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Polk County Board of Commissioners appoint Youth Advisory Board members

In 2018, The Polk County Board of Commissioners approved the formation of a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) under Polk County Public Health (PCPH).

During the December 20, 2022, Commissioners meeting, Sarah Reese, PCPH Director recommended a list of students for appointment as a Youth Advisory Board Member for two years.

She recommended they re-appoint senior Kallie Hand and appoint Lilah Zavoral, Sarah Thoreson, Olivia Ystenes, Katelyn Vesledahl, Julia Buhler, Erin Bowman, and Kyran Moen. All those recommended where appointed to the Youth Advisory Board.

The YAB provides a vehicle for young people in Polk County to become involved in governmental public health services, merging civic engagement and leadership development for high school students. By engaging youth in our agencies policies, practices, and procedures, we bring new energy,

information, and knowledge into our mission-based work through youth targeted, age and gender sensitive interventions.

“Our Youth Advisory Board comes together and discusses Public Health matters, advises us on what’s happening in their schools and communities, and works on Public Health initiatives that are important to them.

“It’s so exciting to have most of our Polk County schools represented, and great to have the leadership of students to share their knowledge and experience to guide us in our work.

“It’s very important that we hear from young people; it helps us do our work and engage in the community the best we can,” Kirsten Fagerlund, Lead Coordinator, Polk County Public Health.

For more information about the PCPH YAB contact Kirsten Fagerlund at 218-281-3385 or email [kirsten.fagerlund@co.polk.mn.us](mailto:kirsten.fagerlund@co.polk.mn.us)



Pictured L to R: Commissioner Mark Holy, Lilah Zavoral - Senior/Sacred Heart, Olivia Ystenes - Junior/Fertile-Beltrami, Commissioner Joan Lee, Sarah Thoreson - Junior/Climax-Shelly, Julia Buhler - Sophomore/Crookston, Commissioner Gary Willhite, and Commissioner Warren Strandell. Not pictured: Kallie Hand - Senior/Win-E-Mac, Erin Bowman - Junior/East Grand Forks, Kyran Moen - Senior/East Grand Forks, Katelyn Vesledahl - Senior/Fosston, and Commissioner Gerald “Jerry” Jacobson.



Holly Breckel shows students how to make bird feeders using pine cones and peanut butter during January at Faith Christian Academy.

Accessibility the focus of Agassiz ELC Giving Hearts Day drive

The Agassiz Environmental Learning Center has provided guided outdoor experiences for thousands of kids over the past 30 years.

In 2023, the AELC is working to make an even greater impact and make the experience more accessible. The organization is working to create a more inclusive and accessible experience for users of all abilities and mobility levels. Among the goals, the organization is working to add benches for resting points, assistive technology, and adaptive devices where possible.

Providing an opportunity for children and adults to be outdoors and discover the wonders of nature helps people discover their connections to nature.

To provide these outdoor adventures for all, Agassiz ELC is conducting a special fundraising campaign as part of Giving Hearts Day.

So far, \$5,200 has been raised as a challenge match from generous local donors committed to helping kids get outdoors. Now through Giving Hearts Day on February 9th, Agassiz ELC is seeking additional contributions to help



meet and exceed this challenge match to reach Agassiz ELC’s total campaign goal of \$25,000. Although this goal is just the beginning of the needs, it is a great starting point to a VERY big project.

Contributions will support staff to lead children on field trips, provide programming for adults, to enhance outings, and begin making small changes to improve every experience. In addition to delivering youth programs, education staff will also provide public programs, lead naturalist hikes in the Fertile Sand Hills, and develop interpretive materials to help “kids of all ages” discover the Fertile Sand Hills and enjoy the wellness benefits that nature provides in a format that meets their individual needs to the best of their ability.

Giving Hearts Day arose in 2008 as a simple but unique fundraising concept: Around Valentine’s Day, ask people to show affection to not only people they love but charities, too. In the decade-plus since, the event has gone on to become one of the longest-running and most successful giving days in the country, providing a platform for North Dakota and northwest Minnesota charities to raise over \$138 million. It is the “Super Bowl” of giving in the Upper Midwest. It has become the region’s day to feed the hungry, nurture the elderly, and educate tomorrow’s leaders.

Contributions can be made by check payable to Agassiz ELC and mailed so they are received before February 9th to the Agassiz ELC, PO Box 388, Fertile, MN 56540 or dropped off at Fertile City Offices by February 9th. Please include “Giving Hearts Day” on the memo line of your check and/or date the check for February 9th.

