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Trying on a Polk County Deputy vest during the Kops versus Kids Program: Keeping our Communities Great program held at Win-E-Mac school was Jens Stordahl. The deputies came to gym class with the kids on Friday, December 17th.

Precinct caucuses will be February 1st

Minnesota political party precinct caucuses are scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. at various locations around Polk County.

The U. S. Constitution grants the management of elections to State Legislatures where rules are developed for the process of eligible voters selecting their preferences for candidates for elective offices locally and statewide, the president every four years, and the content of the party platform – a document of issues they want to address. Caucuses are the official beginning of Minnesota’s election process and are the ground floor for individuals to join the process of self-governance in a democracy where citizen involvement is the method by which “we the people” govern ourselves.

Caucuses are organized by the major political parties and all eligible voters are invited and encouraged to meet with the party of their choice. Participants are provided with the opportunity for neighbors to get together and discuss candidates and issues of importance to them, as well as offer suggestions to address concerns.

- Why Attend?**
- Get to know your neighbors better;
 - Learn about the local political process;
 - Discuss issues of concern;
 - Examine opportunities to participate in the community further.
- What will you do?**
- Register as a participant;
 - Discuss candidates for office and issues of concern to your community;
 - Identify and suggest actions legislators take to address concerns.
 - Elect delegates to the County, District, and State Conventions.
- Caucuses are entirely free of charge and you have a right to time off from work to attend caucuses.
- Check your local newspapers to find your caucus location, contact Polk County Auditor-218.281.2554 or go to <http://www.sos.state.mn.us>, find Elections and Voting on the green main menu, then click on caucusfinder which will appear on the website mid-January.

How to teach kids about emergency preparedness

Emergency preparedness is something everyone in the household should learn, including children. But approaching the topic of emergencies with youngsters requires finesse. Children are capable of comprehending many things, especially when information is presented in age-appropriate ways.

The American Red Cross recommends parents narrow down the subject matter when discussing disasters and emergency readiness with kids. Parents and caregivers can start by determining which disasters are most common where they live. There's no need to broach hypothermia safety, for example, if the family resides in a warm climate. Another good step is to speak with schools or daycare centers to find out how they handle the subject of emergencies, and then reinforce those lessons at home.

The local library may have books in their children's section and there are plenty of online resources that address safety skills and emergency preparedness in language that children can understand. In addition, the Red Cross notes there are mobile apps designed to teach and reinforce important safety skills in informative but fun ways. For example, the Monster Guard app is geared toward kids between the ages of seven and 11 who are asked to join the Monster Guard and prepare for real-life emergencies at home and in other environments.

Children may not understand everything that goes into preparing for an emergency, but they may be more inclined to get involved if they are given tasks they can handle. Children in Pre-K to grade 2 can learn how to dial 9-1-1 or practice...

Kids... Continued on page 2....

Looking Back on 2021

January: With COVID-19 still looming over us, we started the year with school in hybrid learning. While elementary students were back to a full time school day, high school students were still attending part time and distance learning the other part.

High School sports were back in play, with restrictions and smaller game schedules.

Mia Thompson and Paige Breckel were both named Academic All State for their roll on the Win-E-Mac Patriots volleyball team.

Patriot Alex Jacobson was named Academic All-State for 9-Man football.

The Win-E-Mac Triple A Award nominees were Felicity Andrews and Gavin Walker. The triple A award encompasses academics, athletics and arts in it's candidates.

The kids at The Clubhouse Childcare Center were able to spread some joy as they traveled around the community, including outside of McIntosh Senior Living to sing songs for the residents who had been quarantined for so long.

McIntosh held it's Community Blood Drive on January 27th, after a year off. The blood drive collected a total of 47 units of blood products for patients in need. A total of 52 individuals volunteered to donate blood and 43 were able to give blood.

After 47 years at Wild Rice Electric, CEO, and McIntosh native, Steve Haaven,retired.

February: The Win-E-Mac high school students were able to shift back to daily in-person learning beginning on February 8th with the option of distance learning still available.

A near miss as a semi-truck came close to hitting the home of McIntosh resident Jim Wertish.

