



CROOKSTON WATCH

"NORTHWEST MINNESOTA'S REGIONAL NEWSPAPER"



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Commission recommends Ninth Judicial District candidates to Walz

The Commission on Judicial Selection has announced that it is recommending three candidates for consideration to fill the vacancies in Minnesota's Ninth Judicial District. One vacancy occurred upon the elevation of the Honorable Anne M. Rasmusson to the Court of Appeals, and the other will occur later this year upon the retirement of the Honorable Jeffrey R. Remick. These seats will be chambered in Warren and Crookston.

The candidates include Max Schafer-LaCoursiere, Symon Schindler-Syme and Eliza Scott.

Max Schafer-LaCoursiere is an assistant public defender in the Ninth District Public Defender's Office in Thief River Falls, where he represents clients through-

out northwestern Minnesota. He previously served as an assistant county attorney in the Pennington County Attorney's Office and as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Tamara L. Yon in the Ninth Judicial District. Schafer-LaCoursiere is president of the Oxbow Foundation. He also volunteers with the Association of the French of the North and serves on the University of Minnesota Extension Committee for Red Lake County.

Symon Schindler-Syme is an assistant county attorney in the Beltrami County Attorney's Office, where he handles criminal and appellate cases. He was previously an assistant public defender in the Ninth Judicial District. Schindler-Syme's community involvement includes volun-

teering with the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Judicial Branch, the Minnesota County Attorney's Association Criminal Law Committee, the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society, and Bemidji Great River Rescue.

Eliza Scott is an assistant county attorney in the Roseau County Attorney's Office, where she focuses on felony and gross misdemeanor criminal prosecution and civil commitment matters. She previously served as an assistant county attorney in Beltrami County and a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Donna K. Dixon in the Ninth Judicial District. Scott is a member of the Roseau County Drug



Max Schafer-LaCoursiere

and DWI Court Treatment Team, the Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team, and Roseau County's Commu-



Symon Schindler-Syme

nity Justice Coordinating Committee. She is also a member of the Criminal Law and Civil Commitment committees of the Minnesota



Eliza Scott

County Attorney's Association, the Roseau Women of Today, and the Minnesota Cattlemen's Association.

Carol Abeld retires after nearly 55 years

Ladies and gentlemen, Carol Abeld has left the building.

After nearly 55 years of dedicated service to RiverView Health, Carol has officially retired - closing the chapter on what is likely the longest tenure of any team member in RiverView's history.

What began as a summer job at the hospital switchboard grew into a lifelong career. After 13 years connecting calls and people, Carol transitioned to Patient Financial Services, where she spent more than four decades serving as a patient account representative. Along the way, RiverView became more than just her place of employment.

"It's been my home away from home," she said during her final week at RiverView. "The RiverView 'family' has always been there for me. I have always been happy and proud to say I work at RiverView Health.

"Over the years, I have learned many jobs and taught many coworkers. You never stop learning."

Reflecting on her time at RiverView, she added, "A coworker once told me I should have kept a book of all the wonderful people I've worked with over the years. I wish I would have."

Over five decades, Carol witnessed tremendous growth and change throughout the organization. "I've gone through three building projects, from the three-story white brick building to the now sprawling Crookston campus and satellite clinics," she said. "The growth in medical staff, specialties, and high-tech treatments has been great for our



What started as a summer job almost 55 years ago, wrapped up as a career for Carol Abeld recently. A party was held in February to honor her for the decades of dedication she gave to RiverView Health. (Submitted)

region."

Her connection to RiverView extends beyond her professional life as well. "My family and I have used RiverView's services for so many important moments - births of newborns, deaths of loved ones, surgeries, and emergency transfers. The care and knowledge of our medical staff have always been outstanding."

Those family members include her husband, James; sons, Steven and Brian (Lauren); daughter, Julie (John); and grandchildren Audrina, Jordan, Derek and Henry.

As she steps into retirement, Carol looks forward to simple pleasures - sleeping in a little and embracing whatever each day brings.

Hearing held for housing grant

by Anna Phalen Correspondent

The Crookston City Council met Monday, March 16, hearing updates on a federal grant application, the city's 2024 audit, and a lead service line replacement project.

Public hearing held
The council held a public hearing to gather comment and input related to the Small Cities Development Program, a federal grant program administered through the U.S. Depart-

ment of Housing and Economic Development.

City staff explained that HUD requires a public forum before a grant application can be submitted. The City of Crookston is seeking funding to support water main improvements along the Highway 2 corridor on the city side of the roadway, as well as project administration costs.

Officials indicated the grant could include approximately \$900,000 in project funding with an additional

\$600,000 available through the program. If awarded, the project would need to be completed within 30 months and comply with federal historic preservation requirements.

Project administration would be handled by Northwest Community Action. The grant application deadline is April 15.

Council accepts 2024 audit
During the regular

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School Board suspends superintendent search

Board to hire interim leader for one year

by Anna Phalen Correspondent

The Crookston School Board voted Wednesday, March 11 to suspend its search for a new superintendent after interviewing two finalists and determining that neither candidate fully met the district's needs. The decision followed final interviews with Dr. Robert Lukens and Dr. Tim Godfrey, who were selected from a pool of 10 applicants. The district moved to a second round of interviews after its initial offer for the position was declined by Jason Stanoch of Bemidji.