Contributions can also be made now through February 9th at the Agassiz ELC website, [aelfertile.org](http://aelfertile.org) or at the AELC page on the Giving Hearts Day website, [givingheartsday.org](http://givingheartsday.org).

Contributions large and small are all sincerely appreciated in this effort to provide outdoor learning opportunities for all. For more information or questions, please contact Stacy Erickson, AELC Board Director at [stacyerickson31@gmail.com](mailto:stacyerickson31@gmail.com) or 218-277-9338.



The 2023 Win-E-Mac School District Spelling Bee was held at 8:30 on Tuesday, January 24th in the Arts & Events Center. Sixteen spellers from fifth through eighth grades competed in the Spelling Bee. In the end, Megan McGlynn, a sixth-grader, was the champion and will be competing at the Regional Spelling Bee in Thief River Falls on Wednesday, February 8th. Taking second place was Hayden Johnson, from eighth grade. Taking third place was Stella Davis, a sixth grader. In all, 118 words were used in the competition over the course of 10 official rounds (plus a practice round). The championship word was “crevices”. Pictured (L-R) are Stella Davis, Megan McGlynn, and Hayden Johnson. The pronouncer (pictured) was Melanie Nelson, and the judges were Adam Jore and Katrina Courneya.

# Polk County's Reaching Rural Initiative team announced

The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced that a team of professionals representing the criminal justice system, public and behavioral health fields, social services and county commissioners from Polk County was chosen to be part of a select group of fellows in a new rural leadership program.

The program is called Reaching Rural: Advancing Collaborative Solutions. Program fellows will learn how to adopt bold solutions to the persistent challenge of substance use in rural communities. They'll work closely with innovators who have established successful programs in other rural communities.

The participants were selected through a competitive process. "I am excited for the opportunity to work with other leaders both from within Polk County and throughout the country to evaluate the current response to substance abuse in our communities and think creatively about how to be even more impactful in our collective efforts." – Andrew Larson, Director of Tri-County Com-

munity Corrections. The year-long program, which kicks off in December 2022, will have a strong focus on creating engagement across rural communities and sectors. Over the course of the year, participants will benefit from virtual and in-person learning opportunities which include coaching, skill-building workshops, and local and regional asset mapping. The program will demonstrate how diverse systems with different missions can engage with one-another to serve justice-involved individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders more effectively. The Reaching Rural: Advancing Collaborative Solutions initiative is a collaborative project providing training to a class of over 65 fellows working to adopt bold solutions to the persistent challenge of substance use and misuse in 81 rural communities across 15 states.

The fellows include elected county leaders, county and tribal judges, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, public defenders, public health and behavior health practitioners,

emergency management professions, reentry coordinators, and individuals working in community nonprofits. The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State Justice Institute (SJI), with support from the Institute for Intergovernmental Research co-sponsor the project. The National Association of Counties (NACo) is a key partner. To learn more, visit <https://rural.cossappresources.org/reachingrural>. The Polk County team is represented by:

- Andrew Larson, Executive Director – Tri-County Community Corrections
- Greg Widseth, Polk County Attorney
- James Tadman, Polk County Sheriff
- Joan Lee, Polk County Commissioner
- Molly Paulsrud, Supervisor – Polk County Social Services
- Sarah Reese, Director – Polk County Public Health
- Shannon Kronlund, Director of Outpatient Services - Al-luma.

# The basics of cardiac arrest

On a Monday night in early January 2023, the Buffalo Bills were in Cincinnati to take on the hometown Bengals. The game was a highly anticipated, primetime matchup between two of the best teams in the National Football League, but it would be interrupted and ultimately postponed after Bills safety Damar Hamlin suffered a frightening injury during the game. After tackling Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins, Hamlin stood up, only to fall flat moments later. Medical personnel rushed to Hamlin's side, and it was later determined he went into cardiac arrest.

Days went by as football fans across the nation prayed for Hamlin's recovery. Good news arrived by the end of the week, as doctors treating Hamlin reported his condition showed marked improvement. Indeed, within days of that news, Hamlin was on his way back to Buffalo, much to the delight of millions of people across the country.

Hamlin's story made international headlines and left many people across the globe asking questions about cardiac arrest.

**What is cardiac arrest?** The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute reports that cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops pumping. One of the dangers of cardiac arrest is that blood stops pumping to the brain and other vital organs. In the days after doctors first shared news regarding Hamlin's recovery, praise was heaped on the medical personnel, including Bills assistant

athletic trainer Denny Kellington, for their rapid response, which saved Hamlin's life and helped preserve the 24-year-old safety's neurological function.