The 2021 Win-E-Mac School District Spelling Bee was held at 9:00 on Thursday, January 28th in the Arts & Events Center. Ten spellers--four from fifth and sixth grade, and

two from seventh grade--competed in the Bee. In the end, Joy Neubert, a seventh-grader, was the champion and will be competing at the Regional Spelling Bee on Wednesday, February 3rd. The Regional Spelling Bee will be held in a virtual format this year. Taking second place was Adylaide Hickman from fifth grade. Taking third place was Nathaniel Spry from sixth grade. In all, 95 words were used in the competition over the course of 16 official rounds (plus a practice round). The championship word was "nutrients".

Polk County launched an "Equitable Property Value Hub" website to help ensure fair and transparent property appraisals for local property owners.

Jim Ferden currently Board Chair at Win-E-Public Schools, was re-elected to a fourth term



January 2021: Steve Haaven.

Community CALENDAR

McIntosh Community Calendars are now available at First National Bank. They are \$6 and all proceeds help support local events, projects, and causes. Pick yours up today!



February 2021: Sliding down a snowhill and having some fun with her friends in the snow Monday morning in the mild weather is Hazel Burthwick at The Clubhouse Childcare Center in McIntosh..



In the spirit of the season and service-learning, the Win-E-Mac high school invited elementary students to shop at the Kid's Mall that was held on December 16th. McIntosh Bone Builders held this event in the past as part of Santa Day festivities. Children get to enter the Kid's Mall to purchase gifts for their families. They can purchase items for a quarter and the gift will be wrapped. WEM high school students were the ones helping elementary students make selections and wrap their gifts.



Two wonderful Polk County deputies came in to Win-E-Mac school during physical education classes, for our Kops versus Kids Program: Keeping our Communities Great! This program focuses on kids making good decisions and supporting each other through it! Thank you Deputy Ben and Deputy Matthew.

Winners from FNB Open House

First National Bank was able to host a "grab-n-go" open house this year in an effort to bring things a little more "back to normal". We thank everyone who was able to attend. We hope to be able to have a more traditional feel next year! Congratulations to our open house winners! They are as follows:

- Crock Pot – Donald Jackson
- Screw Driver Set – Marvin Neste
- Throw Blanket – Audrey Hemmingsen
- Yeti Mug – Chrissy Roue
- Yeti Mug – Greg Woods
- Ham – Gerald Borud
- Ham – Elizabeth Oppegaard (No Picture)
- Ham – Donald Vaa



Donald Vaa



Greg Woods



Audrey Hemmingson



Gerald Borud

Medicare 101 virtual class

There is a lot to do when you become eligible for Medicare and it can seem overwhelming. Minnesota's Senior LinkAge Line® offers a class giving you answers.

The Senior LinkAge Line Medicare 101 class is for people new to Medicare and would like to learn about Medicare Parts A, B, C and D. Topics include a comprehensive introduction to Medicare including what Medicare covers, supplemental insurance and Part D prescription coverage. During class, you will find out how to get the most from your benefits and how to research your Medicare plan options using the Medicare.gov site.

Space is limited, to attend please register online at www.dancingskyaaa.org or call Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-2433.

WHAT: New to Medicare Virtual Class

WHEN: Thursday, January 20, 2022 from 2:00 PM – 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Online Virtual Class

REGISTRATION: www.dancingskyaaa.org

The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging in partnership with Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line helps older Minnesotans and caregivers find answers and connect to the service and support they need.

Call the Senior LinkAge Line at (800)-333-2433, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or visit www.MinnesotaHelp.info® to chat with a specialist during business hours.

Why breakfast still matters

Many adults recall being told "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" when they were youngsters.

Though the accuracy of that phrasing hinges on what people eat during their morning meal, scientific evidence supports the notion that breakfast is important to overall health. A 2017 study published in the Journal of Physiology found that eating breakfast decreased the activity of genes involved in insulin resistance and increased the amount of sugar taken up by the cells.

Those two results suggest that eating breakfast could help protect against chronic illnesses, including type 2 diabetes. As important as breakfast can be, more important is what

individuals eat for breakfast.

Various cereals contain a significant amount of added sugars, which the Mayo Clinic notes have been linked to a host of adverse health effects, including weight gain, increased triglyceride levels and tooth decay.