Following the interviews, reference checks and discussion, the board agreed to halt the current search and begin the process of hiring a one-year interim superintendent while reopening the search for additional candi-

dates.

Dr. Robert Lukens
Dr. Robert Lukens served as superintendent in Harvey, N.D. He previously served as a middle and high school principal in the Kadoka School District and taught in several North Dakota districts.

Lukens holds a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of Mary in Bismarck, along with a Master of Science in science education from Montana State University and a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from the University of Jamestown.

During his interview, Lukens emphasized transparency, communication and visibility within school buildings.

"If things come to attention, communicate quickly," Lukens said, adding that leaders should remain available after delivering difficult news, and stressed the importance of being present in schools interacting with students and staff.

"I like to live where I work," Lukens said, adding that his family would relocate to Crookston and his children would attend school in the district.

Lukens also highlighted experience with negotiations and district finances, including helping pass a bond referendum in a district where one had not passed in more than 50 years.

"The opportunity to lead a district is a precious one," he said.

Dr. Tim Godfrey
Dr. Tim Godfrey currently serves as superintendent of the Red Rock Central School District in Minnesota and has more than 30 years of experience in education, including 16 years in administrative roles.

Godfrey holds a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of North Dakota, a Master of Science in special education from Florida State University and a Bachelor of

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Ways & Means Committee discusses housing development

by Anna Phalen Correspondent

The Crookston Ways & Means Committee met Monday, March 16 to discuss a potential housing development project and ongoing efforts to address riverbank erosion along Houston Avenue.

Diocese property development, TIF district considered

The committee approved moving forward with plans related to a proposed housing development on land owned by the Diocese of Crookston, located north of Memorial Drive.

Taylor Wyum outlined plans for the City of Crookston to secure a purchase option on the approximately 20-acre parcel and issue a request for proposals to attract developers interested in building market-rate housing.

The property, currently

zoned single-family residential, is located south of Minakwa Golf Course and includes mature trees. Depending on proposals received, a zoning change could be considered to allow additional housing types such as twin homes.

City officials are also considering whether to establish a Tax Increment Financing district as an incentive for developers. If supported by the council, the potential TIF district would be included in the request for proposals. The city is coordinating with AE2S on the project. The purchase option on the property extends through January 2027.

Houston Avenue erosion discussion continues

The committee also held an extensive discussion regarding ongoing erosion issues along Houston Avenue and the possibility of pursuing a state bonding bill to fund mitigation efforts.

City staff outlined a three-phase approach to the proposed Riverbank Stabilization Project: property buyouts, demolition of affected homes, and stabilization of the riverbank.

Estimated costs presented included approximately \$1.2 million for the buyout of eight homes, based on Polk County tax values. Demolition costs were estimated between \$450,000 and \$850,000, with additional considerations including asbestos abatement, utility removal, and disposal requirements.

Riverbank stabilization is projected to cost between \$1.7 million and \$2.2 million, with total project costs estimated between \$3.35 million and \$4.25 million. Officials noted the project would likely require a 50% local match if funded

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Committee discusses housing development/Continued

(Continued from Page 1) through a bonding bill.

Interim City Administrator Darrin Selzler expressed concern about the feasibility of meeting deadlines for the current bonding cycle.

"I just don't think it's possible for the city or its city partners to obtain the data and the MMB in the next couple of days," Selzler said. "I just can't recommend we move forward at this time."

Selzler recommended forming a working group to begin gathering required data and preparing for the next bonding cycle in 2027.

Mayor Dale Stainbrook echoed concerns about financial uncertainty. "We don't know what the city share will be," he said.

Houston Avenue resident Gail Myers urged the committee to continue moving forward, emphasizing the urgency of the situation.

"Right now, it is just the concept that needs to be approved. You are not responsible for a penny unless you start to spend it," said Myers. "There are a lot of risks with waiting."

Myers and other resi-

dents reported significant land loss over time, with one property owner noting approximately 40 feet of yard has been lost since 1999, with erosion accelerating in recent years.

Discussion also included questions about funding eligibility, timelines and whether outside partners, including watershed organizations, could assist with project costs. Officials noted there are still many unknowns, including funding sources and regulatory approvals.

Council member Don Cavalier voiced cautious support for continuing the process. "I think we should move forward, but I think it's going to take some time if the money is not there," he said.

Committee members also discussed forming a board or working group to begin preparing the necessary studies and documentation required for future bonding requests.

No final action was taken on the erosion project, and discussion is expected to continue.

School Board suspends superintendent search/Continued

(Continued from Page 1) Science in social science from the University of Southern Colorado.

Godfrey emphasized transparency and community engagement during his interview. "Transparency builds trust," he said. He added that sharing financial information with the community is critical and described visiting with the community in a previous district where a school had closed in order to gather feedback from residents.

Godfrey also highlighted the importance of being visible in schools. "I don't have a problem with rolling my sleeves up," he said.

Godfrey noted he has written approximately \$500,000 in grants during his career and discussed partnerships with local businesses that created student tours and apprenticeship opportunities.

He also shared examples of building relationships with staff and students, including cooking a pulled-

pork meal for staff and supporting a student by dyeing his own hair pink after the student dyed theirs green.

Godfrey highlighted the creation of an online academy in his district as an example of expanding educational opportunities for students.

Board discussion
Following the interviews, board members discussed strengths and concerns for both candidates before reviewing reference checks.