**How dangerous is cardiac arrest?** The NHLBI notes that cardiac arrest is a medical emergency. In fact, the NHLBI indicates that nine out of 10 people who have cardiac arrest outside of a hospital die. That makes the recovery of Hamlin, who was administered CPR on the field for several minutes prior to being transported to the hospital, all the more incredible.

**What are the symptoms of cardiac arrest?** Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that there are no symptoms in some cases of cardiac arrest. However, individuals may experience these symptoms prior to cardiac arrest:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations
- Loss of consciousness

**What causes cardiac arrest?** The suddenness of the injury to Hamlin undoubtedly left millions of people confused about how the condition could affect a young professional athlete seemingly in peak physical condition. Specifics about Hamlin's medical history are protected by privacy laws, so unless Hamlin chooses to share that information, the public will not learn about why he suffered from cardiac arrest. However, Johns Hopkins

reports that there are three main causes of the condition.

- **Arrhythmia and ventricular fibrillation:** Arrhythmia is a condition marked by problematic electrical signals in the heart that lead to an abnormal heartbeat. Ventricular fibrillation is a type of arrhythmia that causes the heart to tremble rather than pump blood normally. It is the most common cause of cardiac arrest.
- **Cardiomyopathy:** Cardiomyopathy is a condition in which the heart is enlarged. Johns Hopkins notes that when a person has cardiomyopathy, the heart muscle thickens or dilates, which causes abnormal contractions of the heart.
- **Coronary artery disease:** The NHLBI indicates that most people who experience cardiac arrest have heart disease, even if they didn't know it beforehand. The most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which is marked by the buildup of cholesterol inside the lining of the coronary arteries. That buildup leads to the formation of plaque which can partially or completely block blood flow in the arteries of the heart. Certain behaviors or lifestyle choices also can trigger cardiac arrest. For example, the NHLBI reports that heavy alcohol consumption or recent use of cocaine, amphetamines or marijuana can cause cardiac arrest. Severe emotional stress and physical exertion, including that which is typically required of competitive athletes, also can trigger cardiac arrest. More information is available at [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov).

# Lemon pound cake brings sunshine to the table

Cooking at home enables anyone to customize ingredients and gain control of the foods they eat. Too often commercially processed items are contain ingredients that compromise consumers' overall health. This recipe for "Lemon Poppy Seed Pound Cake" is made from pantry staples.

Whether baking alone or with the family, try this recipe, courtesy of "The Pampered Chef® Stoneware Inspirations" (The Pampered Chef®, Ltd.).

**Lemon Poppy Seed Pound Cake**  
*Makes 1 cake or 6 mini pound cakes*

- 11/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 11/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup (11/2 sticks) butter, softened (do not substitute margarine)



4 ounces cream cheese, softened

- 4 eggs
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon Pantry Double Strength Vanilla
- Powdered sugar (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Spray Stoneware Fluted Pan with nonstick cooking spray. Combine flour, granulated sugar, lemon zest, poppy seeds, baking powder, and salt in a stainless, two-quart mixing bowl; mix well. In a stainless

four-quart mixing bowl, beat butter and cream cheese on high speed of handheld mixer for 1 minute, or until blended (mixture will form a stiff paste).

- 2. In a small batter bowl, whisk eggs, milk and vanilla until blended. Add egg mixture to cream cheese mixture in four additions, beating 2 minutes after each addition. (Do not undermix).
- 3. Pour batter into pan. Bake 55 to 60 minutes or un-

# RiverView offers first aid classes

Thousands of people die each year in situations where first aid could have made a difference. Make your home and community a safer place by learning what to do in case of a medical emergency.

RiverView Health hosts four basic first aid classes a year. Participants in each class learn to provide first aid for acute injuries and sudden illnesses such as burns, bites, poisoning, and seizures.

Class dates for 2023 will be on the following Thursdays:

- February 2
- May 4
- August 3
- November 2

First aid classes are held in the RiverView Home Care Building at 721 S. Minnesota Street, Crookston, from 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm. The cost of a class, including the book and card, is \$50. You must pay in advance to save your spot. To register or for more information, call 281-9405. No walk-ins will be accepted.



RiverView offers these classes as part of its American Heart Association (AHA) Community Training Center. Contracted Community Training Centers, like RiverView, are the only sites permitted to offer AHA classes to the public and professionals through their affiliated instructors and programs.