In 2019, registered dietitian nutritionist Sharon Collison told Time magazine that a morning meal that contains protein, whole grains, healthy fat, and a fruit or vegetable can increase satiety and reduce risk for snacking later in the day.

In addition, such a breakfast should provide significant amounts of fiber, vitamins and minerals that can benefit both short- and long-term health.

New Year's resolutions for grieving

by **Connie DeKrey, LBSW, CT**

This time of year, we are inundated with suggestions for changes we can make to greatly improve our lives in the new year.

New Year's resolutions to improve our health and surroundings may be useful and even beneficial. However, if you are among those who have experienced the loss of a loved one during this past year, the typical sentiments may ring hollow for you as the calendar turns. (How can it possibly be so important to eat more broccoli or walk 10,000 steps a day when there is an empty chair at the dinner table and a pair of sneakers by the back door waiting for a loved one who isn't returning?)

Perhaps it would be fitting to consider a different sort of New Year's resolution—a set of suggestions suited especially for those who are entering a season of their lives grieving someone whom they loved.

Such a set of resolutions might look like this:

- I resolve to not place time limits on my grief; it will take as long as it takes.
- I resolve to acknowledge my grief as my own—that it is as individual as I am—and will take shape in its own unique way.
- I resolve to be mindful of the need for flexibility when it comes to the expectations of others (and myself).
- I resolve to not be pressured by "shoulds."
- I resolve to cut myself some slack when I am not as productive as I might like, behave in ways uncharacteristic of my usual self or simply "don't care."
- I resolve to accept that others may not understand my pain, and it is probably not realistic to expect that of them. (Until one has walked the path, how can one know the terrain?)
- I resolve to express my feelings without guilt, and not apologize for tears.

The comfort of quiche

Cheese is a comfort food that boasts a sizable fan base. There are all sorts of appealing cheeses to cater to any craving, ranging from soft varieties like ricotta or brie to hard cheeses like Pecorino Romano or gorgonzola.

Cheese features prominently in many dishes, including quiche. Quiche is a rich, cheese custard tart that originated in France. While there are many varieties of quiche, Quiche Lorraine is perhaps the best-known and the blueprint upon which all other quiches are based. Individuals who want to try their hand at crafting this beloved dish can utilize this recipe for "Quiche Lorraine" from "French Classics Made Easy" (Workman Publishing) by Richard Grausman.

Quiche Lorraine

Serves 6 to 8

Tart pastry

1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
8 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter, cut into eight pieces

1 egg
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 tablespoons cold water

Filling

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 eggs plus 1 egg yolk
1 1/2 cups milk
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

1/4 pound ham (boiled, baked or smoked),

1/4 pound Swiss-style cheese, such as Gruyère or Emmentaler, diced, sliced, or grated (about 1 1/3 cups)

1. Preheat the oven to 475 F with the rack set in the middle position.

2. Place all of the tart pastry ingredients into the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade and process until the mixture blends together to form a mass, about 20 seconds. If it doesn't form a mass after 25 seconds, add another teaspoon of water.

3. Turn the pastry out onto a lightly floured work surface, dust the pastry lightly with flour and begin the blending or kneading.

4. Lightly dust the pastry with flour and shape into a flat round, much like a thick hamburger.

5. Line a 9 1/2- or 10-inch tart pan with removable bottom with the pastry.

6. Prick the pastry, line it with aluminum foil, and weight it with 1 pound of dried rice or aluminum pie weights. Bake until the edges of the pastry begin to color, about 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and remove the foil and

beans from the pan. Spread the mustard over the bottom of the pastry. Lower the oven temperature to 425 F.

7. In a bowl, beat the eggs and yolk lightly. Blend in the milk, salt, pepper, and nutmeg.

8. Spread the ham and cheese evenly over the bottom of the tart shell. Pour the custard into the tart shell to within 1/8-inch of the top of the crust. Holding the tart pan by the outer rim (so as not to dislodge the bottom), place the pan in the oven.

9. Bake until the custard puffs, 25 to 30 minutes. Allow to cool for at least 10 minutes before cutting.

Kids...

Continued from page 1 ...

tice "Stop! Drop! And Roll!" safety techniques. Older children can be tasked with making emergency supplies shopping lists and helping to put away these items, or working with parents to devise a home evacuation plan.

