



McINTOSH

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Times

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Movie premiere featuring McIntosh and residents this Saturday

A film debut is coming to the Fosston Theater on Saturday, August 19th at 4:00 pm. Mr. Yanagi's Aliens, a film made by 2 young filmmakers Alex Buysee and Aamuro Kanda.

Alex Buysee and Aamuro Kanda are recent graduates of the University of Southern California's film program, where they met. They're both Colorado natives with family ties to Minnesota (including McIntosh). The duo met about 5 years ago and have been roommates for the last 3 years; Alex is a full-time film editor whereas Aamuro has been focusing on cinematography and directing.

Together, they have shot projects around the country and world, including a concert in Japan for the Grammy award winning artist Kitaro. To pay for this film, they have been taking a bunch of odd jobs and handyman services, who would've thought these two filmmakers would be splitting logs for a week up in the Northern Woods of the Upper Peninsula.

In brief, the movie is about Alex and Aamuro, two film school burnouts without many prospects. Seeing no future in their jobs as videographers for the local public access television station, they decide to bet everything on one final documentary before giving up on their dreams.

The pair follow a lead about alien sightings in McIntosh, a small farming community in rural Minnesota. While interviewing residents, they team up with a veteran Japanese monster-movie director, Mr. Yanagi, who is also investigating the recent sightings. After managing to capture footage of an extraterrestrial encounter, the two encounter trouble and embark on an adventure that takes them across the world in order to finish the documentary.

The movie stars Alex Buysse, Aamuro Kanda, Dave Stordahl, Naoto Kanda and Kelly Austin. It is proudly Shot in McIntosh Minnesota, Minneapolis Minnesota, Marquette Michigan, Longmont Colorado, and Kyushu, Japan. There is no rating, though the movie does include some strong language and cartoon violence. The movie features original music by John Williams, Eric Jacobsen, Jackson Cloud and Kelly Austin, with additional music by Jack Sligh.

Many McIntosh residents are featured in the movie including, Roxanne Stordahl, Donna Larson, Wanda Kiefert Stordahl, Shirley Carver, Nathan Nelson, Ronald Roed, Bob Bursheim, Andrea Stordahl, Phil Lee, Bruce Haaven, Tom Hegg, Mic Evenson, Jim Lee, Dave Faldet, Virgil Lerfield, and Steve Carlson.

Mr. Yanagi's Aliens stemmed from the idea of just going out and making something fun, sort of like the movies Alex and Aamuro would make when they were growing up. Alex would make Lego animations as a child, and Aamu-

ro would make fun short films using his parents and friends. That same homemade spirit has translated over to their first feature film, Mr. Yanagi's Aliens, which holds all the charms of true independent filmmaking, while being stuck together with duct tape and bubblegum. Those in McIntosh will certainly see some familiar faces.



Aamuro Kanda and Alex Buysee.



Movie poster by Nefeli Hadjiyiannis.

Night of Worship at Win-E-Mac School

Prepare your heart for a transformative evening of praise and worship as community members can gather for the Night of Worship. This will be an unforgettable experience for those across the community.

The night will feature Mitch Wonger, Alexander Pappas, and Hope Darst.

Mitch Wong is a Grammy award winning songwriter and worship leader.

Alexander Pappas is best known for the powerful voice behind Hillsong Young and Free.

Hope Darst is a worship leader at The Belonging Co.

Citywide Worship is a special opportunity to come together with your community, raise your voice and be a part of something greater. Experience an atmosphere filled with faith, joy, and reverence as you



sing, worship and move hearts. Come with family, friends or church groups on Wednesday, October 16th at 7:00pm at the Win-E-Mac School.



On Wednesday, October 9th, the Win-E-Mac Chapter of the Minnesota Honor Society held their annual Induction Ceremony in the Arts and Events Center. Eight new members have been accepted to join with the four current members to make up Win-E-Mac's chapter. The new members include: Lauren Kaupang, Karlie Schow, Paige Breitbach, Josie Johnson, Joy Neubert, Josie Fortman, Abby Sauer, and Bergen Howard.



