opposite end, Spotted Bear was fouled but missed both shots resulting in a Winjum rebound. On the out-of-bounds, Jenkins' pass was deflected by the defender and off her, giving the ball back to South Dakota Mines. On the out-of-bounds play, the Hardrockers found Mansfield for the jumper to make it 80-79 with two seconds remaining. The Golden Eagles attempted to throw the long pass, but it was intercepted as South Dakota Mines held on for the win.



Fosston resident Brynlea Mahlen is pictured prior to passing the ball Saturday, Jan. 3 during a University of Minnesota Crookston women's basketball game against Minnesota State University Moorhead. (Photo by Stella Flahave)

MSUM holds off Minnesota Crookston 63-48 to open new year

The University of Minnesota Crookston women's basketball team commenced the new year with a 63-48 loss to Minnesota State University Moorhead Saturday, Jan. 3 on Gary Senke Court at Lysaker Gymnasium. The Dragons outscored Minnesota Crookston 15-7 in the fourth quarter to put away the Golden Eagles Saturday. Minnesota Crookston dropped to 3-10 (2-6 NSIC) with Saturday's loss. The Dragons improved to 7-5 (4-4 NSIC) with the victory. MSU Moorhead has won the last two in the series. The Golden Eagles finished Saturday shooting 18-of-58 for 31.0% from the field, and 4-of-18 for 22.2% from beyond the arc. Minnesota Crookston was 8-of-9 for 88.9% from the stripe. The Golden Eagles notched just 11 turnovers, but were outrebounded 37-34. Emma Miller (Sr., G, Albertville) paced the squad with 17 points and six boards on 8-of-22 from the field. Rayna Klejeski (Jr., F, Barnum) chipped in 11 points on 4-of-9 from the field. Anna Westby (Fr., F, Eveleth) notched seven points, Riley Jenkins (R-Jr., G/F, Galesburg, Ill.) tallied five points and six rebounds.

Halle Winjum (So., G, Crookston) added five points. The Dragons shot 22-of-51 from the field for 43.1%. MSU Moorhead went 7-of-19 for 36.8 percent from deep, and 12-of-15 for 80% from the line. The Dragons were guided by 19 points from Aubrey Morrison off the bench on 6-of-12 from the field, and 4-of-8 from deep. Terryn Johnson had a double-double of 18 points and 10 rebounds. Caylin Kelly notched 10 points and six boards. The Dragons took a 7-4 lead early on an Adie Wagner basket. Minnesota Crookston countered with a 7-0 run, as a Miller steal and fastbreak bucket made it 11-7. Ashton Safranski came back with back-to-back treys to give MSU Moorhead a 13-11 advantage. A Westby jumper knotted the game, but the Dragons wrapped up the quarter with a Johnson basket to go ahead 15-13. Minnesota Crookston commenced the second stanza with a Miller old-fashioned three-point play to go up 16-15. Minnesota Crookston held a 20-18 lead on a Hope Dudycha (R-Jr., G, Austin, Minn.) free throw. The Dragons were

ahead 27-24 with 3:13 remaining in the second after a Kelly hoop. The Golden Eagles came back and pulled within one on a pair of Klejeski free throws. The Dragons concluded the half on a 7-0 run using Johnson free throws to go ahead 34-26. The Golden Eagles quickly got on the board with a Westby bucket to commence the third quarter and pull within 34-26. The game stayed close until MSU Moorhead broke it out to a 10-point lead on a Johnson basket. Minnesota Crookston countered with a 6-0 rally to pull within 42-38 on a Miller lay-in. The Golden Eagles pulled within three (44-41) on a Jenkins triple. The Dragons finished the stanza on a 4-0 run to lead 48-41 at the quarter intermission. MSU Moorhead set the tone early in the fourth with a 7-0 run, propelled by six points from Morrison as the Dragons led 55-41 with 7:03 remaining in the tilt. Minnesota Crookston trimmed the deficit to 11 on a Winjum trey, but MSU Moorhead was able to close out the win 63-48.