Practice makes perfect, and once families determine which emergency plans they should put into effect, they can role play with children to help make sure that everyone recognizes what to do in the case of an actual emergency. Important phone numbers can be posted in a key location (and programmed into mobile phones), and children should know what to do in the event they get separated from their guardians during a weather situation or another emergency. Children also can help pack go bags with key items they don't want to part with should they need to evacuate home due to a weather emergency.

Children can be involved in emergency preparedness by working through topics they can understand and explore.



**Community
Birthday
and
Anniversary
Calendar**

Wed. Jan. 5: Daros Zahn, Sandy Salvhus, Corey Smeby, Mathea Jore
Thur. Jan. 6: Winston Carlson
Fri. Jan. 7: Paul Jore, Leland Vigoren
Sat. Jan. 8: Katelynn Schulz, Tina Farrell
Sun. Jan. 9: Paige Breckel, Jessica Shimp
Tues. Jan. 11: Davin Faldet

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▪ I resolve to be grateful for concerned others who willingly just listen.

▪ I resolve to recognize that my acceptance of assistance and support of others allows them the blessing of giving.

▪ I resolve to forgive those who say or do that which feels hurtful, recognizing that unkindness is not intended.

▪ I resolve to extend to myself the same grace and patience I would to others, were they in my situation.

▪ I resolve to find some little way each day to begin to reinvest in life, in an effort to move toward hope and a sense of purpose.

▪ I resolve to continue to speak my loved one's name, tell our stories and embrace my memories.

Whether or not you are one to make resolutions, it is our hope that one or more of these thoughts will resonate with you.

Turning the page to begin a new year, you can be resolute as you move forward in your season of grief.

For more information about the free grief support available to you through Hospice of the Red River Valley, please contact the grief support department at (800) 237-4629.

Connie DeKrey, LBSW, CT, is a grief specialist at Hospice of the Red River Valley.

**LSS
Meals Menu
687-2262**

Mon. Jan. 10: Tator Toto Casserole, French Cut Green Beans, Warm Peaches, Peanut Butter Cookie, Dinner Roll, Milk

Tues. Jan. 11: Chicken Wild Rice Hotdish, Broccoli, Pineapple, Monster Cookie, Milk

Wed Jan. 12: Swedish Meatballs, Mashed Potatoes, Carrots, Bred, Bread Pudding, Milk

Thur. Jan. 13: Roasted Turkey w/Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, peas, Sage Dressing, Pumpkin Dessert, Milk

Fri. Jan. 14: BBQ Pork on a Bun, Scalloped Potatoes, Baked Beans, Spiced pears, Dessert, Milk



**ST. MARY'S CHURCH
Fosston
Fr. John Suvakeen,
Pastor**

Sun. Jan. 9: 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley

Sun. Jan. 16: 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley

**OURS SAVIOR'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
(ELCA)
McIntosh
Interim Pastor Keith Zeh
Synodical Authorized
Minister Katie DeMarais**

Our Saviors Lutheran Church, McIntosh will run church services on Channel 30 on Garden Valley Channel 30. They will also be available on YouTube on channel One in Spirit - The Journey. Our Saviors service will be available by 8:30 am each Sunday until further notice.

**MCINTOSH AFLC
McIntosh Trinity / Mount
Carmel:
Pastor Karl Anderson**

Sunday Services
9:30 Mt Carmel
1100 Trinity
Video Sermon -
GVTel Channel 30
9:00am Sunday
Repeated 6pm Wednesday
Also available on the McIntosh Free Lutheran YouTube Channel

**GOSEN LUTHERAN
CHURCH
Independent
Gary Johnson, Pastor
www.gosen-church.com
Face Book: Gosen Church**

Sun., Jan. 9: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study; 11:00 a.m. Worship Service (also on Facebook: gosenchurch and gosenchurch.com)

Tues. Jan. 11: 10:00am Sunday worship service telecast on GVTV--30

Wed. Jan. 12: 6:30pm Bible Study at Sharon Ramberg's home

Gosen Church is located 4 miles south of the junctions of Highways 2 & 59 or 4 miles north of Winger; then 1/2 mile east on County Road 206. For information call 268-4242 or 687-3461.