A Patriot big thank you to Cameron Herriman and Bailee O'Brien from the Winger Fire Department. These firefighters came to the Win-E-Mac school to teach Kindergarten along with the 3rd graders and 6th graders about fire safety. They even brought two fire trucks with them! The members of the Winger Fire Department are pictured here with the Win-E-Mac kindergartner's.

McIntosh September meeting minutes

McIntosh
Council Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2024
The meeting of the McIntosh City Council was called to order by Mayor Toby Strom at 5:30 PM on Tuesday September 10, 2024.

Present: Toby Strom Luke Burd Luke Syverson
Poplar Meadows Committee Member: Rebecca Boehrsen – Licensed Director for Poplar Meadows of McIntosh

Absent: Beth Hagen
1) Motion by Councilmember Syverson and seconded by Councilmember Burd to approve the August 14, 2024 regular Council meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Councilmember Syverson and carried.
2) Motion by Councilmember Burd to approve the August 14, 2024 regular Council meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Councilmember Syverson and carried.
3) MEDA and Poplar Meadows Committee Reports:
Poplar Meadows Committee member Boehrsen reported there are currently 27 residents at Poplar Meadows and all apartments are full. Rebecca has been receiving calls from interested parties and has them on a waiting list.
Committee member Boehrsen reported a broken windowpane in one of the apartments and is looking at different options for repair. Some window companies require multiple windows to be replaced for them to come on site, so glass replacement may be the only option. It was also reported that a broken portion of the sidewalk was not able to be lifted, so Rebecca will call Lance Erickson to inspect the

cement slab and give a quote for repairs.
Motion by Councilmember Syverson to approve the submitted claims. Seconded by Councilmember Burd and carried.
4) Motion by Councilmember Syverson to approve a volleyball net to be put up at the Centennial Baseball Park. A McIntosh resident offered to purchase the net. Motion seconded by Councilmember Burd and carried.
5) Motion by Councilmember Syverson to have MEI Elevator Solutions repair the Bjella Building elevator in the amount of \$984.00. Motion seconded by Councilmember Burd and carried.
6) Councilmember Burd presented resolution number 2024.09.10 noticing public of potential sale of City-owned property and authorizing receipt of offers for City-owned property. Votes in the affirmative: Councilmembers Burd and Syverson. Votes in the negative: none.
7) The Truth in Taxation meeting was set for December 10, 2024 at 6:30 located at the McIntosh Community Center.
8) Motion by Councilmember Syverson to purchase a new locator in the amount of \$1,273.00, for the Public Works Dept. Seconded by Councilmember Burd and Carried.
9) Motion by Councilmember Syverson to approve the submitted claims. Seconded by Councilmember Burd and carried.
10) Motion by Councilmember Burd to adjourn the meeting at 5:55. Seconded by Councilmember Syverson and

carried.
Budget Meeting
Tuesday September 10, 2024
6:00 p.m.
Community Center
Call to order:
Mayor Strom called the meeting to order.
Roll call:
Members present: Toby Strom, Luke Burd and Luke Syverson
Members absent: Beth Hagen
Melissa Finseth – Clerk/Treasurer
Rebecca Boehrsen - Licensed Assisted Living Director for Poplar Meadows of McIntosh
Purpose of meeting:
a. Finalize 2025 budget:
Motion by Luke Burd and seconded by Luke Syverson to approve the 2025 city budget.
Property taxes - \$105,345.00
Enterprise bonds - \$51,000.00
EDA bonds - \$90,000.00
Gross levy amount of \$246,345.00
2025 final budget passed unopposed.
Truth in Taxation meeting will be held on December 10, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the McIntosh Community Center.
b. Finalize 2025 Poplar Meadows budget
Motion by Luke Syverson and seconded by Luke Burd to approve the final 2025 budget for Poplar Meadows with the \$5,000 increase for windows. Passed unopposed.
Adjournment:
Motion by Luke Burd and seconded by Luke Syverson to adjourn at 6:05. Passed unopposed.