The American Heart Association is not responsible for fees for these classes. The AHA strongly promotes knowledge and proficiency in all AHA

## LOOK WHO TURNED 80!

**Curtis Leier**  
His family would like you to come celebrate on **Sat., February 4th** from **12:00 to 2:00 p.m.** at the **Erskine Community Center**

## NOTICE

### Hill River Board of Audit

The Board of Audit meeting of the Township of Hill River, County of Polk, State of Minnesota, will be held on Monday, February 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Ray Sundrud hunting shack. Call Ray for directions. The Clerk's financial records shall be open for review.

Raymond O. Sundrud,  
Clerk/Treasurer  
Hill River Township  
Phone: (218) 435-1029

## LSS

### Meals Menu

687-2262

**Call to reserve your meal. Indoor dining at 11:30 am; drive-up available at 11:00 am.**

**Mon. Feb. 6:** Liver & Onions or Poor Man's Steak - Boiled Potatoes - Stewed Tomatoes - Wheat Rolls - Cinnamon Rolls - Milk

**Tues. Feb. 7:** \*Bingo\* Sausage Gravy over Buttermilk Biscuits - Roasted Potatoes - Apple Slices - Zucchini Bars - Milk

**Wed. Feb. 8:** Ginger Citrus Chicken Breast - Rice Pilaf - Peas & Carrots - Wheat Bread - Peaches - Milk

**Thur. Feb. 9:** \*Bingo\* Sloppy Joe on Bun - Potato Wedges - Baked Beans - Fruit - Swedish Coconut Cookies - Milk

**Fri. Feb. 10:** Closed

## Community Birthday and Anniversary Calendar

**Wed. Feb. 1:** Scott Grove, Todd Tranby, Dakota Hedlund, \*Mark & Danette Strom

**Fri. Feb. 3:** Felicity Andress, Katelyn (Johnson) Probst, Jazmine Burthwick

**Sat. Feb. 4:** Paul Schow

**Sun. Feb. 5:** Rebecca (Lee) Kleven, Rhett Roed, \*Craig & Lynette Espeseth

**Tues. Feb. 7:** Mavis Finseth, Tori Lee Weber, Lydia Herem, Hazel Burthwick, \*Ron & Nicole Grande

**Ad deadline: Noon Friday**

# BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

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## McIntosh Times

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"Serving the Win-E-Mac area"

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classes and has developed instructional materials. Using these materials in an educational class does not represent course sponsorship by the AHA. Fees charged for a class, except for a portion for AHA materials, do not represent income to the AHA.

**McIntosh Community Calendars**  
McIntosh Community Calendars are now available at the First National Bank of McIntosh. There are plenty for sale and the price is still \$6. Pick up yours today!

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

Wed. Feb. 1: Noon - 8:00pm Adoration  
Sun. Feb. 5: 8:00am Confession; 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley  
Wed. Feb. 8: Noon - 8:00pm Adoration  
Sun. Feb. 12: 8:00am Confession; 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley  
Wed. Feb. 15: Noon to 8:00 pm Adoration; 11:30am Mass

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

Sun. Feb. 5: 10:00am Coffee Hour; 10:30am Worship Services  
Sun. Feb. 12: 10:00am Coffee Hour; 10:30am Worship Services  
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:  
Interim Pastors John Anderson and Phil Rokke

**Sunday Services**  
11:00am Mt Carmel  
9:30am Trinity  
**Sunday School**  
10:45am Trinity  
9:45am Mt. Carmel

**GOSEN LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Independent  
Gary Johnson, Pastor  
[www.gosen-church.com](http://www.gosen-church.com)  
Face Book: Gosen Church

Sun, Feb. 5: 9:30am. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study; 11:00am Worship Service (also on Facebook and [gosenchurch.com](http://gosenchurch.com))

Tues, Feb. 7: 10:00am. Sunday worship service telecast on GVTN--30  
Wed, Feb. 8: 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.*

**VERNES LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMC)**  
McIntosh  
Pastor Lee Laaveg

Sun. Feb. 5: 9:00am Worship  
Sun. Feb. 12: 9:00am Worship

**IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
McIntosh  
Pastor Bruce Blocker,

Sundays: 9:00am Worship; 10:00am Fellowship Hour; 10:15am Sunday School

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Winger

Sundays: 9:45am Sunday School; 10:00am Coffee Fellowship; 10:30am Worship

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH-NALC**  
Erskine  
Rev. Pam Thorson

Sundays: 10:30am Worship

Please contact the McIntosh Times if you move or have a change in your address so we can keep the paper coming to your home on time.