Board members said they appreciated Lukens' enthusiasm, transparency and willingness to relocate to Crookston, but some felt portions of his answers lacked depth.

Discussion of Godfrey highlighted his experience, focus on strategic planning, grant-writing background and emphasis on ethics and transparency. Some board members expressed concern that his expectations for meetings could be unrealistic.

References raised addi-

tional concerns for both candidates. References described Lukens as ethical and active in the community but also said he could be inexperienced, impatient, and make hasty decisions.

References described Godfrey as experienced and capable of stepping into the role immediately, but some noted concerns including making quick decisions and occasionally being rigid or overly forceful with staff.

During the final discussion, board members acknowledged both candidates had areas that could require growth.

Board member Marcia Meine said, "Tim can say no to people and we need that." Board member Lorri

Capistran said she doesn't think either candidate fills our needs at this time, with other members in agreement, while board member Mike Theis added, "There are some areas of concern for both of the candidates."

After discussion, the board voted to suspend the search and begin the process of selecting a one-year interim superintendent while reopening the application process for additional candidates. District officials said the interim leader will guide the district through the transition, allowing the board time to conduct a broader search for a permanent superintendent and ensure the district's continued stability.

Hearing held for housing grant/Continued

(Continued from Page 1) agenda, the council received a report on the city's 2024 audit and approved a resolution accepting the audited financial statements prepared by Baker Tilly. The report was presented by CPA Sheanne Hediger.

Auditors reported the city's financial statements were presented fairly. The audit also includes financial information from the Crookston Housing and Economic Development Authority.

According to the report, the city finished 2024 with a total General Fund balance of \$6.41 million. Of that amount, about \$2.46 million

(38%) is unassigned, meaning it is available for general use.

Other portions of the fund balance include \$1.29 million classified as nonspendable, \$1.30 million committed for specific purposes, \$1.14 million assigned for intended uses, and \$228,521 restricted for uses required by outside sources.

The city reported \$8.44 million in total revenues during 2024, about \$1.1 million higher than budgeted, with investment income significantly exceeding projections. Total expenditures were \$8.2 million, resulting

in a net increase in fund balance of \$241,685 for the year.

The audit also noted several administrative concerns, including limited segregation of financial duties and delays caused by staff turnover. However, auditors reported no disagreements with city management.

Lead service line replacement funding

The council also approved a resolution to apply to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority for financial assistance to support lead service line replacement.

City officials plan to seek

up to \$350,000 through the Drinking Water Revolving Fund to help replace aging water service lines and improve the safety and reliability of the drinking water system.

Council reports

During council reports, council member Morgan Hibma said the Crookston Sports Center and community pool saw significant use during the winter season.

Mayor Dale Stainbrook noted that a proposal for approximately \$30,000 to conduct an in-depth study of the community swimming pool will be brought forward at a future meeting.

American Legion celebrates 107th birthday

March 15 marked the day in 1919 that the American Legion was established by an Act of Congress following World War I. The American Legion is the nation's largest veterans service organization, advocating for veterans, service members and military families.

Crookston's American Legion, Nels T. Wold Post 20 was one of the first posts established in Minnesota. Today, even without a brick and mortar building, 108 paid members of the Post uphold the four pillars that the American Legion vowed to maintain when instated - Veterans Affairs and Rehab, National Security, Americanism and Children and Youth. Crookston's Post 20 maintains an honor guard for deceased military members' funerals, participates in Memorial Day, Veteran's Day on the Hill, Veteran's



Honor Flight fundraisers and Veteran's Day. They sponsor community events, scholarships, Girls State, Boys State, American Legion Baseball, and many American Legion Auxiliary activities.

They served their country and continue to serve their community and fellow veterans. Take time to thank them and wish them a happy birthday.

Crookston Area Ministries

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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 Sunlight 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

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P.O. Box 49 - Climax, MN 56523
Pastor Matt Williams
218-857-2215 • 218-857-3362
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Worship
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100 Jefferson Ave SW - Fertile
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Check out website for further information
www.unitedinchristlutheranparish.org

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www.fisherbyglad.org
Pastor Gretchen Enoch
218-891-4632
Sundays: Worship times alternate, please visit our website or call for information.
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hellofreedomchurch.com
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Thursdays: 7 p.m. Christian Life, Ministry Meeting
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Pastor Joel Kangas
Church email: resurrect@gvtel.com
Church website: www.resurrectionfree.org
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Pastor Mathew McWaters - 218-281-4017
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Facebook: Gosen Church
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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

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Parsonage: 218-574-2222
Sundays: 9 a.m. Sunday School, 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

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33276 339th Ave. SW - Eldred, MN
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701 Eickhof Blvd - Crookston
218-281-3393
website: crookstonmethodist.com - view services here
email: wesleyumcrox@gmail.com
Rev. Ruth Sanders, Pastor
Sundays: 9:45 a.m. Sunday School (Sept. - May), 10:45 a.m. Worship (Communion 2nd Sunday)

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

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510 North Broadway - Crookston
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crookstonfirstpres.org
Rev Michael Ozaki, pastor
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Pastor Pat Baranski
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1214 University Avenue - Crookston
Email: stpauls@midconetnetwork.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
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K9 Bo has joined the Polk County Sheriff's Office. He and his handler, Deputy Titan Engen, are currently undergoing training. (Submitted)

K9 Bo joins the sheriff's office

Sheriff Jim Tadman has announced the Polk County Sheriff's Office just received its new K9, Bo. Mark "Mac" McDonough donated the K9 to the sheriff's office.