Social Security announces 2.5 percent benefit increase for 2025

Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for more than 72.5 million Americans will increase 2.5 percent in 2025, the Social Security Administration announced today. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by about \$50 per month starting in January.
Over the last decade the COLA increase has averaged about 2.6 percent. The COLA was 3.2 percent in 2024.
Nearly 68 million Social Security beneficiaries will see a 2.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning in January 2025. Increased payments to nearly 7.5 million people receiving SSI will begin on December 31, 2024. (Note: Some people receive both Social Security benefits and SSI).
“Social Security benefits and SSI payments will increase in 2025, helping tens of millions of people keep up with expenses even as inflation has started to cool,” said Martin O’Malley, Commissioner of Social Security.
Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) is slated to increase to \$176,100 from \$168,600.
Security begins notifying people about their new benefit amount by mail starting in early December.
This year, for the first time, Social Security beneficiaries will receive a newly designed and improved COLA notice that makes it easier for customers to find the information they need most. The simplified COLA notice is now only one page, uses plain and personalized language, and provides exact dates and dollar amounts of a person’s new benefit amount and any deductions.
Individuals who have a personal my Social Security account can view their COLA notice online, which is secure, easy, and faster than receiving a letter in the mail. People can set up text or email alerts when there is a new message—such as their COLA notice—waiting for them in my Social

Security.
People will need to have a personal my Social Security account by Nov. 20 to see their COLA notice online. To get started, visit www.ssa.gov/my-account.
Information about Medicare changes for 2025 will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, the 2025 benefit amount will be available via my Social Security’s Message Center starting in late November. Those who

have not opted to receive messages online will receive their COLA notice by mail in December.
The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) as determined by the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.
To read more, please visit www.ssa.gov/cola.



Alex and Aamuro working on the film with Dave Stordahl, who is Aamuro's uncle.

Capture & preserve family memories

Have you ever wished you had asked more questions about your family history? Join Caleb Curfman for an engaging workshop on capturing oral history! This event will equip you with the skills and techniques necessary to preserve personal narratives and community stories. Learn the importance of oral history, master effective interviewing techniques, and discover how to preserve and archive collected stories.
Caleb will guide you in creating a comfortable environment for interviewees, asking open-ended questions, and handling sensitive topics with care. By the end of the workshop, you'll be ready to conduct your own oral history projects, ensuring the voices and experiences of individuals within your family and community are documented and remembered for future generations. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your interviewing skills and gain a

deeper understanding of the ethical considerations in this valuable historical practice. All materials will be provided!
Sponsored by the East Polk Heritage Center, the workshop will be held at the Moen School at EPHC. A minimal cost of \$15 will cover all materials. Sign up at www.eastpolkheritage.org or contact Caleb directly at 218-280-2183.

Grace Community Food Shelf

Grace Community Food Shelf is located in double garage next to the east entrance to Grace Church, Erskine.
Open for Shopping:
▪ Thur. Oct 17th - 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
▪ Sat. Oct 19th - 9:00 am - Noon
Contact Info: foodshelf@gracechurcherskine.org or 218-687-2250, leave a message.



Trick-or-Treating at MSL

Please join in the fun on Halloween evening Thursday, October 31st for Trick or Treating from 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm in the front lobby at McIntosh Senior Living. The residents are waiting to see all the little trick or treaters and hand out candy.

Pumpkin carving contest at Louie's Mercantile

Louie's Mercantile on Main Street in McIntosh will host their annual pumpkin carving contest.
All ages are welcome to participate in this fun event. Be creative with your pumpkins by decorating with paint, stickers, glitter, carving or however you want to design a winning entry!
Entries are due to Louie's Mercantile (140 SW Cleveland Ave) by Sunday, October 27th. You can message via social media or email louiesmercantile@gmail.com your pumpkin. Winners will be announced on Halloween with a prize from the store!

Community dance featuring O'Neil Family Band

The O'Neil Family Band of East Grand Forks will be in Fosston for another Community Dance on Saturday, October 19th.
They will provide music and calling for a wide range of Reels, Squares, and Circle Mixers. These dances are easy to learn so no prior experience required!

Did you know?