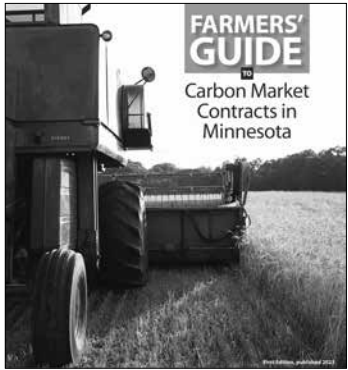
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## Farmers’ Guide to Carbon Markets

Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), in partnership with Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP), released a Farmers' Guide to Carbon Markets in Minnesota.

With one fifth of the world's largest companies setting net-zero emissions targets, farmers are being asked to make changes to their operations that sequester carbon and sell companies credit for that sequestered carbon. These relations between farmers, large companies and often third-party vendors are defined by contracts.

The 32-page guide written by attorneys Stephen Carpenter and Lindsay Kuehn is filled with information to help farmers navigate carbon contracts. There's a handy question-and-answer section that draws on text taken from actual contracts and information



to generate discussion with the representative offering the contract.

MAWQCP-certified producers who have obtained the Climate Smart Endorsement will receive a hardcopy of the Farmers' Guide to Carbon Markets.

“Minnesota farmers now have greater opportunities to combat climate change by tapping into this new and evolving carbon marketplace; however, we must recognize the concerns farmers may have,” said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. “We're pleased to partner with

Minnesota Farmers Union and Farmers Legal Action Group to develop this guide that will ensure farmers have access to the information they need to succeed in this evolving carbon contract arena.”

“The carbon markets are really in their infancy, without a lot of regulation and common structure,” said MFU member Pat Lunemann. Lunemann, of Twin Eagle Dairy in Clarissa, is one of 10 farmers who served as advisors to the guide's authors. “Carbon markets are like the ‘Wild, Wild West’ where everyone is shooting from the hip. No entity is there to assure that contracts are fair to both parties involved. Going forward, there is much potential for farmers to capture rewards for innovative practices on their farms and the guide describes the opportunities and the obstacles that may be in front of us.”

The Farmers's Guide to Carbon Markets is available on the MDA's website.



On Monday, January 16th, the Win-E-Mac Patriot Football team handed out awards at their annual end-of-the-year gathering. Receiving certificates were Tommy Revier (All-Conference Honorable Mention), Ryan Kangas and Jonas Spry (All-Conference). Jonas also received his 9-Man All-State plaque.

## Good Food Access Program Grant applications due by March 16th

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the 2023 Good Food Access Program (GFAP) grants to increase availability and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods to underserved communities.

The GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant helps grocery stores and small food retailers purchase equipment or make physical improvements that will allow them to stock more fresh foods. Potential projects may include the purchase and installation costs of shelving, coolers, and freezers, as well as mobile food trucks, permanent infrastructure at farmers' markets, or architectural work.

A total of \$320,750 is available for this year's round of

GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement Grants, and the MDA anticipates awarding between 10 and 18 grants of up to \$50,000 each.

A cash match is not required, and up to 50% of the award may be requested in advance. Multi-site proposals are encouraged.

The GFAP Technical Assistance Grant is available to help nonprofit organizations and public agencies provide appropriate technical assistance — including guidance and resources on topics such as business planning, financing, marketing, food procurement and distribution, handling and merchandising fresh foods, and more — to eligible food retailers, such as grocery stores, corner stores, and farmers' markets.

The MDA will award up to \$100,000 in this round of GFAP Technical Assistance Grants. Applicants may request between \$5,000 and \$50,000, and the grants can cover up to 75% of project costs.

Awards for both grants must be used to support projects that are located in or serve census-designated food deserts or low- to moderate-income communities with limited access to supermarkets.

All grant applications are due by 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2023.

For more information, including a list of eligibility requirements, visit the GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant and the GFAP Technical Assistance Grant webpages.

## Radon testing during home purchases declined nearly 40% in 2022

*Real estate transaction is key time to identify and reduce cancer-causing gas.*

The number of home radon tests completed during real estate sales in 2022 was down 39% from 2020, even though home sales did not decline, a new analysis from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) shows. Reduced testing means fewer home buyers are identifying and reducing this cancer-causing hazard.

MDH analyzed professional radon testing data for 2020 to 2022 and found that in 2022 there were 19,976 real estate tests reported by professionals, which was lower than the 32,537 tests reported in 2020.