Bo is a 14-month-old German shepherd from Germany. K9 Bo's handler is Deputy Titan Engen. Engen and K9 Bo will train at the McDonough K-9 School. They will be trained in handler protection, building searches, evidence searches, tracking for suspects and or lost persons, suspect apprehension, and narcotics detection.

The sheriff's office is continuing to raise funds as training and equipment are costly. It thanked those who have already donated.

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Next month is National Safe Digging Month, and Gopher State One Call reminds homeowners, contractors, farmers, and communities statewide to click or call 811 before starting any digging project.

Spring marks a significant increase in digging activity, from landscaping and fencing to home improvement, construction, and agricultural work. Striking underground utilities, such as natural gas, electric, communications, water, or sewer lines, can result in serious injuries, service disruptions, environmental damage, and costly repairs.

Under Minnesota law, anyone planning to dig is required to contact 811 at least two full working days before excavation begins, excluding weekends and holidays. The free service notifies utility operators, who then mark the approximate location of underground facilities, helping excavators dig safely and avoid damage.

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DEATH NOTICES

Beverly Martindale, 67

Red Lake Falls - Beverly Martindale, 67, passed away on Thursday, March 12, 2026.

Visitation began at 10 a.m. with the Service of the Word at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2026, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Red Lake Falls.

Condolences may be sent at www.johnsonfuneralservice.com.

DuWayne Engelstad, 90

DuWayne Robert Engelstad, 90, of Nielsville, passed away on March 15, 2026.

DuWayne's family celebrated his life with a funeral service on Friday March 20, 2026 at Shelly Marsh River Lutheran Church beginning at 11 a.m. A visitation was held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at Stenshoel-Houske Funeral Home from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service to begin at 7 p.m.

Kenneth (Tooters) Wallace, 83

Kenneth (Tooters) Wallace passed away on March 15, 2026.

A funeral service celebrating Kenneth's life will be held at Euclid Lutheran Church in Euclid on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 11 am with a visitation taking place one hour prior. Burial will be held at a later date.

Cheryl Vraa, 67

Cheryl Marie Vraa, 67, of

Crookston, passed away on March 9, 2026.

A Memorial Service was held on Monday, March 16, 2026 at Stenshoel-Houske Funeral and Cremation Service.

Yvonne Louisa Berhow, 86

Yvonne Louisa Berhow, 86, of Fertile, died on Tuesday, March 10, 2026.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Fertile. Interment was at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Fertile.

Joe McMullen, 74

Joseph McMullen, 74, of Thief River Falls, passed away on Monday, March 16, 2026.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 2 pm on Monday, March 23, 2026 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Red Lake Falls. Visitation will be held from 4-6 pm with a prayer service at 5:30 pm on Sunday, March 22, 2026 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Red Lake Falls. Visitation will also be held one hour prior to the service.

Delbert Desrosier, 84

Delbert Raymond Desrosier, 84, Crookston, passed away Thursday, March 12, 2026.

A memorial service for Delbert will be held at 3 pm on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Stenshoel-Houske Funeral Home with a visitation one hour prior to the service.

Soil health and water quality event set for farmers

The Sustainable Farming Association, in partnership with Lake of the Woods and Roseau County soil and water conservation districts, is launching a practical soil health and water quality-focused learning exchange in northwest Minnesota this month. The NW Minnesota Soil and Water Quality Learning Exchange will be held on Wednesday, March 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Seven Clans Casino, Hotel and Water Park in Thief River Falls.

Advance registration is required for this event. Lunch, coffee and light breakfast is included with registration. Members of SFA can register for \$25, nonmembers for \$35.

The one-day event will feature presentations, farmer-led breakout sessions, and networking time.

The full schedule, speaker bios, and registration can be found at <https://sfa-mn.org/events/nw-minnesota-soil-water-quality-learning-exchange>.

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The City of Crookston is currently hiring for the position of Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator for the Crookston Economic Development Authority (CEDA) supports efforts to grow and strengthen the local business community. The role focuses on coordinating economic development projects, identifying and managing funding opportunities, assisting with grants and loans, and serving as a liaison between residents, businesses, developers, and government or foundation partners.

Submit cover letter and completed job application to:
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NOTICE LEAD SERVICE LINES REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The City of Crookston is soliciting public comments regarding the proposed Lead Service Lines Replacement Project. The Project is located within City limits, with 14 existing service lines identified for replacement. The project would replace lead service lines for public health reasons with HDPE or copper service lines of similar size.

Proposed disturbances would occur where service lines are already present and the land has been previously disturbed. Any above ground disturbance will be repaired and restored to pre-project conditions.

The project is being funded by Minnesota Drinking Water State Revolving Fund along City water utility revenues.

All interested parties are invited to ask questions and express their comments by 5:00 pm on Monday, April 20, 2026. Written comments are preferred to be received via email to the City's consultant (AE2S) at: Betsy.Seaver@AE2S.com. Written comments may also be delivered or mailed to Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC (AE2S) at 4050 Garden View Drive, STE 200, Grand Forks, ND 58201.