The popularity of vegan diets is on the rise as people increasingly turn to plant-based eating.
According to Soylent, a soy-based meal replacement beverage company, the number of vegans exceeded 9.7 million in the United States in 2019. Projections estimate that by 2040, only 40 percent of the global

Pet parade

It's time for the Louie's Mercantile Annual Pet Parade! Join people and their pets on Saturday October 19th at 4:30 pm at Louie's for a pawsome parade down Main Street. Dress your pets in their cutest, funniest or most creative costumes and strut you stuff. There will be prizes, photo ops and plenty of fun! To enter, stop by the shop to sign an entry prior to parade.

Winger

Halloween Party

Calling all monsters to join in the fun at the Spooktacular Halloween Party with games, bingo, cupcake walk, pumpkin painting and a haunted stage tour. The party is on Sunday, October 27th from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Winger Community Center. There will be pizza and candy at every stop! Bingo will begin at 3:00 pm. This event is sponsored by the Winger Lions and a group of local women. Free will donations will go towards the new playground coming to Winger in the spring.

This event is open to all ages and has, in the past, been a great afternoon for everyone.
Held at the Embassy Center, dancing starts at 2:00 PM. Sponsored by the East Polk Heritage Center, there is no charge.
Light refreshments will be served. Hope you can join in!

population will continue to eat meat. The online resources Made in Canada reports that, in 2020, 4.6 percent of Canadians were vegan.
Between 2017 and 2021, the compound annual growth rate for plant-based ready meal sales in Canada was 441.8 percent advises the site.



Wed. Oct. 16:
Connie Strom, Calvin Schow, April Ostena, Brook Simonson, Mara Erickson
Thurs. Oct. 17:
Adam Jore, Shirley Kraft
Fri. Oct. 18:
Steve Carlson, Piper Schow, *Mark & Joan Lee
Sat. Oct. 19:
Craig Espeseth
Sun. Oct. 20:
Marilyn Graff, Holly Breckel, Jerry Weber, Todd Enger, *Brady & Karol Langemo
Mon. Oct. 21:
Kobe Hamre
Tues. Oct. 22:
Chris Bartz, Wanda Stordahl, Craig Burslie

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

Wed. Oct. 16: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 12:00pm Rosary for Life
Fri. Oct. 18: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston
Sun. Oct. 20: 8:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley
Wed. Oct. 23: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston
Fri. Oct. 25: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston
Wed. Oct. 30: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston
Fri. Nov. 1: 11:30am Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston
Sun. Nov. 3: Mass at St. Mary's, Fosston; 10:30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Bagley

OURS SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA) McIntosh Pastor Rene Mehlberg Synodical Authorized Minister Katie DeMarais

Sun. Oct. 20: 10:00am Coffee Hour; 10:30am Worship Services
Sun. Oct. 27: 10:00am Coffee Hour; 10:30am Worship Services
Our Savior's 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: Jerry Moan

Trinity: (27262 315th St. SE, McIntosh) Sunday Worship: 9:30am
Mt. Carmel: (305 State St. NE, McIntosh) Sunday Worship: 11:00am
Lutheran Parish YouTube Channel

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

Sun. Oct. 20: 9:30am Sunday School and Adult Bible Study; 11:00am Worship Service (also on Facebook and gosenchurch.com)
Tues. Oct. 22: 10:00am. Sunday worship service telecast on GVTV--30
Wed. Oct. 23: 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. Oct. 20: 9:00am Worship
Sun. Oct. 27: 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: 10:30am Coffee Fellowship; 11:00am Worship

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH- NALC Erskine Rev. Pam Thorson

Sundays: 9:15am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship
Come early and enjoy fellowship and a good cup of coffee. It will also be available at the same time on Garden Valley Channel 30, Facebook and YouTube.

Thriving Life Church Erskine, MN

Sunday service at 10:00 am
Call or visit us at: 22722 350th Street; 218-687-2343

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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The County Line

By Warren Strandell

Polk County Commissioner, Dist. 2

A couple weeks ago I was among the 30 or so people who participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new round-about at the intersection of U.S. Highway 75-Polk Co. State Aid Highway 21. That's midway between Angus and Euclid. Financed mostly by federal and state funds, the \$2.6 million project included quite a lot of impressive new concrete along with the asphalt shouldering. In the center of the round-about is a 4- to 5-foot high hill of dirt.