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The County Line
By Warren Strandell
Polk County Commissioner, Dist. 2

Local government units are pretty much ready to start a new year... the past year with the COVID issues and a few other things, too, wasn't the greatest.

The same goes for people. For me, the old year ended with a few things that went upside down.

One, which I hope will get fixed yet this week, had to do with the technology part of my life. For some reason, probably its age, I couldn't get my computer to talk to my printer to get things to print... not to either one of my printers. My favorite IT guy determined that the "driver" wasn't doing its thing. I have no real idea what a driver does except that it probably drives some bit of information, say from the computer to the printer. That makes sense but when I was told that the printer has a driver, too, I was lost.

Age a problem??
Okay, forget having to understand that part of the problem, which likely has something to do with that age issue mentioned earlier... both the 17 years of the LaserJet printer and my age. I came from a different era, one that understands an engine and how valves open and close as the cylinder moves up and down. But not today's technology.

I never really had any formal education on how computers perform. My OJT (on the job training) began in an office setting where I could just hol-

der out "Hey, how do you do this?" The answer was quick and I could get on with what I was doing.

That office setting went away years ago and despite with my years of stumbling along in the technology world I'm still on the No. 1 turn when others have no problem crossing the finish line.

Okay, so that was problem No. 1.

Another age thing??
Problem No. 2 is that the ice maker on my refrigerator has quit working. Probably another age thing. The Maytag unit looks a lot like the refrigerators of today but it has passed the quarter century mark in its lifetime. I can probably get along without ice this winter but not next summer, especially not if we have a repeat of last year.

Problem No. 3 has involved trying to make my checking account balance. I think I might have gotten that issue solved, or at least close to it. After deducting a check that wasn't in my book but was in the bank's accountings, I was only off three cents this month. We'll know better when the next statement comes out in a couple weeks.

So, that's some of what has been on my plate the last few weeks.

On the county workplan
For Polk County, things seem to be in place for the coming year. The levy — that's what funds the county's share

of operations — will be increased 3.5 percent for 2022. While no one likes taxes, costs go up. The county has a really good employees and, especially in today's climate, they have to be taken care of financially. If county salaries aren't competitive there are big problems. With all of the opportunities that are out there today, more pay and better benefits don't always help.

For a bit of history on levies, the county's average annual levy increase over the past 14 years has been 2.76 percent. I think that's something that commissioners and county administration can be pretty proud of, especially when we have been able to both construct (the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail and Justice Center) and maintain other county buildings, roads, equipment and keep a really good staff.

The \$17.5 million in bonds that were sold to pay for the jail portion of the Justice Center will be paid off in four years... in February 2026. The other part of the \$25.5 million Justice Center project — the part that houses the Polk County Court system, the Tri-County Community Corrections Administration and Probation Department, the Polk County Attorney's Office, and Polk County Public Health — was paid for in cash when the center was built. Knowing that there were buildings and space issues that would have to be

dealt with, commissioners and administration had over several years stashed away some \$8 million to help address that problem.

Per diems paid debt
The \$1.3 million a year that has been needed for debt service on those bonds has been more than paid for by the income from per diems that other jurisdictions have been paying to house their inmates when they have space issues. So, the jail hasn't been costing county taxpayers anything. It has been a very good investment.

Not all is roses, however. The Red River Valley Juvenile Center, a part of Tri-Valley Community Corrections, is in the process of having to be extensively remodeled. What will probably be a \$1.3 million rebuilding job was brought on when a pop-up rainstorm occurred last May at the same time that the roof was being replaced.

While the structure of the building wasn't really affected, the Residential Living unit portion of the Center and the elec-

trical equipment room, which contained all of the electronic security equipment, were destroyed. Heating, ventilating and other upgrades will now be a part of the work. Bidding will be done in mid-January. Litigation is underway to see who pays for what.

Jail population reduced
A staffing shortage that was at least partly brought on by COVID but had gone on for some time before that too has forced the closure of one 60-bed general population unit of the Regional Corrections Center jail.

That has reduced the occupancy of the jail from a maximum of 200 inmates down to 140 and will reduce significantly the income that has been derived from housing prisoners from other jurisdictions.

Tri-County Corrections is in the process of trying to recruit and to train new corrections officers, who when ready to work shifts by themselves work 12-hour days. Pay and benefits are good. While emotionally draining in the training period,

the job provides lots of time off for other endeavors.