The colorless, odorless gas occurs naturally in Minnesota soils and is found at elevated levels in about 40% of all Minnesota homes. It is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. In fact, each year radon kills more than 21,000 people across the country. While there are ways to test for radon and fix it, many people are unaware of the risks.

Fortunately, the radon risk is largely preventable by testing homes and reducing radon problems by installing radon reduction systems. Real estate transactions present an opportunity for home buyers to reduce their lung cancer risk. If the radon level is high, buyers could request that sellers install a radon mitigation system. With more people working from home, it's more important than ever to test homes for radon, health officials say.

During January, Radon Action Month, MDH is making a special push to urge everyone to test their home for radon, including when purchasing a property.

“Unfortunately, we have seen a decline in radon testing reported to us during home sales,” said Dan Tranter, supervisor of the MDH Indoor Air Program. “Radon professionals have also told us about a decline in their services. During the hot housing market in the last couple of years, some home buyers were skipping home inspections and radon tests.”



Health professionals recommend testing for radon during real-estate transactions. Sellers must disclose any prior radon testing and provide a two-page publication to buyers under state law. Radon tests should be incorporated into a home inspection. MDH licenses home inspectors and other professionals who test for radon. A list of currently licensed radon measurement professionals can be found on the Find a Radon Measurement Professional page on the MDH website.

“From 2018 through 2020 we experienced tremendous increase in radon testing,” said Doug Laurent with Homefax Radon Services, a Plymouth-based home inspection company. “However, in early 2021, the market conditions drove many buyers to forgo a home inspection and with it, radon testing. Buyers that waived their home inspections and radon tests are not following up with testing after they move in, at least not with a professional.”

The average radon level in Minnesota homes is about 4.2 picoCuries per Liter (pCi/L). MDH recommends installing a radon mitigation system when the radon level is at 4 pCi/L or above. But you can't know what the radon level in your home is unless you test, Tranter said.

Amanda Klecker of Healthy House on the Block, a White Bear Township home inspector and consultant, echoed the importance of testing. “Over the past few years, I've seen a steady decline in radon testing

that is contingent on a home sale — many homeowners have been purchasing without even a home inspection in order to make their offer more competitive,” she said. “Thankfully, some realtors are highly knowledgeable about the harmful health effects of radon and have been encouraging their buyers to have the home tested after closing. While it's unfortunate the testing isn't being done prior to closing, buyers can still test after closing to ensure their home is safe for their family.”

This winter, MDH is partnering with local public health departments and other organizations to make test kits available to all Minnesotans at low or no cost. Participating agencies and vendors can be found on MDH's Radon Testing website. Hardware stores may also stock test kits. Licensed professionals can also conduct testing.

Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. Test devices are usually placed in the home for two to five days. The best time to test is during the heating season, but testing can be done year-round.

In homes with high radon levels, radon reduction typically involves installing a venting pipe and fan to pull the gas from under the home to the outside. Professionals conducting radon mitigation must be licensed by MDH, follow standards, and affix an MDH tag to the system. A list of licensed radon mitigation professionals can be found on the Find a Radon Mitigation Professional page on the MDH website.

MDH conducts free inspections of radon mitigation systems installed after June 1, 2020. The inspections ensure systems were installed correctly. Contact the MDH Indoor Air Unit to request an inspection at health.indoorair@state.mn.us.

More information about radon in Minnesota is available on the MDH website at Radon in Homes or by calling the MDH Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601 or 1-800-798-9050.

## “Wicked problems” defy easy solutions to sustainable food production

Urban centers and rural areas benefit greatly from each other's strengths. But the issues rural and urban dwellers see affecting them and their neighborhoods are very different. These different perspectives can make it difficult to come up with solutions to big societal issues such as sustainable food production and climate change. This consequently results in conflict over how to spend tax dollars and what policies to put into place. There is a scientific term for these large complex societal problems. They are considered “wicked problems.”

A “wicked problem” is defined as a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of its complexity and interconnected nature. Wicked problems have no perfect solutions and require open discussion and listening to all perspectives before arriving at a compromise that works for everyone.

Here are few reasons wicked problems are particularly challenging.

**Wicked problems involve several different stakeholders with different perspectives on the problem.**

One reason it is difficult to agree on solutions is that stakeholders have different values. If you were to ask 10 people about what constitutes sustainable food production, you could easily receive 10 different responses. Responses will vary because of different personal values and circumstances.

For some, the highest priority of a sustainable food production system is producing nutritious food that is low-cost. Other people may be more concerned about using less herbicide and wanting products from animals raised in their natural environment. Cost is less of a concern.