If you would like further information regarding the Lead Service Line Replacement Project or this notice, please call Betsy Seaver at AE2S at 701-746-8087.

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2. Prizes will be awarded by each participating business for each age group.
3. Children must bring their colored pictures to the participating business whose name appears under the picture. No mail entries will be accepted.
4. **Judging date for the completed pictures is Monday, March 30, 2026.** All pictures must be in prior to that date.
5. Every participating business will notify winners from their business.



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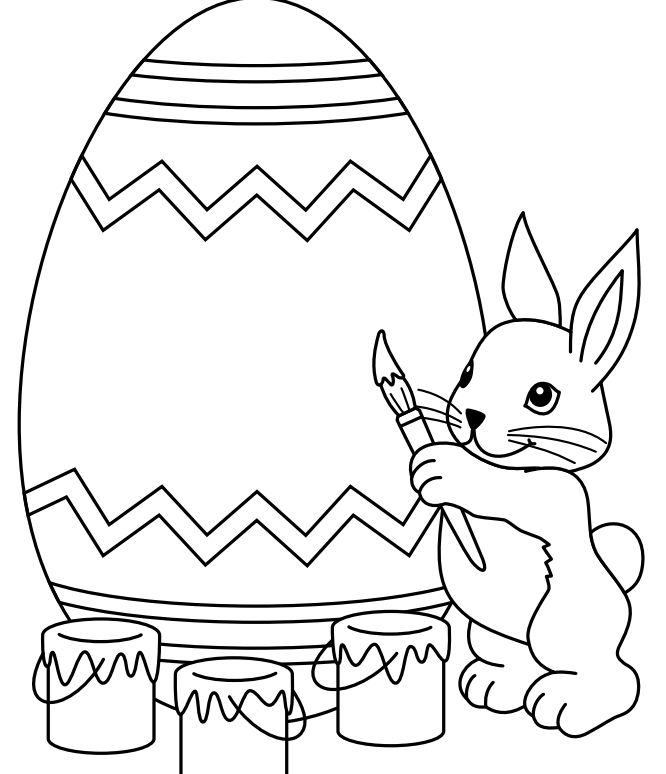
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Nathan Weiss D.C., C.ACU

Rural Reflections ...

Ask hard questions to find your why

by **Grant Nelson**



There are two large white boards at the Sanford Fitness Center where I am a member. There is a monthly challenge board and a board that is for members to post the reason they work out. It's kind of organized, thoughtful graffiti. This board is called "What's your why?" (WYW) board.

I like the WYW board because there is a core reason at the center of the ripples that emanate from almost every activity. What's your why was the first hurdle I had to overcome when I began using the Noom fitness program to lose some weight. WYW is a question that requires total honesty and courage as you might have to admit a truth to yourself that has been buried under rationalizations or even outright lies. If you don't drill down to this truth, your base for the purpose of what you do is structurally weak and hard to sustain. It is your motivation and your drive.

The WYW board at the fitness center is a huge

white board with an erasable marker that you can write down the central reason why you are there. Some of these statements are funny, some are simple and some really strike home. There are verses from the Bible or wishes "to honor God, not me." Some are pushing to a goal such as, "I want to downhill ski at age 80." Others mirror the situation of those who are staying strong like, "They're counting on me" or "I've got little eyes looking up at me." Some of the other "gym art" displays just how often people are working out to ease anxiety or depression. Some of the gym art is actually art.

I like that the statements are written in erasable marker as the work done at a fitness center reveals deeper truths as you put in time. It's a microcosm for life and you should have the right to change your "why" as you learn more about working out or more about life.

The fitness center WYW board is such a poignant tool for working out because it is the power behind the effort. Many in that fitness center are facing internal battles which they are fighting physically with free weights, machines or on a treadmill. To face these struggles through physical effort requires commitment and

nothing feeds commitment like knowing your ultimate reason for the effort.

WYW translates to life because you are not doing something just for the approval of others or for gaining notoriety. This sort of shallow motivation will ultimately run its course. If you have an internal need that makes everything else work, it will drive you to greatness. If you are just looking for an activity that is trendy or will get you some "likes" on social media, you will soon forget the activity as quickly as online algorithms forget you. Hard words, but they are the truth.

So what is the ultimate "why?" It is part of the collage of written internal truths squeezed out of sweat and effort early in the morning, in organized groups or performed alone with wireless headphones for company. It's the unhealthy person who takes those first, vulnerable steps toward health, a young person trying to make a high school team or the Silver Sneakers participant making sure those golden years are golden. It's also for everyone negotiating each day of their life. If you want to know your ultimate why: Ask yourself hard questions, answer them honestly and get busy.

Signs of spring at the library

The Crookston Public Library has a busy spring schedule ahead with several programs for all ages scheduled at the library.

This weekend, the Crookston Public Library will host the grand opening of its annual Seed Library, which invites those interested in growing their own vegetables to pick up free samples of vegetable and herb seeds to start a small garden or container garden. Gardeners with extra seeds to donate are encouraged to drop them off at the library, where they will be shared with those starting their own gardens - possibly for the first time.

The seed exchange will be available from March 21 to May 31, or while supplies last. The project is offered in collaboration with the Family Resource Center and the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Inc. The library also has a number of books to help aspiring gardeners get off the ground. Stop by the library or browse the collection at larl.org/catalog. The Reading by the Red

Book Club will gather in the library's River Room for cookies and a conversation about their selected title for March: "The Bell in the Lake" by Lars Mytting. The group will meet Tuesday, March 24 at 6 p.m. to discuss the historical fiction novel, which is set in a small Norwegian village in the 1880s. All are welcome and no registration is required.