The Juvenile Center building and corrections officer shortage are the big issues, but there will always be issues that have to be addressed. Polk County accounts for 87 percent of Tri-County Corrections operations and is the owner of the buildings. That puts the county right at the front of everything.

That's some of what is on the county plate. There will always be something that needs to be done and we could certainly get along without COVID.

Thoughts for the day:
When everything has been said and done, much more will have been said than done. — Gerald Hamerlik

Complaining about a problem without proposing a solution is called whining. — Teddy Roosevelt

Disclaimer: Thoughts expressed in this column are those of the author and are not necessarily a reflection of the opinions of the other members of the Polk County Board.

Did you know?

According to Gallup's 2021 Economy and Personal Finance survey, the average individual in the United States is retiring earlier than many people might expect.

Gallup found that the average retirement age was 62, which is two years earlier than the working respondents indicated they planned to retire. Canadians are retiring a little bit later than their American

counterparts, as Statistics Canada reports the average retirement age in Canada is just over 63 and a half.

The average retirement age is worth noting, as studies routinely find that many working professionals greatest concern about retiring is that they won't have enough money saved to meet their needs. By recognizing that they may end up retiring earlier than they

initially planned, professionals can make a concerted effort to save more money in the years ahead.



Assessing the risk
of invasive plants in MN

Monika Chandler, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Invasive plants are species not native to Minnesota that cause harm to public health, the environment, public roads, crops, livestock, and other property.

Assessing the risk of invasive plants helps us understand how to respond to them. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) multi-organizational Noxious Weed Advisory Committee (NWAC) conducts risk assessments to help inform whether a species should be regulated as a noxious weed and, if so, whether it should be regulated as Prohibited Eradicate, Prohibited Control, Restricted, or as a Specially Regulated Plant.

The risk assessments are documents based upon a decision tree of questions about the following:

- What is the native range and distribution in North America?
- What is the potential for establishment and spread in Minnesota?
- How potentially problematic is the species?
- Does the species have beneficial qualities?
- What is the likelihood of control?

The outcome of the risk assessment process is a listing recommendation for the MDA commissioner to consider. Many species are assessed, and the recommendation is to not regulate.

The assessment process generally takes one year with assignments in winter, initial drafts due in the spring, next drafts in the summer and nearly final drafts are presented to all committee members in the fall.

Recommendations based on these assessments are voted on by NWAC in the winter. The commissioner reviews the recommendations and makes final decisions. Sometimes additional time is needed if surveys, research, or tests are needed to inform the assessment. If there is new information or new control methods available, assessments can be updated.

The Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council has a list of completed Minnesota Noxious Weed Risk Assessments. In 2022, the committee will update assessments for yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), pale swallow-wort (*Cynanchum rossicum*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), mead-



Knotweeds can grow into pavement and buildings which can require costly repairs.

ow knapweed (*Centaurea x moncktonii*), Oriental bitter-sweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Amur silvergrass (*Miscanthus sacchariflorus*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and

poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). In 2023 and 2024, assessments will be conducted for species not previously assessed. Visit Minnesota's current noxious weed list.

MN produce farmers
asked to complete MDA
2022 Grower Questionnaire

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is asking produce farmers to fill out the annual Grower Questionnaire which will help farmers identify the federal food safety requirements that apply to their operations.

Data from the questionnaire also provides the MDA with a more accurate assessment of Minnesota's expanding produce farming sector.

"The Grower Questionnaire is an important tool to help Minnesota's produce farmers navigate the federal produce safety requirements," said Alexandra Cortes, MDA Produce Safety Program Outreach Analyst. "It also helps our program better understand farmers' needs and improve resources and programs for them."

The Grower Questionnaire should be filled out once per year, per produce farm. Participation is voluntary.

Farm contact and location information is classified as private and not made public. Produce growers who opt out of the questionnaire will be contacted by the MDA Produce Safety Program to determine any inspection requirements.

The 2022 MDA Grower Questionnaire is available online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ProduceSafety.