In addition to an intersection that will go a long way toward eliminating future T-bone crashes... the ones that result in fatalities, my thoughts then and since have included a trip down memory lane. That memory trip goes back to the way things were when I was in my first years as a commissioner.

Back then the county highway engineer and the commissioners would have discussions about which of the gravel county roads — those that have the coveted CSAH (county state aid highway) designation — would be next in line to be hard-surfaced. There was money available from the state gas tax and where it would be spent was largely determined by traffic counts.

Politics and the numbers
There was some politicking in the process, too, and there were even some thoughts that citizens may have done some things to increase the traffic count numbers... like driving back and forth over the count wire recorder. Roads past the residences of commissioner may have gotten some preference too, but who knows.

I have lived in East Grand Forks my whole time on the County Board, so no roads ever went past my home. I am innocent of that charge. Whether or not any of those things ever happened was not proven, but there were suspicions.

Actually, I had some good success in my first years in getting graveled roads hard surfaced. That was until the gas tax fund monies were overrun by rising construction costs. The from "gravel to hard-surface" projects that come to mind — just in District 2 — in the good years, include:

MDA unveils state's first Farm to Kids strategic plan

Plan will advance Farm to School and Early Care efforts in Minnesota.

October is Farm to School and Early Care Month, a time to celebrate food education, school gardens, and lunch trays filled with healthy, locally sourced foods from Minnesota's producers.

In recognition of this month, today the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) unveiled the state's first-ever Farm to Kids Strategic Plan. Developed collaboratively by Farm to School and Early Care partners across Minnesota, this plan is a 5-year roadmap for advancing local procurement and agricultural education in K-12 schools and early care settings.

Using insights collected from robust stakeholder engagement with producers, school food service professionals, educators, early care providers, youth, and other members of the public, the Farm to Kids Strategic Plan outlines specific goals, strategies, and actions for future Farm to School and Early Care efforts. The high-level priorities of the plan include:

- Increase purchases of Minnesota-grown and -raised foods by schools and early care settings.
 - Improve integration of food and agricultural education in classrooms, cafeterias, and other educational environments.
 - Build and activate a strong Farm to Kids network to foster shared, collaborative leadership among Farm to School and Early Care partners.
- "For over a decade, state agencies, institutions, and organizations have been working together to support and expand

CSAHs 58, 59, 18, 41, 45, the extension of 17 to the east, and the one mile of 20 before it enters District 5. And there were probably more.

A number of graveled CSAHs in the other districts were hard surfaced, too. I just don't try to keep track of them, but you can be assured that the other commissioner districts got their share of funding and projects.

The Highway Department has a five-year plan for work. Virtually all decisions about road work are based on need.

About the gas tax
The gas tax has been at the rate of 28.5 cents per gallon since 2012. In January 2025 a surcharge tax of 3.5 cents per gallon will be added. This surcharge is to pay debt service on trunk highway bonds issued to construct, improve, and maintain Minnesota's interstates and highways.

The state of Minnesota and its 87 counties haven't had the funding needed to do anything more than maintain the highways. In fact, they haven't even had the funding to do a really good job of that.

So, the question I ask is this: How much could another 5 cents of tax on a gallon of gas affect our purse strings??? The tax increase question comes up in the legislature on a regular basis but goes nowhere. Another five cents on a 15-gallon fill would add 75 cents to the bill. That's less than that of a soda or a candy bar. I could live with the 75-cent increase if it paid for more road construction and better maintenance.

Oh, and about that reference to the height of the mound built into the center of the interchange mentioned at the start of this column: Well, for those crazies who made a practice of running through the CSAH 21-Highway 75 intersection crossing — and there were more than you think — they better be ready for a ride if they try doing that again. At highway or the higher speeds used, they are going to get quite a ride before landing on the other side.

The pillar problem
The real benefit of interchanges is that they eliminate much of the right pillar vision

problem in vehicles. That pillar — the massive support structure between the windshield and vehicle roof — blocks a very large part of the vision approaching from the right. Thus, the high number of T-bone crashes.