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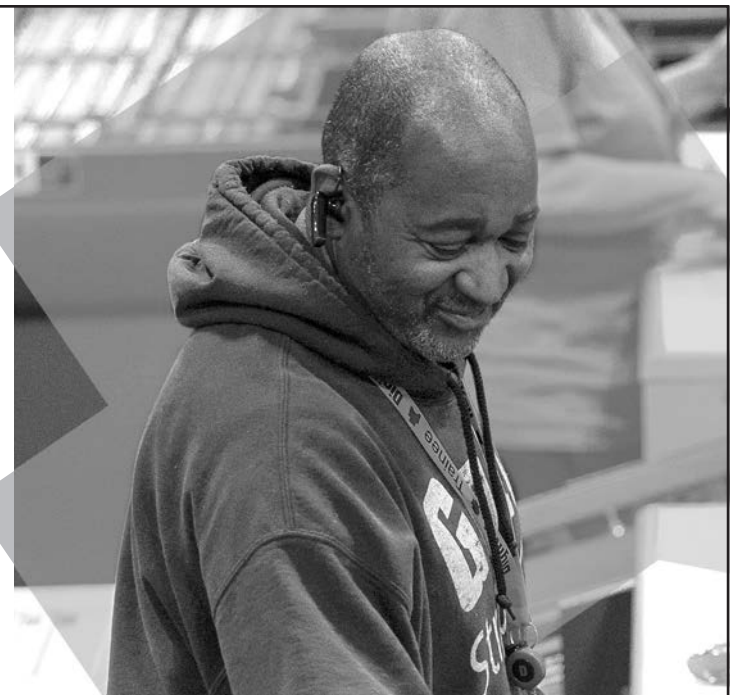
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Crookston sophomore Gabe Perala runs a deep half on Fertile-Beltrami's Jaxon Grunwald during their bout at 127 pounds. Grunwald worked his way out of trouble and eventually won the match 5-4. The Falcons defeated the Pirates 44-28. (Photo by Isaac Telle)

Falcons wrestle to 44-28 win over Pirates

Fertile-Beltrami won eight of the 13 matches Tuesday night in a 44-28 dual meet win over Crookston Tuesday night at Crookston High School.

The Pirates got wins from Mauricio Arriaga by fall over Boe Rasch at 114; Gavyn Hlucny by forfeit at 152; Jose Arriaga by 19-10 major decision over Alexander Molina at 160; Jaron Knutson by for-

feit at 172 and Miles Corneilie at 215.

Fertile-Beltrami 44, Crookston 28
107: Bennett Whitcomb 7th, FEBE over Forfeit, CROO (FF); 114: Mauricio Arriaga (10-1) So., CROO over Boe Rasch 8th, FEBE (F 2:35); 121: Greg Ramberg Jr., FEBE over Forfeit, CROO (FF); 127: Jaxon Grunwald 8th, FEBE over Gabriel Perala (3-4) So., CROO (Dec 5-4); 133: Max Ramberg Jr., FEBE over Kolton Bahrenfuss (1-4) So., CROO (F 1:12); 139: Levi Kresl 8th, FEBE

over Jose Contreras (2-4) 8th, CROO (F 0:32); 145: Gavin Broden So., FEBE over Forfeit, CROO (FF); 152: Gavyn Hlucny (8-0) Sr., CROO over Forfeit, FEBE (FF); 160: Jose Arriaga (6-5) Sr., CROO over Alexander Molina Fr., FEBE (MD 19-10); 172: Jaron Knutson (7-5) So., CROO over Forfeit, FEBE (FF); 189: Jack Erickson Jr., FEBE over Lucas Perala (2-4) Sr., CROO (TF 19-3 (3:57)); 215: Miles Corneilie (1-4) Sr., CROO over Forfeit, FEBE (FF); 285: William Howard Fr., FEBE over Jack Odegaard (2-6) Jr., CROO (F 1:10).

Crookston girls drop games to section foes TRF, EGF



Crookston's Jensen Stinar controls the puck during the second period of the Pirates' 9-1 loss to Thief River Falls. (Photo by Isaac Telle)

The Crookston girls hockey team continued its tough slate of games with a pair of home games against ranked opponents Monday and Tuesday.

On Monday, the Pirates dropped a 9-1 decision to 16th-ranked Thief River Falls at the Crookston Sports Center; and on Tuesday, the Pirates were defeated 7-2 by the East Grand Forks Green Wave at the Kim Braaten Memorial Arena in Mayville, N.D.

The Prowlers took control early in Monday's contest, with four goals in the first period, three in the second and two more in the third. Scoring goals for the Prowlers were Miley Cota, Parker Olsonawski, Lila Dalager, Rowan Kennett, Ella Breiland, Charleigh Hamre, Brynn Hennen, Halle Seeger and Aubrey Payment.

The Pirates' lone goal came from Adley Vigness with 8:45 remaining in the

third period. Emma LaPlante was credited with an assist on the play.

The Pirates were more competitive Tuesday night against the Green Wave. The teams skated to a scoreless tie through one period of play Tuesday night.