A hands-on learning activity for youth ages 5-18 is scheduled at the Crookston Library in two sessions, one on Monday, March 30 at 6 p.m. and the other on Tuesday, March 31 at 10:30 a.m. The programs offering young learners the opportunity to explore learning about gardening in a hands-on and fun way, as well as an opportunity for parents and caregivers to explore the many educational resources the library offers. This is one of several programs for youth held throughout the month; others include weekly Storytime (Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.) for youth ages 3-6 and a weekly Baby

Bounce (Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.) for youth ages 0-3.

The Crookston Public Library will offer a Glow-in-the-Dark Rock Painting activity, offering aspiring artists the opportunity to paint a glow-in-the-dark rock with fluorescent colors that could even serve as a night light! The program is scheduled Tuesday, March 31 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. and all are welcome.

The Crookston Public Library has also teamed up with the Northern Lights Council, Scouting America to offer a LEGO Fun Day. From towering creations to zippy vehicles, kids will get hands-on time with LEGO stations designed for big imaginations. The come-and-go event will be offered from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Friday, April 3 and will be held at the Crookston Public Library.

All programs are open to the public and are offered free-of-charge. A full calendar of events can be found at larl.org/events.

Emma Miller named D2CCA All-Central Region Second Team for second-straight season

University of Minnesota Crookston women's basketball player Emma Miller (Sr., G, Albertville) was named to the 2025-26 D2CCA All-Central Region Team. Miller was selected D2CCA All-Central Region Second Team for the second-consecutive season. Miller and Katrina Nordick (2012-16) are the two D2CCA All-Region honorees in recent history.

Miller became the NSIC's all-time leading scorer earlier this season, surpassing Minnesota Duluth's Brooke Olson. She finished with 1,692 career conference points. Miller is a three-time All-NSIC First Team honoree, and the first player in school history to receive either All-NSIC First or Second Team accolades in all four of her seasons. In addition, Miller is the first Golden Eagle in program history to score over 2,000 points. She finished with 2,135 career points, and also had the school's three-point mark with 272 career three-pointers.

Miller was a D2CCA All-

Central Region Second Team selection. She played in 115 career games, with 115 career starts. Miller ended her career sixth all-time in rebounds with 594, second in assists with 344, fourth in steals with 138, seventh and first all-time in career field goals made with 834. As a senior, Miller averaged 19.7 points, 5.1 rebounds, and 3.0 assists per game. She shot 38.7 percent from the field, 28.6 percent from beyond the arc, and 84.9 percent from the stripe. Miller had 16 games as a senior with over 20 points, including a season-high 33 points December 17 against Jamestown.

The D2CCA Central Region Player of the Year was Talexa Weeter of Fort Hays State University. Natalie Bremer of Minnesota State University and Bergan Kinnebrew of UMary were named D2CCA All-Central Region First Team. Miller was joined on the second team by Lauren Wilson and Lydia Haack of Concordia University-St. Paul.



Minnesota Crookston senior Emma Miller was recently named to the 2025-26 D2CCA All-Central Region Second Team for the second consecutive season. (Photo by the University of Minnesota Crookston)

Area players named to Section 8A Boys Hockey All-Section teams

The selections for Section 8A boys hockey were announced recently.

First Team All-Section 8A

Forwards: Gavin Anderson, Warroad; Spencer Anderson, Thief River Falls; Garrett Fischer, Crookston.

Defense: Broden Hontvet, Warroad; Max Bies, East Grand Forks.

Goalie: Finn Hanson, Warroad.

Second Team All-Section 8A

Forwards: Easton Kennedy, Detroit Lakes; Tucker Lovejoy, East Grand Forks; James Palmer, Bagley/Fosston/CG.

Defense: Hudson Petit, Detroit Lakes; Ayven Hontvet, Warroad.

Goalie: Griffin Lindberg,

Detroit Lakes.

Third Team All-Section 8A

Forwards: (Tie in voting) Ryan Shaugabay, Warroad; Will Cymbaluk, Detroit Lakes; Jace Panzer, East Grand Forks; Finn Henry, Park Rapids.

Defense: Sam Hard, Warroad; Tate Hamre, Crookston.

Goalie: (Tie in voting) Cooper Roff, Thief River Falls; Noah Schindele, East Grand Forks.

Section 8A Coaches Awards

Section 8A Head Coach of the Year: Jay Hardwick, Warroad

Section 8A Michael Tveit Memorial Assistant Coach of the Year: Connor Morgan, Crookston.

2026 Northern Galaxy All-Conference awards are announced

The 2026 Northern Galaxy All-Conference teams and awards have recently been announced for girls basketball.

All-Conference Team: Annie Peterson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; Markelle Pederson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; Macey Boe, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; Lexi Lawrence, Sacred Heart; Leah Sundby, Sacred Heart; Finley Horken, Sacred Heart; Kayence White, Kittson County Central; Greta Kuznia, Kittson County Central; Aubrey Halverson, Red Lake County Central; McKaelyn Frizzle, Red Lake County Central; Ayla Woinarowicz, Stephen-Argyle Central; Faith Efta, Northern Freeze; Nevaeh Kotrba, Goodridge/Grygla.