To me, when automakers quit making cars with "wrap around" windshields back in the late 1960s, a big mistake was made. With a return of good sight to the right that the wrap-arounds provided many of the roundabouts recently constructed wouldn't be needed.

Thoughts for the day:
• America is so great that the people who hate it won't leave. — Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.)

• It's never right to do the wrong thing. It's never wrong to do the right thing. — Lou Holtz, football coach.

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.

What is a fair farmland rental agreement?

Landlords, farmers and agri-business professionals should make plans to attend one of the informative meetings being held across Minnesota. These free meetings are being provided by the University of Minnesota Extension. Farmland rental rates are the largest input cost to the farmer. Determining a fair farmland rental agreement is always challenging.

Negotiating a fair rental agreement that satisfies the landowner and the farmer is a challenge.

David Bau and Nathan Hulsinsky, Extension educators in Ag Business Management, will provide several ways to determine a fair farmland rental rate for both parties; by examples, factsheets and worksheets.

Topics covered at the meetings will include local historic and projected farmland rental rate trends, current farmland values and sales, and a worksheet that will help determine a fair rental agreement. Input costs for 2024 will be present-

ing the Countryside, University of Minnesota Extension, and additional members of the Minnesota Farm to School Leadership Team and Minnesota Farm to Early Care Advisory Group.

Sen. Johnson speaks, highlighting impact from changes to state's civil asset forfeiture laws

Senator Mark Johnson (R-East Grand Forks) spoke at a press conference to highlight the impact of changes to the state civil asset forfeiture laws passed in 2021. The changes aimed to streamline and unify various agency enforcement actions and balance holding bad actors accountable while protecting the rights of every citizen to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

"These changes are a result of civil liberty advocates, law enforcement, and legislators coming together to find common ground," Johnson said. "While these changes won't impact most Minnesotans, those who are impacted can trust the process to be fairer and more balanced. We can see the results of that in the today's report that continues a downward trend of civil asset forfeiture."

A summary released by the State Auditor's office included the following highlights:

In 2023, 243 Minnesota law enforcement agencies reported a total of 3,873 completed forfeitures pursued under both state and federal law. Of the 243 law enforcement agencies that reported completed forfeitures, 241 agencies reported a total of 3,795 completed forfeitures pursued under state law and 11 agencies reported an

Get a free cost estimate and check for savings only available through MNsure

Minnesotans who need health insurance for 2025 can get an early start on health plan shopping through MNsure. Consumers can go to MNsure.org to preview 2025 health plans and get a free and anonymous cost estimate ahead of MNsure's annual open enrollment period, beginning November 1.

"With just three key pieces of information — where you live, who is in your household, and your total household income — you can get an immediate estimate of how much money you could save in 2025 by enrolling through MNsure," said MNsure CEO Libby Caulum. "We estimate eligible Minnesota families will save an average of \$561 per month (over \$6,700/year) on private health plans purchased through MNsure."

The great news for Minnesotans is that expanded premium tax credits thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) continue to help make health insurance affordable for more Minnesotans. For example, a married couple with



a combined income of \$85,000/year (over 400% of the federal poverty guideline) can access savings through MNsure in 2025 that they wouldn't have been eligible for pre-ARPA/IRA. Federal legislation also capped the cost of premiums for the benchmark plan so that all Minnesotans, regardless of income level, can find a 2025 plan with premiums that cost no more than 8.5% of their annual income.

MNsure's online tools help consumers:

- See if they qualify for discounts (tax credits) that lower the cost of monthly premiums for private health plans
- Explore and compare the 2025 plans available in their

area

- Check whether any household members may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance through Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare

Through MNsure's partnerships, Minnesotans can get application and enrollment help from health insurance experts at no cost, including free plan advice from a broker. MNsure's broker enrollment centers offer free walk-in assistance, and there are hundreds of MNsure-certified assisters across the state ready to help in person, over the phone, or by virtual meeting. Connect with a local, trusted broker or navigator by searching MNsure's Assister Directory.

ed, along with current 2024 corn and soybean prices. Worksheets will examine 2025 costs and what is affordable rent to pay in 2025, the rate of return to the landlord at current market values and examine flexible rental agreements.