People living in rural areas may be more interested in supporting a food production system that keeps their local schools and small towns vibrant. All these stakeholders' perspectives are valid and important, but some of the potential solutions may compete against each other.

**Wicked problems are unstructured making it difficult to sort out causes and effects with little consensus in identifying problems and solutions.**

Is our current food produc-

tion economically, socially and environmentally sustainable? What are the long-term effects on the environment and food cost if we eliminate all herbicides? Are there any long-term human health or environmental effects of the herbicides we are using? Is grazing better for the environment and animal welfare than confinement dairying? Is eliminating all ruminants better for the environment?

The answers to these questions are not clear and research results are inconclusive or conflicting. There are potential tradeoffs with different solutions.

Eliminating ruminants will decrease methane production, but many of the human-inedible byproducts we feed to animals are converted to highly nutritious human food. Landfilling these byproducts may result in methane production.

Grazing cows will result in more perennial crops being grown, potentially lowering erosion while less fuel will be needed to harvest the crop and

haul the manure. But if cows produce less milk, we may need more land and cows to produce the same amount of milk resulting in increased methane production.

**Wicked problems are interconnected, never go away, and can only be managed.**

Solutions involve compromise and tradeoffs. Will eliminating ruminants solve climate change if we keep using fossil fuels?

Most of the major challenges that we hear about on the news and debated in the political arena are wicked problems. Before we jump to what may appear to be a simple solution, it is important for all of us to try and understand everyone's perspective, not just our own. We need to have more respectful conversations about all the potential solutions, realizing that solutions will involve compromise and tradeoffs. If we do this, we will craft better solutions that work for everyone.

*Author: Jim Salfer, Extension dairy educator*

## Shedding light on home solar

Consumers shopping around for home improvement projects may be leaning toward overhauls that can reduce energy consumption and save them money in the long run. This is a driving factor behind a growing number of homeowners investigating solar energy for their residences.

**How does solar power work?**

Solar power harnesses the sun's energy and converts it into electricity that can be used in homes. Many people are familiar with photovoltaics (PV), which are the panels that absorb sunlight and create an electric field across their layers. Another solar technology, known as concentrating solar power, is primarily used in large power plants and is not appropriate for residential use, according to Energy.gov.

According to the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have been put in use across the United States since 2008 .

**Costs with solar**

The upfront expense of solar panels is significant, costing anywhere from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for initial installation. However, comparatively speaking, homeowners can

spend \$1,500 or more per year on electricity, so solar panels will pay for themselves over time. Keep in mind that costs may vary depending on energy needs and how many panels will be required to service the system.

**How much electricity can I expect?**

The Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Advice says that the amount of power generated from a solar energy system depends on a few factors:

1. The average number of hours of direct, unshaded sunlight your roof gets each year;
2. The pitch (angle), age and condition of your roof, and the compass direction it faces;
3. The size and strength of your system; and
4. Environmental factors such as snow, dust or shade that may cover the system.

**Save even more money**

Consumers can contact their utility companies to find out if they provide homeowners who produce solar power with "net metering."

This program pays the homeowner money or gives credit for excess power the system produces and returns to the electric grid. Individuals also may be eligible for energy tax credits or other benefits.



Working on a project at Faith Christian Academy, Iris Howard and Jaxson Knopps identify healthy foods and place them on our food rainbow.



Nadia Nikolayson, a Faith Christian Academy student, makes play-doh with some of our younger students during the month of January.

## Scholarships available for MAWQCP producers enrolled in Farm Business Management

**Applications for spring semester are due March 1st.**

The Farm Business Management Program (FBM) is a one-on-one, student-led program designed to provide education to farm owners and operators.

The program helps students to meet their business and personal goals and focuses on using quality records and sound business decisions with tools and other resources. It is offered at seven Minnesota State colleges throughout the state.

The MAWQCP Farm Business Management Scholarship is an exclusive opportunity for certified producers to receive up to 75% off their tuition for the FBM Program.

The scholarship will award \$140 per credit for new students in their first and/or second semester of the program and \$90 per credit for returning students in their third semester or beyond. The application for spring semester is due by March 1. If you have any questions contact your FBM instructor.

As part of the FBM program, students use the FIN-

BIN database to track and benchmark their financials. The "Influence of Intensified Environmental Practices on Farm Profitability" study has examined the financials of certified and non-certified producers.

### Simple strategies to find more time to read

Many people wish they could read every day but find it hard to make time to crack a book. Reading is an invaluable pastime, but nowadays it's easier than ever to get distracted.