Data gleaned from previous questionnaires has found that:

- 41% of Minnesota fruit and vegetable farmers are growing more than 5 crops — with some growing up to 80 fruit and vegetable crops in a season
- Tomatoes and apples are the top crops grown by produce farmers
- More than half the produce farms are under 10 acres in size

The most current data is available in the 2020 Produce Safety Program Report.

Approximately one third of Minnesota's estimated 3,000 produce farmers participated in the previous Grower Questionnaire and the MDA encourages more farmers to complete the 2022 questionnaire to help raise awareness of their industry and strengthen its growth.

Farmers can contact the MDA Produce Safety Program at 651-539-3648 or email producesafety.mda@state.mn.us to request a paper copy of the questionnaire, or for more information.



Who wouldn't love to enter a door with Olaf as your greeting. Mr. Svalen's 4th graders sure seemed to like it.



A fireside retreat outside of Mrs. Lindberg's room at Win-E-Mac School.



(Above and below) both preschool classes helped to make their classroom door special by creating a cup of Christmas cocoa to decorate the door with. Adding special marshmallow decorations made the cup of cocoa complete.



Simple strategies to combat stress

Just about everyone experiences stressful situations. Sometimes a measure of stress can provide motivation to do one's best or strive for an especially lofty goal.

However, when stress becomes a chronic condition, it can adversely affect individuals' quality of life and even their overall health.

Harvard Medical School says stress can manifest itself in myriad ways. Stress can cause tension headaches, indigestion, aches and pains, or even heart palpitations, and it may affect the mind by making it hard to concentrate or make decisions. Many people experience stress through emotional or psychological symptoms, such as irritability or feeling down. Learning how to effectively manage stress is essential for individuals' overall well-being.

Exercise regularly

Exercise serves many functions, including acting as a potent stress relief strategy. The Cleveland Clinic says aerobic exercise releases endorphins, which are natural substances that help a person feel better and maintain a positive attitude. Movement activities like yoga or Tai Chi also can relax

the mind and body and promote physical health.

Take media breaks

Overwhelming oneself with a barrage of negative news stories or constant information can increase stress levels. Individuals can strive to remain informed and still build breaks into their schedules. Shut off news programs, turn over the newspaper or tune out of social media from time to time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that individuals who are stressed out by world events reduce the number of times they read the news or check the headlines each day.

Meditate or perform breathing exercises

Breathing and meditation can help alleviate stress, according to the American Heart Association. A quick meditation can provide some perspective. If a situation is stressful, go for a walk or take a few slow, deep breaths until the body relaxes. Harvard Medical School also says meditation can induce a relaxation response, which is an antidote to stress.

Change negatives to positives

Negative self-talk may increase stress, but positive

self-talk can help a person calm down. Individuals should practice positive self-talk every day. Instead of saying, "I hate when this happens," say, "I know how to deal with this, I've done it before."

A small amount of periodic stress can be a good thing. However, chronic stress poses a significant threat to individuals' long-term health.



Win-E-Mac Student Council Announces: Snowfest will be January 31-Feb 4 and the Snowfest dance will be Feb 4. This dance will be Semi-Formal.

WEM Kid's Night – Boys' basketball game vs. Fosston Greyhounds – Friday, January 7 th –grades pre-K-6 th grade. Kids will receive a free mini basketball at the end of the varsity game. Varsity players will be in the gym to give autographs afterwards.



Mrs. Frisks' class was surrounded by sweet treats that decorated the entry to their classroom for the Win-E-Mac door decorating at the Elementary school.



Mr. Langemo's class with their decorated door that got them into the holiday spirit at Win-E-Mac School.



The Win-E-Mac staff and students had an Ugly Sweater Day on Monday, December 20th. Here, the staff shows their holiday spirit. WEM staff included back row left to right: Ryan Breitbach, Brady Langemo and Nate Johnson. Middle row: Charity Salmonson, Anne Schow, Ross Roragen, Ian Hanson, Angie Walker, Jodi Lee, Jason Svalen, Adam Jore, Carol Johnson, Augusta Maruska, Cassie Subbert and Taylor Orthaus. Front row: Heidi Determan, Frannie Langemo, Suzanne Weik, Melanie Nelson, Liz Lindberg, Melanie Anderson, Stephanie Frisk, Angie Brtek, Jill Landsverk, Heidi Stuhau, Amanda Shultz and Eileen Cook.