Make plans to attend one of these meetings now. No

pre-registration is required. Attendees will receive several informative worksheets and factsheets.

The meetings will be held from November 7 through December 16, in Pipestone, Sandstone, Litchfield, Hutchinson, Melrose, Little Falls, Mankato, Alexandria, Preston, Caledo-

nia, Buffalo, Owatonna, Faribault, Thief River Falls, Sleepy Eye, Madison, Olivia, Rochester, Albert Lea, Blue Earth, Gaylord, Slayton, Cologne, Jordan and St. Peter.

For a complete listing of workshops, go to: extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/farmland-rental-workshop

MDH releases draft action plan on drinking water and invites feedback

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) released a draft action plan to ensure safe drinking water across the state and is inviting feedback from Minnesotans.

The DRAFT Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan is a 10-year roadmap to ensure that everyone, everywhere in Minnesota has equitable access to safe and sufficient drinking water. The plan outlines anticipated future challenges, identifies risks and gaps, and proposes strategies to address them.

At the recommendation of the Clean Water Council, the Minnesota Legislature directed MDH to coordinate the development of this plan, using Clean Water Fund dollars

The plan incorporates expertise and feedback from water professionals, state and local governments, researchers and Minnesotans who drink water.

Minnesota has an outstanding record of providing safe

and sufficient drinking water for customers on public water systems and continuously maintains a high rate of compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Yet, the plan identifies current and anticipated future challenges, such as limited protections for private well users, a shrinking drinking water workforce, as well as emerging risks from contaminants, pathogens and climate change.

"Safe drinking water is essential for people to be healthy and for a healthy economy, which contributes to making Minnesota one of the best places to live for children and families," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Brooke Cunningham.

Three key takeaways from the draft plan include:

- While people relying on public water systems can be confident in the quality of their drinking water, Minnesota's 1.1 million private well users need further support and re-

sources so that they, too, can be confident their drinking water is safe.

- The drinking water workforce is critical to safe drinking water, and it is shrinking. Many water operators and well contractors are retiring, and few new people are entering the field. Safe drinking water relies on supporting the current workforce and recruiting and engaging the next generation.

- Minnesota has been a leader in the nation for scanning the horizon for emerging risks to drinking water and understanding how those risks may affect people. To ensure safe drinking water into the future, Minnesota must continue anticipating, understanding and managing emerging risks.

MDH invites the public to review the DRAFT Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan and provide input by Oct. 17. The plan, a summary and feedback form are posted at Future of Drinking Water.



Left to Right: Robert Small, Executive Director, Minnesota County Attorneys Association; Sen. Mark Johnson; State Auditor Julie Blaha.

additional 78 completed forfeitures pursued under federal law.

In 2023, for all completed forfeitures pursued under state law, gross sales of forfeited property or seized cash totaled \$6,186,943; administrative

expenses and lienholders' obligations totaled \$1,273,349; amount returned totaled \$931,807; and net proceeds totaled \$4,392,7125.

In 2023, for all completed forfeitures pursued under federal law, total proceeds

received through the equitable sharing program totaled \$897,306.

Read the full report at <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/media/mmqlfgzd/assetforfeitureandexpenditures-23report.pdf>



Bailee O'Brien from the Winger Fire Department shows the 3rd graders at Win-E-Mac the fire equipment on the fire truck.



The Win-E-Mac 3rd graders check out the fire trucks and equipment when visited by the Winger Fire Department last week.

Preliminary data show a decrease in overdose deaths in 2023

From 2022 to 2023, Minnesota saw an 8% decrease in overall drug overdose deaths from 1,384 to 1,274 deaths among residents in the state, according to preliminary data. Though the numbers are still preliminary, 2023 likely marks the first time since 2018 that Minnesota has seen a drop in total overdose deaths among its residents.

Greater Minnesota experienced a 21% decrease in overdose deaths (482 to 381 deaths). The seven-county metro area saw a 1% decrease as well (902 to 893 deaths).

Nonfatal overdoses involving opioids other than heroin (like fentanyl) increased by 11% (4,328 to 4,819 overdoses).