All Conference Honorable Mention: Kenley Marquis, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; Bryn Stevens, Sacred Heart; Iz-

abelle Cwikla, Sacred Heart; Afton Lindgren, Kittson County Central; Hanna Warnke, Kittson County Central; Isabelle Paradis, Red Lake County Central; Keanna Landrus, Red Lake County Central; Lexie Dahl, Badger/Greenbush-Middle River; Jocelyn Groven, Stephen-Argyle Central; Isabella Gerardy, Northern Freeze.

Offensive Player of the Year: Greta Kuznia, Kittson County Central.

Co-Defensive Players of the Year: Annie Pederson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo; and Finley Horken, Sacred Heart.

Coach of the Year: Brian Loe, Sacred Heart.

2026 Conference Champions: Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Ponies.

Minnesota DNR announces open water fishing regulations for Upper Red Lake

Anglers fishing on Upper Red Lake during the 2026 open-water season that starts Saturday, May 9, will have a five-walleye possession limit, with only one walleye longer than 17 inches allowed. This is the same regulation that was in place for the 2025 open-water season.

"Upper Red Lake walleye have been managed at a level that, among other factors, resulted in a number of recent strong year classes," said Andy Thompson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources area fisheries supervisor for Bemidji. "This regulation is an opportunity

for anglers to keep abundant young walleye while also maintaining spawners at a level that continues to produce successful year classes."

Spawning stock levels on Upper Red Lake have a "sweet spot" where abundance is high enough to produce newly hatched walleye, known as fry, but not so high that young fish don't survive well due to competition for food. Through this regulation, the Minnesota DNR is seeking to keep the fishery in this condition by focusing harvest on the plentiful immature fish under 17 inches, so that future numbers of spawning walleye aren't

higher than desired, and overall harvest doesn't exceed agreed-upon levels established with Red Lake Nation.

Walleye management on Upper Red Lake is a collaborative effort between Red Lake Nation and the Minnesota DNR, governed by a joint harvest plan revised by the Red Lakes Fisheries Technical Committee in 2015 and again in 2025. Winter harvest regulations for 2026-2027 will be determined after the summer fishing season and fall assessment netting.

The Upper Red Lake Citizen Advisory Committee reviews walleye harvest totals

and provides recommendations for the state waters of Upper Red Lake. Current fishing regulations for Upper Red Lake are detailed on the Minnesota DNR website (mndnr.gov/fishing/upper-red-lake-regulations.html).

The DNR reminds anglers to protect Upper Red Lake and all Minnesota waters from aquatic invasive species by cleaning and draining watercraft and equipment, and putting unwanted bait in the trash. A decontamination station is available at the Tamarac River Big Bog Public Water Access, referred to locally as Homestead Park.

DNR seeks public input on proposed updates to Rainy Lake management plan

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources invites those interested in Rainy Lake fisheries management to share their thoughts on a draft update of the plan for the lake.

The Rainy Lake Fisheries Management Plan was last updated in 2013. It is important for the next update to reflect current public values and attitudes about how the lake should be managed.

The updated plan will be used to guide management of Rainy Lake fish populations. It will include management goals, objectives and strategies for the lake for the next 10 years.

The DNR will host a virtual public meeting to provide an overview of the plan and its purpose, answer questions, and collect public

input. Registration is not required. The virtual public meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 6. The public can join the webinar from the DNR's Rainy Lake webpage (mndnr.gov/rainy-lake).

The public can get a digital copy of the draft update on the Rainy Lake webpage (mndnr.gov/rainylake). Comments on the draft plan may be submitted by: using the online form at the Rainy Lake webpage (mndnr.gov/rainylake); emailing interfalls.fisheries@state.mn.us. Calling International Falls area fisheries staff at 218-598-8196, mailing comments to 392 Highway 11 East, International Falls, MN 56649; or providing verbal or written comments at the April 6 virtual meeting. The DNR is

accepting comments on the draft plan through 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 13.

Rainy Lake spans 220,800 acres along the Minnesota-Ontario border, with 54,140 acres in Minnesota, including significant waters within Voyageurs National Park.

The lake's Canadian Shield geology, mesotrophic character, diverse fish community and extensive recreational use make it biologically unique and highly valued.

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Kathleen Rustad named head coach of Minnesota Crookston Volleyball

The University of Minnesota Crookston volleyball program announced a new head coach. Director of Athletics Stephanie Helgeson announced the hiring of Kathleen Rustad to lead the Golden Eagle volleyball program.

Rustad is the sixth head coach in the Division II era and 12th overall, dating back to 1974.

Rustad enters the collegiate ranks after an extremely successful run coaching for Hawley High School. The former Win-E-Mac Patriot and North Dakota State Bison standout has led the Nuggets for the last seven seasons and has brought that program to back-to-back State Class AA Championships, including a 32-2 record this past fall. The Nuggets fell behind in the state championship two sets to none to Chatfield, before winning the final three sets to win their second-straight title. In her time at Hawley, Rustad took the Nuggets to three State appearances.

In her six seasons at the helm of the Nuggets, Rustad had two Class AA Coach of

the Year honors and was an astounding 136-35 at the helm of Hawley. The most matches she lost in a year was 11 with Hawley. She also earned a pair of Section Coach of the Year honors.