The Green Wave tallied a pair of goals by Ady Hjelm and Kelly Dronen in the second period.

The Pirates got on the board 25 seconds into the third period on Jensen Stinar's fourth goal of the season. Blake Schultz assisted on the play as the Pirates cut the deficit to one.

The Green Wave answered just over a minute later with Dronen scoring her second goal of the night unassisted to make it 3-1.

The Pirates responded quickly and got back to within a goal 44 seconds after Dronen's score. Emma LaPlante scored her ninth goal of the season, with Vigness getting the assist 2:18 into the third.

Unfortunately, that would be as close as the Pirates would get. The Green Wave finished the night with four unanswered goals to secure the 7-2 win. Keely Janecke scored at the 2:58 mark. Hjelm scored goals at 4:35 and 11:11 to complete the hat trick, and Laurel Kolstoe rounded out the scoring with 1:30 remaining.

	S	A	T	P
Thief River Falls	4	3	2	9
Crookston	0	0	1	1

First period - TRF, Miley Cota (Alexis Sawatzki) 5:28; TRF, Parker Olsonawski (Chloe Barrett, Lila Dalager) 7:05; TRF, Lila Dalager (short handed) 9:16; TRF, Rowan Kennett (unassisted) 12:24.

Second period - TRF, Ella Breiland (unassisted) 10:50; TRF, Charleigh Hamre (unassisted) 11:42; TRF, Brynn Hennen (unassisted) 14:33.

Third period - TRF, Halle Seeger (Chloe Barrett) 7:30; Crookston, Adley Vigness (Emma LaPlante) 8:15; TRF, Aubrey Payment (Addi Bienenek) 10:10.

Shots - TRF 15-12-7 - 34; Crookston 8-6-5 - 19.

Power plays - TRF 0-for-2; Crookston 0-for-5.

Penalties - TRF 5 (10 minutes); Crookston 2 (4 minutes)

Goalie saves - TRF, McKenna Carr 18; Crookston, Madilyn Abrams 25.

	S	A	T	P
East Grand Forks	0	2	5	7
Crookston	0	0	2	2

First period - No Score

Second period - EGF, Ady Hjelm (Blake Schultz) 7:20; EGF, Keeley Dronen (Megan Bergh) 12:43.

Third period - Crookston, Jensen Stinar (Christina Hershey, Adley Vigness) 0:25; EGF, Keeley Dronen (unassisted) 1:34; Crookston, Emma LaPlante (Adley Vigness) 2:18; EGF, Keeley Janecke (Sydney McDonald) 2:58; EGF, Ady Hjelm (Blake Schultz, Laurel Kolstoe) 4:35; EGF, Ady Hjelm (unassisted) 11:11; EGF, Laurel Kolstoe (Blake Schultz) 15:30.

Shots - EGF 9-5-15 - 29; Crookston 4-2-8 - 14.

Power plays - EGF 0-for-2; Crookston 0-for-3.

Penalties - EGF 3 (6 minutes); Crookston 2 (4 minutes)

Goalie saves - EGF, Reese Kvaser 12; Crookston, Madilyn Abrams 22.

CROOKSTON SPORTS

Saturday, Jan. 10
 ■ Hockey - UMC Men vs. University of Jamestown 5 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 11
 ■ Hockey - UMC Men vs. University of Jamestown noon
Monday, Jan. 12
 ■ Basketball - Crookston Girls vs. Park Rapid Area 5:30 p.m.; Crookston Boys vs. Park Rapids Area 7 p.m.
 ■ Hockey - Crookston Boys at Grafton 7 p.m.; Crookston Girls at Park Rapids Area 7:15 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 13
 ■ Basketball - Crookston Girls at Warren-Alvarado-Oslo 7 p.m.; Crookston Boys vs. Bagley 7:30 p.m.
 ■ Hockey - Crookston Girls at Roseau 7 p.m.
 ■ Wrestling - Crookston Boys

and Girls at Fosston/Bagley 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 15
 ■ Basketball - Crookston Boys vs. Red Lake County 7:30 p.m.; Crookston Girls at Thief River Falls 7 p.m.
 ■ Hockey - Crookston Boys vs. Bagley 7 p.m.
 ■ Wrestling - Crookston Girls at Grand Forks Red River Triangular 5:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 16
 ■ Basketball - UMC Men vs. Wayne State 5:30 p.m.; UMC Women vs. Wayne State 7:30 p.m.
 ■ Hockey - UMC Men at University of Minnesota Club 7:30 p.m.
 ■ Wrestling - Crookston Girls at Prowler Invite (Thief River Falls) 3 p.m.

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