"We have seen a decline in opioid deaths, alongside an increase in nonfatal overdoses, in part due to greater naloxone availability," said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Brooke Cunningham.

"We know the work is not done, and we cannot rest. Every overdose is one too many, and we are committed to continuing to work with partners across the state to identify additional strategies that will save more lives."

"This is encouraging news but there is much more to do," said Addiction and Recovery Director Jeremy Drucker. "The state and its partners remain laser-focused on continuing the work to ensure every Minnesotan is healthy and safe."

Total overdose deaths essentially plateaued with a slight increase between 2021 and 2022, though early preliminary numbers had indicated a

potential drop. These numbers are preliminary and are likely to increase when final, because they do not include Minnesota residents who might have died from an overdose while in another state.

Most fatal overdoses (about 70%) involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl. However, the number of opioid-involved deaths in Minnesota was also down 8% from 2022 to 2023 (1,031 to 947 deaths), according to preliminary data.

Minnesota overdose deaths in the synthetic opioid category that includes fentanyl are down 6%, (949 to 892 deaths). Most cases in this category are assumed to involve illicitly manufactured fentanyl. All other opioid related categories including prescription opioids, heroin and methadone continued to see a decrease in deaths.

Minnesota's preliminary 2023 overdose data is reflective of national trends. The CDC reports a nationwide 3% decrease in all overdose deaths from 2022 to 2023.

While opioid-involved deaths went down in 2023, deaths from the psychostimulant category, which includes methamphetamine, continued a 10-year upward trend with meth deaths increasing 4% (516 to 538 deaths) and cocaine 11% (219 to 242 deaths).

Furthermore, for every one overdose death in 2023, there were nearly 13 nonfatal overdoses treated in Minnesota hospitals, with the number of visits remaining elevated but stable from 2022.

As drug overdose remains a crisis in Minnesota that im-

pacts communities to varying degrees, MDH, Tribal nations, local public health and health organizations have increased their investments in overdose prevention activities. Minnesota continues to be on the forefront of overdose prevention.

Additionally, the governor and Legislature passed a policy to reduce drug overdose deaths by requiring all schools, law enforcement officials, emergency responders and residential treatment programs to have naloxone on hand.

MDH and the Minnesota Department of Education have posted a toolkit to help schools obtain cost-free naloxone and implement the new requirement.

Additional state-led activities include expanding medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD); establishing new peer recovery support systems; and launching the MN Naloxone Portal where mandated groups, Tribes, Syringe Service Programs and organizations serving unsheltered Minnesotans can access no-cost naloxone.

From September 2023 through July 2024, more than 124,000 nasal naloxone kits were distributed through this portal. Collaboration with other state agencies and federal funding partners help make this overdose and substance use response work possible

**Ad deadline:
Noon Friday**



The kindergartners at Win-E-Mac School learn about fire safety from Winger Fire Department members Camerson Harriman and Bailee O'Brien.



The Win-E-Mac Chapter of the Minnesota Honor Society held their annual Induction Ceremony. Eight new members have been accepted to join with the four current members to make up Win-E-Mac's chapter. Members include: Lauren Kaupang, Karlie Schow, Paige Breitbach, Josie Johnson, Joy Neubert, Josie Fortman, Abby Sauer, Bergen Howard, Evie Ryan, Shelby Mandt, Livaeh Kiecker and Dani Winter.



There will be no school on Thursday, October 17th and Friday October 18th due to MEA/NEA.

Win-E-Mac is seeking individuals to visit our school and share their career experiences with our students. We would love for you to talk about the education and training that helped you reach your current position, what your job is truly like, and share valuable insights with the kids.

If you have a unique job that not many people are aware of or understand, work in a booming industry looking for passionate employees, or simply love what you do and want to inspire others, we invite you to participate!

This is a fantastic opportunity to speak to our senior class during their Senior Seminar, where nothing beats first hand experience.

If you're interested in making a positive impact on our students' futures, please consider joining us!

For more information, contact school counselor Becky Hanson at rhanson@win-emac.k12.mn.us.

The Win-E-Mac School District office will be open from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday during regular school days.