Rustad led the Nuggets to their first-ever State appearance in 2021 in just her second year at the helm. That year, with her daughters Faith and Ingrid on the team, the Nuggets won third place at state, including a five-set upset win over Cannon Falls in the first round.

"We are thrilled to announce Kathleen as our next volleyball coach," said Helgeson. "Kathleen brings a winning pedigree to the program and has won wherever she has been. She has great energy and enthusiasm and an understanding of volleyball and is knowledgeable of the region and state of Minnesota and we can't wait for her to get started."

Rustad played collegiately for the North Dakota State Bison and finished her Bison career with 2,216 assists and led the Bison to a 30-4 record as a senior. She was one of five sisters to play for the

Bison from 1987-92 and 1998-01. During that stretch with the former Hegg sisters, the Bison won 85 percent of their matches and won a whopping eight North Central Conference titles.

Rustad is thrilled for the opportunity to lead the Golden Eagle volleyball program. "I'm super excited to start this new adventure and I am excited to get involved with the program," mentioned Rustad. "I'm especially excited to get to know the team and be a part of building this family up together. Go Golden Eagles!"

Rustad and her husband, Bjarne, have two daughters, Faith and Ingrid. Faith ran cross country for the University of Sioux Falls and Ingrid is currently a freshman volleyball player at North Dakota State College of Science. She received her Bachelor of Arts in nursing from Concordia College in Moorhead and a Bachelor of Science in HPER from North Dakota State University.



The University of Minnesota Crookston announced earlier this week that it has hired Kathleen Rustad to be the 12th head coach in program history. Rustad, pictured far right, served as the head volleyball coach at Hawley High School the past seven seasons. Also pictured from left to right are Bjarne, Faith and Ingrid Rustad. (Submitted)

Minnesota Crookston falls to Wayne State 15-3

The University of Minnesota Crookston baseball team fell 15-3 in the series opener with Wayne State College Friday, March 13 at the Pete Chapman Baseball Complex. The Wildcats hit three home runs and were guided by an eight-run third frame as they picked up the win.

Minnesota Crookston dropped to 11-8 (4-3 NSIC) with Friday's loss. The Wildcats improved to 11-9 (3-4 NSIC) with the win. Wayne State snapped a three-game losing streak against the Golden Eagles. The Wildcats last won 12-1 February 22, 2025 in Pueblo, Colo.

Wayne State was guided

by the pitching of Tyler Albert, who improved to 4-1. Albert threw five innings, allowing three runs on five hits. Albert struck out eight, and walked two. Adam Egger pitched a scoreless sixth, while Keegan Hansen threw a scoreless seventh.

Ashton Detloff (Fr., LHP, Perham) ran into some of his first struggles in his young career. He fell to 3-1 after allowing seven runs on six hits in 2.1 innings. He struck out one, and walked one. Aaron Bennett (R-Jr., RHP, Saginaw, Minn.) allowed two earned runs on three hits in 0.2 innings. Kaylor Chamberlain (So., RHP, Mankato) continued to be an effective

reliever for Minnesota Crookston. Chamberlain allowed one earned run on two hits in three innings. He struck out three, and walked two. Derek Carpenter (R-Fr., RHP, Hatton, N.D.) pitched a scoreless frame, with two strikeouts.

Minnesota Crookston was led by Tori Uhlich (Jr., OF, Wahpeton, N.D.), who went 2-of-3, with a run scored. Elias Leach (Fr., OF/LHP, Plymouth) went 2-of-3. Aaron Wensloff (Jr., IF, Roseau) finished 1-of-3, with an RBI and a run scored. Terrence Moody (Jr., IF, Sauk Rapids) went 1-of-1.

Wayne State jumped out to an early 3-0 advantage

Friday. A Nate Cunningham triple for the Wildcats plated Monosmith and Madsen to make it 2-0. They added a run with a Braden Cannon sacrifice fly, scoring Cunningham to end the half inning with a 3-0 advantage.

Minnesota Crookston trimmed the deficit to 3-1 when Uhlich crossed on an Americo Sculati (R-Sr., OF, Golden Valley) sacrifice fly.

The Wildcats pushed their advantage to 4-1 with a Tony Coniglio base-knock to drive in Chaney. Later in the second, a Max Heard double brought in Coniglio to extend the lead to 5-1.

Wayne State extended their lead to 6-1 in the third

with a solo shot from Cunningham off Detloff. The Wildcats continued an early onslaught in the top of the third with a three-run blast from Easton Mains, plating Chaney and Casey Prychak to extend their lead to 9-1. Wayne State pushed their advantage to 13-1 with a grand slam from Cunningham, driving in Monosmith, Heard, and Madsen to put the Wildcats in the driver's seat.

The Golden Eagles made a dent in the disadvantage in the fourth. An Aaron Wensloff triple drove in Sculati to cut the deficit to 13-2. Wensloff scored on a Connor Bushbaum (R-Sr., OF, Sagi-

naw, Minn.) sacrifice fly to trim the Wayne State lead to 13-3.

Minnesota Crookston put runners on the corners in the bottom of the fifth, but Albert struck out the last two batters to keep the tilt 13-3 in favor of Wayne State.

The Wildcats added a run in the top of the sixth when Tyler Lofdahl scored on an error. They pushed the lead to 15-3 later in the frame when Chaney scored on a Mains groundout.

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