Reading stimulates the brain and it may slow down the progression or development of cognitive disorders like Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Reading can induce calm and help reduce stress. It also helps a person become a better writer and communicator by improving readers' vocabularies.

The joy of reading is not unknown to the general public. In fact, a 2012 study by the Pew Research Center found that adults read an average of 17 books each year.

Here are some strategies to

find more time to read.

**Set very small goals**  
People who make any type of resolution - including plans to read more - may find they're unable to keep their goals if they make things too challenging. Keep your reading goals realistic. Make a tiny tweak in existing habits, like aspiring to read 10 pages of a book during down time in lieu of scrolling social media for 15 minutes. Manageable chunks can add up and are easy to maintain.



find more time to read.

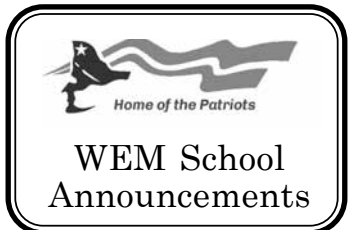
**Make reading fun**  
Remember the days of being assigned books in school only to push off reading until the last possible minute? That may have been because the subject matter simply didn't interest you. Pick books that you'll enjoy, even if they are not the most intellectual or culturally relevant. If reading about a favorite sports player or the latest beach romance is what gets you turning pages, have at it.

for median income.

Other key financial metrics were also better for those enrolled in the MAWQCP, such as debt-to-asset ratios and operating expense ratios.

**Join a book club**  
A book club is an opportunity to read as well as socialize. Having firm deadlines to complete a book and then the opportunity to discuss the plot and characters may be the motivation you need to pick up your book on a regular basis. Plus, fellow club members can keep you on target.

There are many steps people can take to achieve their goals of reading more.



**Win-E-Mac School District is home to over 20 paraprofessionals** who provide services in multiple settings within our school, including support for instruction, student activities, and individual students, as well as numerous other tasks that contribute to educational success.

The support and services provided by paraprofessionals are integral to student achievement, resulting in a more effective and a successful Win-E-Mac school. The Win-E-Mac School is committed to excellence in education and recognizes the important role that paraprofessionals play in ensuring educational success. The Win-E-Mac School District celebrated the contributions of paraprofessionals during Paraprofessional Recognition Week, January 23rd - January 29th. Please reach out and thank a paraprofessional this week!

Win-E-Mac paraprofessionals are: Ashley Enokson, Isaac Salvhus, TaraAnn Neal, Ashley Gunderson, Mandy Davis, Stefanie Kutsev, Chrissy Munter, Malena Peterson, Anne Schow, Jadyn Rivera, Craig Swanson, April Solheim, Angie Walker, Heidi Stuhau.

Taylor Orthaus, Jennifer Wang, Kylie Brekke, Ashley Solie, Adam Jore, DeAnn Boe, and Hannah Davidson.

**Snowfest will be February 6th - 10th.** Friday the cheerleaders will be having a pepfest at 2:10pm. There will also be a semi formal dance on Friday night after the girls' basketball game.

**Dress up days for Snowfest:**

- Monday: Pajama Day
- Tuesday: Minnesota Day (Sports teams, colleges, or just Minnesota Themed)
- Wednesday: Say No to Snow (Beach Day)
- Thursday: Elementary- Dress like you are a 100- High School- Spotlight day (Red if you are in a relationship, Yellow if it is complicated, Green if you are single)
- Friday: Spirit Day

**High school quarter 2** report cards are now available on ParentVue.

**Prom Sign-up**  
Prom - Saturday, May 6th, 2023

Complete sign-up by February 25, 2023

All prom attendees must be signed-up and pay attendance fees ahead of time. Win-E-Mac seniors/juniors are invited to attend the prom. Attendees are expected to wear formal attire if possible. Sophomores and former graduates (under age 21) may attend as a guest of a WEM senior or junior. The cost to attend is \$20 each. Return forms (from Mrs. Winter&#39;s room) with payment directly to Mrs. Winter.



Four students from each grade, 5th through 8th, participated in the Win-E-Mac Spelling Bee. The students included: Lucas Eggl, Hayden Johnson, Jareth Walk, Cora Earls, Abe Cheremnov, Ella Langemo, Eleanor Kaiser, Charley Carlson, Grady Breitbach, Megan McGlynn, Bennett Bailey, Stella Davis, Sofia Zarkoff, Steffan Erofeeff, Logan Johnson, and Annabelle Bachmeier-Lewis,